# HIST 4883.001: Texas LGBTQ History

Class Hours: Mondays/Wednesdays 2:00-3:20 pm

Classroom: Wooten Hall 115

## Instructor Information

Dr. Wesley Phelps (he/him)

Office: Wooten Hall 255

Email: [wesley.phelps@unt.edu](mailto:wesley.phelps@unt.edu)

Student Drop-In Hours: M/W/F 10:00-11:00 am, or by appointment

## Course Description, Structure, Requirements, and Objectives

### Course Description

This course investigates the rise of modern lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer identities, politics, cultures, and communities in Texas. This semester, we will study the history of the Oak Lawn neighborhood in Dallas, which is the city’s historic gayborhood. In this project-based course, each student will gain hands-on experience in archival research, primary document analysis, oral history methodology, and digital media tools. Students will ultimately produce a multi-episode historical podcast series about the history of the Oak Lawn neighborhood that will pull together original research and insights. What the final podcast series will sound like, what it will include, and how it will be organized will be for us to debate and determine as a class. Students are NOT expected to have any previous podcasting experience.

### Required Materials

All materials will be provided by the instructor.

To complete the project for this course, students will need access to a computer. UNT Libraries offers a laptop checkout service for students who need it. Laptops checked out from the library come equipped with all of the software students need to complete the requirements for this course. See <https://library.unt.edu/services/laptop-checkout/> for more information.

### How This Course Works

This course uses an unconventional approach to assessing student learning called specifications grading. (If you’re curious about this approach, see this [overview](https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2016/01/19/new-ways-grade-more-effectively-essay).) Specifications grading means that your final course grade will be determined by the amount of quality work you choose to do. Assignments are bundled together at each grade level based on amount of work and/or level of complexity. The A bundle of assignments requires more work, and work of greater complexity, than the B bundle, which is likewise more challenging than the C bundle. Rather than earning a grade for each assignment, you will earn your final course grade by meeting the expectations on all of the assignments within your chosen bundle. These bundles reflect a hierarchy of course objectives. Your final grade will be assigned based on which bundles of assignments you satisfactorily complete. These final grades, therefore, indicate which course objectives you demonstrate that you accomplished. You have an opportunity to think ahead about what grade you would like to earn in this course and plan your workload accordingly. However, your chosen grade is not set in stone – you can reevaluate this choice at any time.

All individual assignments will be evaluated as “meets expectations” or “does not meet expectations yet,” based on specific criteria for each assignment. You will receive credit for an assignment when it meets ALL of the criteria. There are no points, percentages, or gradations of quality in specifications grading. An assignment either meets expectations, or it does not. I will share these criteria with you well in advance of each assignment. In general, “meets expectations” should not be viewed as “minimally competent,” as is typical for a grade of C. Rather, “meets expectations” indicates you have achieved the course objective associated with that particular assignment and its specifications. In practice, “meets expectations” will describe work that, under a typical grading scheme, would receive at least a B+ or A-.

As you may have noticed, one of the evaluation categories is “does not meet expectations yet,” rather than “fail.” The word choice is deliberate. I want to cultivate a learning environment in which you feel comfortable taking risks and in which you see learning as an incremental process. To ease stress, to allow for flexibility, and to maximize opportunities for learning, you will have the option to revise and resubmit any written assignment that does not yet meet expectations. Resubmissions will be due 1 week after I return the assignment to you with comments.

My goal is to help you achieve satisfactory levels of learning on all components of the course that you undertake and to be transparent about expectations for learning throughout the semester. Please let me know if you have any questions about the grading system at any time during the semester.

### Course Objectives

Students who pass the course with a minimum grade of C will be able to:

* Identify major historical events and themes related to LGBTQ history in Texas
* Understand the significance of Texas LGBTQ history and its impact on current events and debates
* Conduct archival research related to Texas LGBTQ history
* Analyze primary and secondary sources to construct original arguments about Texas LGBTQ history
* Collaborate with peers to write, produce, and edit a historical podcast episode related to Texas LGBTQ history

Students who achieve a higher level of mastery with a minimum grade of B will also be able to:

* Reflect on the value of the podcast project in contributing to your learning about Texas LGBTQ history

Students who achieve the highest level of mastery with a grade of A will also be able to:

* Design a written proposal pitching your final podcast episode to a potential podcast distributor or public radio station

### Grades

The only letter grade that you will receive in this course will be your final grade, and it will reflect the “bundles” of assignments and requirements you have satisfactorily accomplished in the class. That final letter grade is not an assessment of your intelligence, your abilities, or your value as a person. Rather, the grade reflects what you demonstrated that you learned in the course: no more, no less.

Built into this system is a good deal of choice as to how much you wish to learn and how hard you want to work to demonstrate and apply that learning. You might choose that passing this course with a C is sufficient for your goals—it is perfectly appropriate and worthy of respect for you to make that choice, especially if it allows you to proactively allocate your time to other endeavors at UNT or beyond. If you strive to get an A in this course and maximize your learning, you will be making the choice to challenge yourself, and you should make sure you are in a personal and academic situation to achieve that level of engagement.

#### C Bundle

If you receive “meets expectations” on all of the following assignments, you will pass the course with a grade of C:

* Introduction Paper
* 10 Project Journal Entries
* 1 History of Oak Lawn Collaborative Bibliography Entry
* 3 Research Reports
* Contribution Report
* In-Class Engagement

#### B Bundle

If you receive “meets expectations” on all of the following assignments, you will pass the course with a grade of B:

* Introduction Paper
* 10 Project Journal Entries
* 1 History of Oak Lawn Collaborative Bibliography Entry
* 3 Research Reports
* Contribution Report
* In-Class Engagement
* Final Reflection Essay

#### A Bundle

If you receive “meets expectations” on all of the following assignments, you will pass the course with a grade of A:

* Introduction Paper
* 10 Project Journal Entries
* 1 History of Oak Lawn Collaborative Bibliography Entry
* 3 Research Reports
* Contribution Report
* In-Class Engagement
* Final Reflection Essay
* Written Pitch Proposal

Note: Grades of D will be given only in rare cases where a student meets most of the C Bundle requirements but falls short in one area. Typically, a student who does not meet the requirements of the C Bundle will fail the course.

### Assignments

#### Introduction Paper (Due Wednesday, Aug 20, by 2:00 pm)

All grade bundles. Write a short essay (1 page or less) introducing yourself to me. This assignment is designed to allow me to get to know you better, so tell me your pronouns, whether you have a preferred name that is different from what is on the class roster, where you are from, what your major is and why you are interested in that subject, what you hope to learn in this course, any fears or concerns you have about this course, what grade bundle you plan to pursue in this course, and at least one interesting thing about you. You may also include a photo of yourself, which will help me learn names. Including a photo is optional but greatly appreciated.

#### Project Journal Entries (Due by 2:00 pm each date listed in course schedule)

All grade bundles. This semester you will keep an online project journal in which you will record your individual thoughts and ideas, track your progress on the project, and respond to various assigned reading and listening materials. Each project journal entry should be approximately 500 words in length. I will post a prompt for each journal entry. Your journal entries will be due at 2:00 PM on each due date listed in the course schedule.

#### History of Oak Lawn Collaborative Bibliography (Due Monday, Aug. 25, by 2:00 pm)

All grade bundles. Together, we will build a collaborative bibliography that includes primary and secondary sources about the history of the Oak Lawn neighborhood. You will be responsible for adding one source accompanied by a 1-2 sentence description of the source.

#### Research Reports (Due Sep 29, Oct 6, and Oct 13 by 2:00 pm)

All grade bundles. As your team begins conducting archival research and drafting your episode script, each team member, as individuals, will submit written 500-word Research Reports discussing your team’s progress and detailing the contributions of each team member. During our class meeting, each team, as a group, will provide an oral research report to the rest of the class.

#### Contribution Report (Due Dec 1 by 2:00 pm)

All grade bundles. Each team member will be expected to contribute to the team’s final podcast episode. To earn credit, you will write a 500-word Contribution Report detailing the contributions you made to the final episode. Your Contribution Report must be approved by the other members of your team before submitting it for credit.

#### In-Class Engagement

All grade bundles. This is a project-based course, and as such it is designed to facilitate active engagement. Much of the time we spend together in class will be devoted to discussion and workshopping. For everyone to reap the full benefits of these discussions, you should arrive in class having read or listened to the assignment for that day and/or completed the assigned task for the project. I encourage you to offer your own thoughtful comments about the reading material and your project during our discussions. I also realize that not every student is outspoken. Additional ways to demonstrate your engagement are: taking productive notes during lectures; asking questions during lectures and discussions; answering questions posed by me and by other students; and otherwise being present, alert, and involved in what is happening during class.

To demonstrate your active engagement, you must be present in class. For all grade bundles, you may not miss more than 3 classes during the semester. Being absent for more than 3 classes during the semester will negatively affect your final grade.

#### Final Reflection Essay (Due Dec 8 by 2:00 pm)

A and B grade bundles. To earn an A or a B in this class, you will write a 750-word Final Reflection Essay in which you reflect on how the podcast project contributed to your learning about Texas LGBTQ history.

