

Carleton University
Winter 2024 Preliminary Course Outline
Department of English

ENGL 2109A: *Gender, Sexuality, and Literature*

Topic: Queer Feeling, Queer Healing: Four Authors for our Time

Prerequisites: second-year standing or permission of the department

Preclusions: Precludes additional credit for ENGL 2902 (no longer offered)

Wednesday/Friday / 2:35 to 3:55

Format: In-person, not suitable for online students

Instructor: Prof. Jodie Medd

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*****This is a preliminary description only—texts and assignments are subject to change. A complete version will be available closer to the start of the term.*****

Course description:

James Baldwin. Audre Lorde. Billy-Ray Belcourt. Ivan E. Coyote.

Enough said.

But in case you need more: Together we will study four 20th- and 21st-century queer* writers whose lives and work have been transformational and inspirational in their own time and place and beyond. Focusing on these select, influential creators and cultural teachers will allow us to get to know them, selections of their work, and their ongoing livingness. This class will encourage you to cultivate your own curiosity as you relate what interests you about these writers with what interests you about other textual and cultural forms . . . and what interests you about feeling, being, and healing.

Texts will include essays, fiction, poetry, short stories, life writing, performances, film and other media by/about/in kinship with Baldwin, Lorde, Belcourt, and Coyote.

Coursework for Evaluation includes personal written reflections, creative possibilities, and independent opportunities to connect class readings with other cultural creators, content, or events that are in kinship with our primary authors. In class we will focus on various forms of discussion and peer exchange.

Prerequisites: open mind + open heart + willingness to learn in community

*queer here functions as an imperfect umbrella term encompassing 2SLGBTQIA+ identifications/nonidentifications

Course Intentions and Invitations: What are the key learning intentions for this course?

Through practice, written work, and interactive exchange, our course invites you to *pay attention*:

- **to the course materials** by/about the primary authors (literary texts and other media including film, podcasts, videos). Take time to notice and document what feels meaningful to you.
- **to your own response to the materials**: What thoughts and feelings do you notice as you engage with these authors? Where are these responses coming from? What might you learn from them? What challenges you—including your own biases, presumptions, or patterns of thinking/feeling? What is different from your own experience? What feels right and makes sense to you? This involves reflection on the material as well as self-reflection.
- **to process**: You have the opportunity to share, revisit and reflect on your thinking, feeling and writing over the term, including a final Course Reflection at the end of term.
- **to the world around you now**: Where/how do you see the authors and their work reflected in or resonating with our cultural moment, in your current learning (in university or elsewhere), and/or in the material/content you encounter in your life? How can you document and share these connections with the class?
- **to your writing and communication**: Practice articulating your ideas and feelings with clear, coherent, and compelling language that also cultivates your *own* writing voice; use links to other media to convey your thinking and feeling about the course materials. The course provides the chance to respond to and build on feedback from your peers and the instructor/TA.
- **to one another**: Be involved in co-creating a community of learning, exchange, and care that holds space for vulnerability (both for yourself and others). Contribute to fostering a space that is kind, brave, inclusive, curious, and welcoming.
- **to your own presence**: This class invites you to show up and enjoy being present for yourself, the authors and their work, and each other.

Texts: (Details to be finalized)

Books will be available to purchase from Haven Books, 43 Seneca Street on the corner of Sunnyside <http://havenbooks.ca/>. Short walk from campus: follow University Dr. out of campus, cross Bronson to Sunnyside. Turn right on Seneca at stop sign. Order books from Haven online for pickup or shop in store.

James Baldwin, *Giovanni's Room* (Vintage)

James Baldwin, selected essays (available through CU Library/ARES/Brightspace)

Audre Lorde, selected essays and poetry (available through CU Library/ARES/Brightspace)

Billy-Ray Belcourt, *A Minor Chorus* (Penguin Random House: Hamish Hamilton Canada)

Billy-Ray Belcourt, selected poetry (available through CU Library/ARES/Brightspace)

Ivan Coyote and Ray Spoon, *Gender Failure* (Arsenal Pulp Press)

Ivan Coyote, *Care Of: Letters, Connections, and Cures* (McClelland and Steward) * selections only

Evaluation: Requirements, Assignments, and Assessments (tentative: details to be finalized)

1. 3% Introductions posted to two spaces (@ 1% each): Discussion Board (1%) & cuPortfolio (2%) (optional in-take form to Assignments encouraged)
2. 10% Attendance & Participation
3. 10% in-class quizzes and/or in-class writing (to document reading)
4. 20%: 3-4 Kinship Connections in cuPortfolio: best 3 of 4 will be used to calculate your grade; you may opt to just complete 3
5. 40% : 3-4 Personal Reflections (Assignments): best 3 of 4 will be used to calculate your grade; you may opt to just complete 3
6. 5% documented participation in group shares (4 @ 1.25% each): all four count!
7. 10% Final Course Reflection (5%) + Kinship Connection (5%)
8. 2% TBD: sharing work/ideas to Discussion Board

Coursework information: for each of the four authors you will have the opportunity to complete a Kinship Connection (connecting the reading to ideas, texts, contexts outside of the course and relevant to your own life/learning, using cuPortfolio to document the connection) and a Personal Reflection (reflecting on your own engagement with the reading). You need to complete at least three out of four of each opportunity, and you must complete at least one of these assignments for each author. Our study of each author will end with an in-class group share in which you will share the ideas and connections you made in these assignments with a small group. Additional coursework includes a Final Reflection and Kinship Connection (due during exam period), in-class quizzes and in-class writing, and ongoing in-class participation and engagement.