Do LGBT People Want to be Normal?
Diversity, Assimilation, and Queerness in a Post-Marriage Equality World

Course Description
In 2015 the United States Supreme Court issued its ruling in Obergefell v. Hodges that same-sex marriage was a right guaranteed by the United States Constitution. This resulted in nationwide marriage equality with the legalization of same-sex marriage in all fifty states. A watershed moment for American culture, the Obergefell ruling, like other recent events, raises questions about how LGBT+ rights and politics have collided in the twenty-first century. Why did marriage become the primary cause for the LGBT+ community? What does having the right to marry say about LGBT+ people? How are matters of economics bound up in LGBT+ rights?

Using marriage as one example, this course will investigate ways in which certain sections of the contemporary LGBT+ community have defined themselves through a sense of being “normal,” of assimilating, rather than resisting social norms. We will try to understand how contemporary economics, politics, and history have contributed to this “homonormativity.” Some questions we will ask: How did LGBT+ identities – once queer, outside the mainstream – become normative, and what challenges, complications, and compromises accompany this move? What facets of LGBT+ identities and sexualities are excluded from homonormativity? Who is resisting homonormativity, and how and why? How do ideas about economics and politics affect the real lives of people, their bodies, and their families?

Course Texts
There are no textbooks to buy for this class. We will read a combination of theory texts and texts in which theories are applied to various facets of contemporary culture. Some of the readings are listed here; other texts will be included on the syllabus.