

**Winter 2017**  
**English Department**

ENGL 2109A

GENDER, SEXUALITY, & LITERATURE (Lecture)

Location: Southam 515

Time: Mon & Wed 2:35 to 3:55

Precludes additional credit for ENGL 2902 [1.0] (no longer offered).

Prerequisite(s): 1.0 credit in ENGL at the 1000 level or permission of the department.

Professor J. Medd

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Office Hours: Monday 4:05-5:30 & by appointment

Office: 1804 DT

## ENGL 2109 A: Gender, Sexuality, & Literature: Transgressive Fictions

### Course Description

A century of perverts, pederasts, adulterers, queers, and gender & sexual failures of all kinds!

This course focuses on literature that represent transgressions of normative sexuality and gender—including same-sex desire, pederasty, adultery, incest, inter-racial and cross-class sexuality, 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, colonialism, place, and family. We will explore how select literary texts set in England, the United States, Europe, the Caribbean, Vietnam, 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. Topics will include sexuality and secrecy, sexuality in history, sexual exile, the queer diaspora, trans identities, and more. We will consider how the literature and lives of particular authors have influenced and been affected by changing popular notions of sexuality and gender. To provide helpful context and theoretical tools, the course will include readings and lectures on critical theories of sexuality and gender and on the history of sexuality. Throughout the course, we will keep an open debate about the ways in which particular labels, categories, identities, 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? Pervert? Queer? Butch/Femme? Straight/Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual? Transgender?

### Required Texts

Books are available at Haven Books, 43 Seneca Street (on the corner of Sunnyside) <http://havenbooks.ca/>. Please buy editions indicated (if you are buying new books). Additional readings are available at the reserve desk and/or electronically through ARES, indicated as [ARES] in the reading schedule

Henry James, *The Turn of the Screw* (Dover)

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

Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home* (Mariner, Houghton Mifflin)

Shani Mootoo, *Cereus Blooms at Night* (Emblem)

Monique Truong, *The Book of Salt* (Mariner)

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

### Course Learning Objectives: What will ENGL 2109 give you the opportunity to do?

**Reflect on and challenge** ideas and assumptions about gender and sexuality over history: understand and apply concepts from select key thinkers.

**Pay attention to a literary text through close reading:** read carefully, critically, and observantly to develop a deeper understanding of literary texts and shape your own ideas and interpretations.

**Write better:** practice, revise, and get feedback on your writing. Seek extra help if you need it.

**Make connections, debate, compare, and relate:** make connections within a text, across texts, between small textual details and big ideas, between your ideas and others', between the texts and your life...

**Enjoy** reading, discussing, debating, thinking about, and writing about a diverse range of literary texts, to come to a deeper understanding of them and the ideas, desires, and identities they explore.

**Course Requirements: How will student learning be assessed?**

Students will engage in a variety of class activities and assignments. These activities support the course's learning goals by helping you develop your own skills and critical voice in reading, writing, analysis, and discussion. Expectations and evaluation criteria will be distributed with each assignment.

**Please keep an electronic copy of all of the out-of-class writing you submit to this course.**

**Attendance, Participation & Preparation (10%)**

Taking this class means a commitment to attend all of the classes, complete assignments on time, and participate in class discussions and activities. Attendance and participation are assessed in the following ways:

1) The class format will rely on discussion (both full-class, and small group) and I will take regular attendance. If you take this class, you are committing to coming to class on time, prepared to ask and answer questions and to participate in discussion. Multiple absences will seriously affect your final grade. **Students are allowed up to 4 unexplained absences per term. After this, you may receive zero for your participation mark. In the case of extreme unexplained absenteeism you will lose marks from your final paper. If you miss more than one-third of the classes (up to 8 classes) you may not be allowed to write the exam and thus cannot pass the course. If outstanding circumstances cause you to miss multiple classes, please contact me immediately. Documentation for illness or emergency will be accepted.**

2) To receive credit for your work in **small group discussions**, you may be asked to document (take notes of) your discussions, report back to the class, and either submit the notes to me or post them on cuLearn. Include the full names of all active group participants, so that everyone can receive credit for their work.

3) Periodically, we may do **informal in-class writing** based on the reading to prepare for class discussion. Collected in-class writing will receive some feedback; depending on the assignment, you may simply receive credit for doing the writing (which requires having done the reading), or you may receive a mark. In-class writing will not be announced ahead of time and cannot be made up.

