

**Carleton University
Winter 2015
Department of English**

**ENGL 2109A: Gender, Sexuality, and Literature
Queerer than Fiction: Transgressing the Century
Jodie Medd**

We will consider how select literary texts from England, the U.S. and Canada from the 1890s to the present engage with, reflect, resist, and even transform cultural discourses about sexuality and gender through the stories that they tell. We will focus on texts that represent transgressions of normative sexuality and gender—particularly same-sex desire and cross-gender identification—with attention to how gender and sexuality are categorized and conceptualized in particular historical and cultural contexts, including their intersection with race, class, nation, and place. We will consider how the work and lives of particular authors have influenced and been affected by popular notions of sexuality and gender. To provide helpful context and theoretical tools, the course will include readings and lectures that address “queer theory” (critical considerations of sexuality) and the history of sexuality. Throughout the course, we will keep an open debate about the degree to the ways in which particular labels, categories and concepts help or hinder, produce and proscribe understandings and interpretations of gender, sexuality, desire, and identity: “The Love that dare not speak its name”? “Unspeakable secrets”? Homoerotic? Heteronormative? Masculine? Feminine? Invert? Queer? Butch/Femme? Dandy? Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual? Transgender?

Writers may include: Oscar Wilde, Radclyffe Hall, James Baldwin, Audre Lorde, graphic artist Alison Bechdel, Shani Mootoo, Ivan Coyote, and Rae Spoon. Not all of these authors may be included in the final schedule, and others might be added. Please see the final course outline and schedule available by December 2014 for details.

Coursework will include at least formal two essays, informal in-class writing, lecture, full class discussion, and small group discussion.