#### Pitch Proposal (Due Dec 8 by 2:00 pm)

A grade bundle. To earn an A in this class, you will write a 750-word pitch proposal that attempts to sell your podcast episode to a podcast distributor or a public radio station.

## Course Expectations

### Land Acknowledgment

Acknowledging the land is an Indigenous protocol, and it is important to note that the University of North Texas is located on the un-ceded territory of the Wichita and Caddo Affiliated Tribes. It is important to study the long processes that have brought us all to reside on this land, and to seek to better understand our places within these histories.

### Attendance

Research has shown that students who attend class are more likely to be successful. The knowledge and skills you will gain in this course highly depend on your participation in class learning activities. Because of that, I expect you to attend all class sessions unless you are ill or have a valid reason for missing. I plan to track class attendance to help me understand how and when students are engaging in the course. If you are ill or have another valid reason for missing class, please contact me in advance of the absence.

### Communication

Student drop-in hours offer you an opportunity to ask for clarification or find support with understanding class material. I want to be as accessible to you as I can be. I encourage you to visit me to discuss any aspect of this course or whatever else is on your mind. If you cannot visit during drop-in hours, please email me and we will find a time that works for you.

### Inclusivity and Belonging

As members of the UNT community, we have all made a commitment to be part of an institution that respects and values the identities of the students and employees with whom we interact. I view this commitment as encompassing the intersecting identities that make us unique individuals, including, but not limited to, ethnic/racial identity, nationality, sexual identity, gender identity and expression, age, religious/spiritual beliefs, socioeconomic status, body shape/size, physical ability status, and varying points of view. Together we will strive to build a classroom environment that recognizes and acknowledges the impact of stereotypes, prejudice, discrimination, oppression, power, and privilege and work to create a learning atmosphere that embraces and celebrates diversity. If you ever have a concern about the inclusivity of this learning space, please come and talk to me.

### Course Conduct

​I am committed to creating a positive learning environment where diverse perspectives are recognized and valued as a source of strength. I request that you work with me to create a classroom culture based on open communication, mutual respect, and inclusion. As a class we will approach all discussions with respect and civility. Disagreements and debates in academic discourse are expected and welcome, but personal attacks are never OK and will not be tolerated. I strive to ensure an open and welcoming classroom for all students. If I ever miss the mark, please don’t hesitate to come and talk to me. We are all learning together.

### Caregiver Responsibilities

I have great respect for students who are balancing their pursuit of education with the responsibilities of caring for children or other family members. If you run into challenges that require you to miss a class, please contact me. There may be some instances of flexibility I can offer to support your learning.

### School-Life Conflict

Many students face obstacles to their education as a result of work or family obligations or unforeseen personal difficulties. If you are experiencing challenges throughout the semester that are impacting your ability to succeed in this course, or in your undergraduate career more broadly, please reach out to me immediately so that we can work together to form a plan for your academic success. If you are unable to attend my student drop-in hours, please email to set up a time that works for you or to arrange a meeting by Zoom.

### Emergency Notifications and Procedures

UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to Canvas for contingency plans for covering course materials.

### ADA Accommodation Statement

I am committed to the principle of universal learning. This means that our classroom, our virtual spaces, our practices, and our interactions will be as inclusive as possible. Mutual respect, civility, and the ability to listen to and observe others carefully are crucial to universal learning. Any student with particular needs should contact the Office of Disability Access (ODA) at the beginning of the semester. If necessary, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter that you can submit to me. Then you and I can work out the details of any accommodations needed for this course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time; however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. For additional information, refer to the [Office of Disability Access](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access) website (http://www.unt.edu/oda). You may also contact ODA by phone at (940) 565-4323.

### Academic Integrity

The University of North Texas promotes the integrity of learning and embraces the core values of trust and honesty. Academic integrity is based on educational principles and procedures that protect the rights of all participants in the educational process and validate the legitimacy of degrees awarded by the University. In the investigation and resolution of allegations of student academic dishonesty, the University’s actions are intended to be corrective, educationally sound, fundamentally fair, and based on reliable evidence. Students should be aware that “acts of dishonesty” include cheating, plagiarism, furnishing misleading information, and forgery. We will uphold the policies and regulations of the University. A finding of academic dishonesty in this course, which includes the use of AI-generated text as a substitute for your own writing on any assignment, will result in a grade of 0 for the work in question. Students have the right to appeal a finding of academic dishonesty. The full AI policy for this course can be found on Canvas. *Please note that your instructor used absolutely no generative AI in the creation or preparation of this course, and your instructor will use absolutely no AI in any form to assess your assignments or provide feedback on your work.*

