

Trans Week of Visibility: Queerness in Nature & Society

Turns out, its not just basic biology!

Monday, April 21, 2025 | 5pm- 6pm | Zoom ([Register for the link](#))

What does biology actually say about queerness? Turns out, the biology is more nuanced than we thought! This talk will explore what is currently known and unknown about the biological background for sex, sex determination, gender identity, and sexual orientation in humans and other organisms.



Kris Troy is a PhD candidate in the Molecular, Cellular, and Developmental Biology Program. Currently a National Science Foundation Graduate Fellow (NSF GRFP recipient), Kris has spend their time in graduate school performing biology education research to explore how to remove systemic barriers that prevent students from marginalized communities from succeeding in undergraduate biology programs. Inspired by their own experiences as a non-binary academic, Kris's current work focuses on LGBTQ+ individuals in particular. Over the course of this work, they have become an expert in the biology of sex, gender, and sexual orientation in

both humans and other animals. Now, Kris explores how biologists and other individuals in society think about nature as related to the LGBTQ+ community. Kris' work has been published in CBE-- Life Sciences Education, Nature Communications, and Epigenetics & Chromatin, among other journals.

"Its just basic biology" – a phrase often wielded to enforce rigid notions of sex, gender, and sexuality. But what does biology *actually* say? Turns out, the biology is more nuanced than we thought! Same sex mating behaviors are common in nature and recorded in over one hundred species of mammals, biological sex characteristics exist on a spectrum in humans and other organisms, and biologists struggle to create neat definitions of "male" vs. "female" organisms that work for every example. When faced with data like this, the idea that LGBTQ+ people are somehow not "natural" or "normal" falls apart. As these facts become more and more crucial to our social conversations, it is more important than ever to set the record straight. This talk will explore what is currently known and unknown about the biological background for sex, sex determination, gender identity, and sexual orientation in humans and other organisms. Come learn about biology and society, and prepare to leave surprised by just how queer nature can be!

A Resource Center for Sexual and Gender Diversity event in collaboration with the Department of Molecular, Cellular, and Developmental Biology (MCDB).
Register with this QR Code for the Zoom Link:

