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# Living Queer: The Experience of Embodied Resistance in the University (A Literature Review)

Richard C. Cavanaugh

Loyola Marymount University, [rcavanau@lion.lmu.edu](mailto:rcavanau@lion.lmu.edu)

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Loyola Marymount University

Living Queer: the Experience of Embodied Resistance in the University  
A Literature Review

Cole Cavanaugh

Department of Women's and Gender Studies  
Loyola Marymount University

Faculty Mentor

Dr. Mairead Sullivan  
Department of Women's and Gender Studies  
Loyola Marymount University

**Abstract:**

In this proposal, I am requesting funding for conducting an in-depth literature review of Queer Theory, Feminist Theory, phenomenology, psychoanalysis, and empirical studies on the experiences of those with non-normative identities in the workplace. I will carry out this literature review in preparation for conducting a phenomenological study on the experiences of queer professors in professional settings. This study will focus on understanding experiences of queerness in spaces, temporalities, and behavioral frameworks governed by professionalism. The overall project of this two-part research endeavor is to ground the work of Queer Theory (which often explores queerness in very abstract terms) in the particular lived experiences of queer academics in their everyday navigation of professional settings.

I intend to conduct a phenomenological study of the experience of queer academics navigating professional cultures, expectations, spaces, and temporalities. This study will be grounded in the work of queer theorists on the body, space, time, orientation, and identity. My intention is to conduct this research in two steps: first, I will spend seven weeks conducting an in-depth literature review of works in Queer Theory, psychoanalysis, phenomenology, and Feminist Theory which deal with these topics. I will also use this time to review major cultural narratives of professionalism, focusing on empirical studies of the experiences of women, LGBTQ folks, people with disabilities, and racial and religious minorities in the workplace. The first six of these weeks will be spent reviewing literature which is accessible to me in research databases, libraries, and bookstores. The last week will be spent conducting archival research at the University of Southern California's ONE Archives, then cataloguing and reviewing the collected materials. This will allow me to investigate work done by LGBTQ organizations, publications, and individuals on professionalism, workplace expectations, and respectability at large in recent history.

In the second part of my research, I will generate data on the experiences of queer academics in professionalism by conducting a series of phenomenological interviews with professors at various universities around the United States. My goal in trying to understand the experiences of queer academics with professionalism is to ground some of the theoretical work of Queer Theory in the lived experiences of queer folks. In doing so, I will search for overlaps and gaps between the theory and the realities of the lives of those I will interview, mapping out the limitations or lack thereof of queer political practice founded in Queer Theory. This examination of the potential and the constraints of queer politics and Queer Theory is an ongoing project of queer theorists, and I hope to contribute to the discourse by introducing more specific experiences of queer people in the particularly normative environment of professionalism and examining how these experiences may shed light on the realities and possibilities of queerness.

This proposal details the in-depth literature review that I hope to conduct in preparation for eventually carrying out the aforementioned phenomenological study. My literature review will cover a broader range of topics than I anticipate focusing on in my own study of queerness and professionalism. In particular, I intend to review a broad array of literature which focuses on

the following: identity, the body, performativity, professionalism and disciplinarity, queer epistemology, queer futurity, failure, orientation, respectability, counter-hegemony, and forms of queer resistance. My reason for focusing on such a broad range of topics is to situate my future research appropriately within the scholarly discussions happening today regarding queerness and professionalism. This review will also help me familiarize myself with important theoretical frameworks for understanding these topics (identity, the body, performativity, etc.), offering me more tools to analyze my data and thereby allowing me to see how the experiences of various queer academics may confirm, expand on, resist, or reinvent some of these frameworks. My familiarity with extant texts on these topics will be crucial to my ability to understand and make productive use of the data I will generate in my study of the experiences of queer folks in academia. Attached to the end of this proposal is a running list of texts and papers that I will read as part of my literature review.

As I conduct my literature review, I will write short summaries/analyses of each text I read, then write short analysis papers each week putting the ideas of the texts in dialogue with one another. These essays will be evidence of my research and progress. My work will culminate in a longer literature review paper detailing the development of the ideas in Queer Theory literature which I end up finding most relevant to my future research goals. Throughout this process, I will meet frequently with my faculty mentor, Dr. Mairead Sullivan, to discuss my findings and work through some of the more difficult texts that I will be reading.

During the last week of the grant period, I will conduct archival research at the USC ONE Archives. My experiences working with Dr. Mairead Sullivan as her research assistant have given me some exposure to the steps involved in conducting archival research. Though my specific experience working with Dr. Sullivan has been with the work of cataloguing and organizing materials already gathered from archives, this work has given me valuable insights into the process as a whole, and has helped better prepare me to conduct archival research of my own.

### Research Timeline:

I will conduct this literature review from May 13, 2017 - July 1, 2017 (7 weeks total). In order to cover the costs of housing for the first six weeks (May 13 - June 23), I will apply for the Summer Undergraduate Research Program. Participating in this program will help facilitate the first part of my literature review; as I mentioned before, these first six weeks will be spent reviewing the literature that I have access to via the LMU library, various research databases, and from bookstores. Then, for the following week (June 23 - July 1), I will stay in an Airbnb in the LA area, conducting archival research at the USC ONE Archives. My budget as presented below describes the costs of conducting this research with SURP housing for the first six weeks.

### Budget:

The following gives an approximation of my budget for conducting this seven week literature review. The majority of my budget describes the basic living costs that I will incur staying in Los Angeles, though I will also require funds for transportation and some research materials. The transportation and housing costs are somewhat variable depending on how far in advance I will be booking tickets and housing for my stay, but I have tried to give an accurate estimate of the costs below.

#### Transportation -

\$250: Round trip flight from PDX to LAX (May 13 - July 1)

\$175: Uber transportation from near LMU to USC ONE Archives (for one week)

#### Housing -

\$741: Airbnb near LMU from June 23 - July 1

#### Food -

\$500: Groceries for 7 weeks

#### Materials -

\$300: Cost of literature

Total Costs - approximately \$1,966

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