## Course Schedule

**Note: If a reading or listening requirement appears on a particular date, please read or listen to it before arriving in class.**

| **Date** | **Topic / Reading or Listening** | **Assignment Due (by 2:00 pm)** |
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| **Week 1: Course Introduction / Gayborhoods and LGBTQ Historic Sites** | | |
| Aug 18 | Welcome to Texas LGBTQ History! | **In Class: Introductions** |
| Aug 20 | Gayborhoods and LGBTQ Historic Sites  ***But We Loved podcast, “The Transformational***  ***Power of Knowing Your Gay History”***  ***(Canvas)***  ***LGBTQ&A podcast, “Cleve Jones: Queer Spaces***  ***After COVID-19” (Canvas)*** | **Due Today by 2:00 pm:**  **Introduction Paper**  **Project Journal Entry #1**  **In Class Today:**  **Discussion of *But We Loved* and *LGBTQ&A* podcast episodes** |
| **Week 2: The History of Oak Lawn** | | |
| Aug 25 | The History of Oak Lawn  ***Research the history of Dallas’s Oak Lawn neighborhood online and begin building collaborative bibliography***  ***Production Job Descriptions (Canvas)*** | **Due Today by 2:00 pm:**  **History of Oak Lawn Collaborative Bibliography Entry**  **In Class Today:**  **Discussion of Oak Lawn history and production jobs** |
| Aug 27 | Brainstorm Session 1: Episode Topic Ideas  ***Out in Oak Lawn podcast, episodes 1-6 (Canvas)*** | **Due Today by 2:00 pm:**  **Project Journal Entry #2**  **In Class Today:**  **Discussion of *Out in Oak Lawn*, brainstorm episode topic ideas, and form production teams** |
| **Week 3: Class Trip to the Oak Lawn Neighborhood in Dallas** | | |
| Sep 1 | Labor Day – No Class Meeting |  |
| Sep 3 | Class Trip to Oak Lawn  ***Finding Our Voice documentary (Canvas)*** | **In Class Today:**  **We will carpool to Dallas for a tour of Oak Lawn led by Robert Emery, member of The Dallas Way board of directors, and Kathy Jack, former manager for Caven Enterprises** |

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| **Week 4: Using the LGBTQ Collections in the UNT Archive** | | |
| Sep 8 | Brainstorm Session 2: Episode Topic Ideas  Using Finding Aids and Requesting Materials | **Due Today:**  **Project Journal Entry #3**  **In Class Today:**  **Brainstorm topic ideas and explore archival finding aids** |
| Sep 10 | Class Visit to UNT Special Collections | **In Class Today:**  **We will meet in Willis Library room 443. Discussion of the LGBTQ archival collections at UNT** |
| **Week 5: Finalize Topics / Podcast Analysis** | | |
| Sep 15 | Finalize Episode Topics  Podcast Analysis – What Works, What Doesn’t?  ***Queering the Lone Star State Podcast, Episode 1***  ***with production script (Canvas)*** | **In Class Today:**  **Finalize episode topics and discuss Queering the Lone Star State podcast episode 1** |
| Sep 17 | Podcast Analysis – What Works, What Doesn’t?  ***Queering the Lone Star State Podcast, Episode 2***  ***with production script (Canvas)*** | **Due Today:**  **Project Journal Entry #4**  **In Class Today:**  **Discuss Queering the Lone Star State podcast episode 2** |
| **Week 6: Podcast Analysis / Podcasting Tools** | | |
| Sep 22 | Podcast Analysis – What Works, What Doesn’t?  ***Queering the Lone Star State Podcast, Episode 5***  ***with production script (Canvas)***  ***“Creating a Narrative Podcast: A Step-by-Step Guide” (Canvas)***  ***“How to Create Narrative Podcasts: Writing Story-Driven Shows” (Canvas)***  ***“My Kingdom for Some Structure” (Canvas)*** | **In Class Today:**  **Discuss Queering the Lone Star State podcast episode 5 and narrative structure** |
| Sep 24 | Podcast Analysis – What Works, What Doesn’t?  ***Queering the Lone Star State Podcast, Episode 6***  ***with production script (Canvas)***  ***Oral History Association, “Oral History Best***  ***Practices” (Canvas)*** | **Due Today:**  **Project Journal Entry #5**  **In Class Today:**  **Discuss Queering the Lone Star State podcast episode 6 and Oral History best practices** |

