

Department of English, Carleton University

ENGL 5608F

Fall 2012

*** Preliminary Course Outline / Subject to Change

Studies in Modernism- Queer Theory and the Production of Modernist Sexualities

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Course description:

This course aims to read both foundational and recent queer theory in relation to modernist literature (from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries) and modernist sexualities. It will consider the following inter-related questions: How have key concepts from queer theory relied upon readings of modernist literature and modernist authors? How has queer theory been shaped by modernist literature, and in turn, how does queer theory shape our understandings of modernist literature and sexualities? How might recent debates in queer theory inform our reading of modernist texts and sexualities now? What has queer theory learned from modernist literature, and what might our readings of modernist literature learn from queer theory? To what extent modernist sexualities and queer theory constituted one another? The course will aspire to move between theory readings and modernist literature, not necessarily to “apply” the theory to the literature, but to consider how reading the theory might help us to become more open and curious readers of the literature, and how reading the literature might help us to understand and complicate the ideas and debates of the theory. No previous knowledge of the theory or literature is required.

A selection of issues in queer theory will be drawn from: sexuality, power, and knowledge; performativity; queer temporality; futurity; heteronormativity; homonormativity; queer “negativity;” utopianism; historicizing sexuality; nationalism and citizenship; queer of colour critique; sexual and racial science; queer diaspora; queer liberalism; paranoid v. reparative readings. Theory readings may be selected from (but are not limited to) the following thinkers: Michel Foucault, Judith Butler, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Lee Edelman, José Esteban Muñoz, Heather Love, Elizabeth Freeman, Elizabeth Grosz, Leo Bersani, Judith Jack Halberstam, Michael Warner, Lauren Berlant, Lisa Duggan, Jasbir Puar, David Eng. Literary readings may be selected from (but are not limited to) the following authors: Oscar Wilde, Henry James, E.M. Forster, Virginia Woolf, Radclyffe Hall, Nella Larsen, as well as one or two contemporary authors that take modernist texts or figures as their subject matter, such as Monique Truong’s *The Book of Salt*.

Provisional Course Requirements and Evaluation:

Participation and Online Informal Commentaries: 30%

Seminar Presentation and Paper: 35%

Final Research Paper: 35%

- *Subject to slight change. Please consult the final syllabus for final information.