**Quizzes (5%)**

Expect regular short in-class quizzes, based on the day's reading. These will not be announced ahead of time. These are to give you credit for keeping up with the reading and to introduce content for discussion; missed quizzes cannot be made up.

**Two Close Readings/Critical Reflections (25%)**

You will write two close reading/critical reflection (750-1000 words each) to practice your skills in close reading, critical thinking, and writing about literature, and to make connections across the course. You can choose one of the literary texts from the first half of the course (before the break), and one from the second half (after the break). You may submit your reflection on any of the classes when we are discussing the reading that is the basis of your reflection. Reflections will be assessed on the clarity of writing as well as the depth of thought and analysis, and making connections. They are not formal essays, but do require organization and focus. Please follow the "Paper Format Requirements." The reflections will be weighted to most benefit your final mark: 15% for the one that receives the higher mark and 10% for the other.

**This is a mandatory requirement. If you do not complete these reflections, you may not pass the course.**

**Final Essay (30%)**

You will write a final formal essay of about 6-8 pages (2250 to 3000 words), due Friday, April 7 to the English Department Office (DT 1812). Please follow the "Paper Format Requirements." Expectations for the essay will be provided in writing and discussed in class; suggested topics and evaluation criteria will be distributed later in the course. As the final essay is due at the end of the term, there is no space to grant extensions—schedule your time accordingly. If you have an emergency situation, you will need to apply to the registrar for a deferral of your term work (see *Undergraduate Calendar*). **Concerned about your essay-writing skills? The Centre for Student Academic Support (see page 5) provides writing support; book an appointment before the essay due date. You are also welcome to consult with me and the TA for writing support.**

**This is a mandatory requirement; if you do not complete the final essay, you will not pass the course.**

### **Final Examination (30%)**

You will write a scheduled three-hour examination in April. The exam will consist of short answer and essays, and will be based on readings, lectures, and discussions. It will cover all the major authors. Details about exam format and expectations will be distributed in class. **This is a mandatory requirement of the course; if you do not complete the exam, you will not pass the course.**

### **Classroom Policies**

If you cannot attend class because of illness, contact a member of the class to find out about work you missed, and check cuLearn for announcements, handouts, and assignments. Please seek out notes from a classmate *before* you come to me or the T.A. with questions. **Please turn off cell phones during class and use laptops only for taking notes.** Being present in class means being as fully present as you can be. Messaging, internet surfing, and other non-class computer activities are distracting and disrespectful to everyone in the course. If you want to use your electronics for purposes other than taking notes, please stay home so you do not distract other class members. I will speak to you directly if there is a problem.

### **Assignment Submission Policies**

Unless otherwise noted, assignments and essays are due as hard copies at the beginning of class on the due date. Late assignments will lose up to 2% for each day late (not class, but day: a paper due on Monday but submitted on Wednesday may lose up to 4%). Late assignments may also receive minimal written feedback. If you expect to be absent, submit your work by the due date to my mailbox in the English Department Office, 1812 Dunton Tower. There is a drop-box at the office for after-hours submission of student work.

**Please keep an electronic copy of all work that you submit.**

### **Note on Final Grades**

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

**Contacting Me:** see top of page 1 for office hours & contact information

I am always available during my office hours to discuss any aspect of the course. You can visit or call me during office hours. Please note that as my office hours are limited this term you are very welcome to schedule an appointment with me for a different time. You can also send me a message by e-mail or to my office voice mail, any time of day or night and I will respond in good time. E-mail is the most reliable means of contacting me; however, use common sense when e-mailing. Do not expect me to respond to major issues with an assignment the night before it is due!

You can also e-mail and/or see the course T.A. during their office hours or set up an alternative time to meet.

### **Academic Integrity & Plagiarism**

Carleton University has a clear policy on academic integrity, including procedures to address academic misconduct. See the Undergraduate Calendar under “Academic Regulations of the University” Section 14.1: <http://calendar.carleton.ca/undergrad/regulations/academicregulationsoftheuniversity/acadregsuniv14/>

**It is important that students understand and meet academic integrity standards, and are sure they do not violate these standards through plagiarism.** The University Senate defines plagiarism as “*presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.*” This can include:

- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another’s data or research findings;

- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another's works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in "substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs."

Plagiarism is a serious offence that cannot be resolved directly by the course's instructor. The Associate Dean of the Faculty conducts a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include a final grade of "F" for the course. For more information please go to: <http://www2.carleton.ca/studentaffairs/academic-integrity>

**Your close readings/reflections are focused on the primary reading and your own ideas—do not go to other sources.** If you choose to incorporate research into your final paper (details to be discussed), you must cite your sources appropriately. If you have any questions about when and how to cite reference sources, please ask me or the T.A.

