

## Teaching *In Plain Sight*: Lesson plan for a 75 minute class period

### Course reading and preparation:

- Thomsen, Carly. 2016. "In Plain(s) Sight: Rural LGBTQ Women and the Politics of Visibility." *Queering the Countryside: New Frontiers in Rural Queer Studies*. Mary Gray, Colin Johnson, Brian Gilley, Eds. New York: NYU Press. Pages 244-65.
- Students explore [www.inplainsightdocumentary.com](http://www.inplainsightdocumentary.com) and write a half page reflection about one aspect of the website and how it helps them understand the reading.

### Class schedule:

0:00-0:35 [35 minutes] Screen *In Plain Sight* film

0:35-0:45 [10 minutes] Small group discussion questions

- Students break into small groups to discuss 3 questions
  - All groups should discuss the following question:
    - How does the film help us to better understand the arguments presented in Thomsen's article? In answering this question, make sure you state Thomsen's main argument.
- Professor should allocate two of the following questions to each group:
  - In what ways does the reliance on visibility politics (re)produce metronormativity and create dissonance between national gay rights groups and rural LGBTQ women?
  - In what ways does the flickr.com group reflect metronormativity?
  - Why do national organizations, such as the Human Rights Campaign, emphasize visibility? What political advantages does it offer to these groups? How do such calls for visibility erase other ways of being LGBTQ?
  - In what ways does Equality South Dakota both reproduce and challenge metronormative political strategies?

- How might different values regarding sameness and difference explain dissonance between national and rural strategies regarding visibility?
- How did local coverage frame the Newsome case? How did national media coverage differ? How does Thomsen use this as evidence for her main argument?
- What detail from the Newsome case did the “Justice for Jene!” Facebook page include that the national media coverage omitted? *Why* was it ignored and how does this omission inform assumptions about rural place?
- According to Thomsen, how are calls for visibility and assumptions about social progress mutually constitutive? In what ways do progress narratives rely on common understandings of both time and place? How does Thomsen’s critique of visibility politics disrupt this dominant progress narrative?
- In what ways does *In Plain Sight* effectively communicate and further the arguments presented in Thomsen’s article? Consider the values and limitations of visual representation.
- What assumptions must we disrupt in order to view belonging and inclusion in more robust ways?
- What, after all, is the benefit of disrupting metronormative ideas?

0:45-0:65 [20 minutes] Review these discussion questions as a full class

0:65-0:75 [10 minutes] Students discuss website reflections, guided by the following question:

- How does the material on the website help you make connections between the film and the article?