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| **Week 7: Research Reports** | | |
| Sep 29 | Research Reports (first round) | **Due Today:**  **Research Report #1**  **In Class Today:**  **Teams will give a 15-20 minute update on the progress of their research** |
| Oct 1 | Research Reports (first round) | **In Class Today:**  **Teams will give a 15-20 minute update on the progress of their research** |
| **Week 8: Research Reports** | | |
| Oct 6 | Research Reports (second round) | **Due Today:**  **Research Report #2**  **In Class Today:**  **Teams will give a 15-20 minute update on the progress of their research** |
| Oct 8 | Research Reports (second round) | **In Class Today:**  **Teams will give a 15-20 minute update on the progress of their research** |
| **Week 9: Research Reports** | | |
| Oct 13 | Research Reports (third round) | **Due Today:**  **Research Report #3**  **In Class Today:**  **Teams will give a 15-20 minute update on the progress of their research** |
| Oct 15 | Research Reports (third round) | **Due Today:**  **Script Drafts for Oct. 20 Workshop (at least 2000 words) – upload to shared folder**  **In Class Today:**  **Teams will give a 15-20 minute update on the progress of their research** |

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| **Week 10: Script Draft Workshops** | | |
| Oct 20 | Script Draft Workshop (3 teams)  ***Script Drafts (Shared Folder)*** | **Due Today:**  **Project Journal Entry #6**  **Script Drafts for Oct. 22 Workshop (at least 2000 words) – upload to shared folder**  **In Class Today:**  **Script Workshop** |
| Oct 22 | Script Draft Workshop (3 teams)  ***Script Drafts (Shared Folder)*** | **Due Today:**  **Project Journal Entry #7**  **Script Drafts for Oct. 27 Workshop (at least 2000 words) – upload to shared folder**  **In Class Today:**  **Script Workshop** |
| **Week 11: Script Draft Workshops / Final Script Updates** | | |
| Oct 27 | Script Draft Workshop (2 teams)  ***Script Drafts (Shared Folder)*** | **Due Today:**  **Project Journal Entry #8**  **In Class Today:**  **Script Workshop** |
| Oct 29 | Final Script Updates (all teams) | **Due Today:**  **Final Script (approx. 5000 words) – upload to shared folder**  **In Class Today:**  **Teams Report on Script Changes and Production Plans** |
| **Week 12: Editor Workshop / Episode Manager Meeting** | | |
| Nov 3 | Editor Workshop (all editors) | **In Class Today:**  **Editor Workshop (only editors need to attend)** |
| Nov 5 | Episode Manager Meeting (all episode managers) | **Due Today:**  **Episode Rough Cuts (at least 20 minutes) – upload to shared drive**  **In Class Today:**  **Episode Manager Meeting (only episode managers need to attend)** |

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| **Week 13: Episode Rough Cut Workshops** | | |
| Nov 10 | Episode Rough Cut Workshop (4 teams) | **Due Today:**  **Project Journal Entry #9**  **In Class Today:**  **Episode Rough Cut Workshop** |
| Nov 12 | Episode Rough Cut Workshop (4 teams) | **Due Today:**  **Project Journal Entry #10**  **In Class Today:**  **Episode Rough Cut Workshop** |
| **Week 14: Producing the Final Cut** | | |
| Nov 17 | Episode Manager and Editor Meeting (all episode managers and editors) | **In Class Today:**  **Episode Managers and Editors discuss producing final cuts (only episode managers and editors need to attend)** |
| Nov 19 | Team Meetings (as necessary) | **Due Today:**  **Episode Final Cut (30-40 minutes) – upload to shared drive**  **In Class Today:**  **Team Meetings (as necessary)** |
| **Thanksgiving Break** | | |
| Nov 24 | Thanksgiving Break – No Class Meeting |  |
| Nov 26 | Thanksgiving Break – No Class Meeting |  |
| **Week 15: Project Assessment / Preparations for Podcast Launch Event** | | |
| Dec 1 | Accomplishments, Failures, and Lessons Learned | **Due Today:**  **Contribution Report**  **\*\*Teammate Approvals Due Dec 8\*\***  **In Class Today:**  **Project Assessment** |
| Dec 3 | Podcast Launch Event Preparations | **In Class Today:**  **Prepare for Launch Event** |
| **Final Exam Week: Podcast Launch Event** | | |
| Dec 8 | Podcast Launch Event  History Department Library (Wooten Hall 267) | **Due Today:**  **Teammate Approval for Contribution Report**  **Final Reflection Essay (A and B Bundles)**  **Pitch Proposal (A Bundle)** |