### **Intellectual Property**

My lectures and course materials, including presentations, posted notes, assignments and exams remain my intellectual property and are protected by copyright. They are intended for personal use and may not be reproduced or redistributed without my prior written consent. This is also true for student work. Occasionally I may use brief anonymous student examples to address writing issues. I will seek consent to use a longer sample.

### **Academic Accommodation**

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy obligation: write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details see the Student Guide <http://carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/academic/students/>

Religious obligation: write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details see the Student Guide above.

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or [pmc@carleton.ca](mailto:pmc@carleton.ca) for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (if applicable).

**Helpful Student Services** <http://students.carleton.ca/student-support-101/>

The Centre for Student Academic Support (<http://carleton.ca/csas/>) provides free one-on-one writing services support (tutoring) to help even the strongest writers improve their work (<http://carleton.ca/csas/writingservices/>). Book appointments online well before essay due dates. The Centre also offers free programs and services to support student learning, including academic skills development workshops and info sessions, peer helpers, drop-in sessions on study skills, study rooms, etc. 4<sup>th</sup> floor MacOdrum Library

The Academic Advising Centre (<http://carleton.ca/academicadvising/>) offers academic advising for students, including educational planning, registering changes in your program or major, and transfer credits. 302 Tory Building

The Student Experience Office (<http://carleton.ca/se0/>) offers a variety of programs and services for both new students and parents of CU students, to ensure student success. 430 Tory Building

International Student Services Office (<http://www1.carleton.ca/isso/>) 128 University Centre

Carleton Health and Counselling Services (<http://www.carleton.ca/health/>) offers health care, including counselling of personal problems and emotional distress. 2600 Carleton Technology & Training Centre.

## ENGL 2109 A: Reading & Assignment Schedule

### Close Reading/Critical Reflections:

**ONE in the first half of term, submitted before the Winter Break (on a day we discuss your text)**

**ONE in the second half of term, after the break (on a day we discuss your text)**

January 9	Introductions & Expectations
January 11	Discourse & Sexuality: Michel Foucault, “We ‘Other Victorians,’”(3-13) and “The Incitement to Discourse” (17-35), from <i>The History of Sexuality, Volume I</i> [Reserve, ARES, online]
January 16	Henry James, <i>The Turn of the Screw</i> , Chapters I-XII
January 18	James, <i>The Turn of the Screw</i> , finish the book
January 23	James, <i>The Turn of the Screw</i> , discussion concluded
January 25	Gender Performativity: Judith Butler “Imitation and Gender Insubordination,” <i>Inside/Out</i> Butler, “Performative Acts and Gender Constitution,” <i>Theatre Journal</i> [ARES]
January 30	Visit to <i>TRANSACTIONS</i> exhibit, with Cara Tierney, at CUAG (St Patrick’s Building)
February 1	James Baldwin, <i>Giovanni’s Room</i> , Part 1, to p. 71 Michael S. Kimmel, “Masculinity as Homophobia” [ARES]
February 6	Baldwin, <i>Giovanni’s Room</i> , Part II, Chapters 1-3, p. 75-118
February 8	Baldwin, finish the novel
February 13	Documentary, <i>After Stonewall</i>
February 15	Alison Bechdel, <i>Fun Home</i> , Chapters 1-3
February 20 & 22: Winter Break	
February 27	Bechdel, <i>Fun Home</i> , Chapters 4-5
March 1	Bechdel, <i>Fun Home</i> , Chapters 6-7 (finish the book)
March 6	Shani Mootoo, <i>Cereus Blooms at Night</i> , first half of Part I, to p. 52
March 8	Mootoo, <i>Cereus Blooms at Night</i> , finish Part I
March 13	Mootoo, <i>Cereus Blooms at Night</i> , Part II
March 15	Mootoo, <i>Cereus Blooms at Night</i> , Parts III to V (finish the novel)
March 20	Monique Truong, <i>The Book of Salt</i>
March 22	Truong, <i>The Book of Salt</i>
March 27	Truong, <i>The Book of Salt</i>
March 29	Truong, <i>The Book of Salt</i>
April 3	Coyote and Spoon, <i>Gender Failure</i>
April 5	Coyote and Spoon, <i>Gender Failure</i>
April 7	<b>Final Paper Due (submit hard copy to English Department Office, DT 1812)</b>