

**Winter 2018**  
**English Department**

ENGL 2109A

GENDER, SEXUALITY, & LITERATURE (Lecture)

Location: 3101 Canal Building\* confirm on Carleton Central

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

Prerequisite(s): second-year standing or permission of the department

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

Professor J. Medd

Phone: 613 520 2600, ext. 2329

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Office Hours: Wed 12:00-1:00 & