Modernity once appeared to be revolutionizing romantic and familial life, with heteronormative sexuality as one of its central tenets. Modernist narratives often posited challenges to heterosexuality as both a threat to and escape from the monolithic reproduction of passive worker-consumers. However, the present status of 'gay liberation' is inconclusive. Bourgeois-democracies now celebrate queer aesthetics and rhetoric as a key triumph of Liberal capitalism's inclusion and proliferation of identity-positions. On the other hand, capitalism has also incubated and fueled a brand of regressive traditionalism with a radically conservative set of sexual values.

This class will read several novels dealing with queer and non-conforming sexuality. We will also read critical writing and watch films that further interrogate how and why sexual norms are subverted. Authors will include Jean Genet, Audre Lorde, Robert Glück, Chris Chitty, Maya Gonzalez, LIES Collective, and Isaac Julien. In a discussion-based format, we will posit: what is the contemporary status of sexuality as a terrain of struggle? Under what conditions does Desire transcend the laws and confines of socialization? What does the restriction and liberalization of sexuality tell us about the historical arc, and possible terminus, of the capitalist system?

COM 010N is a 2-unit reading course without a writing requirement, taken for Pass/No Pass.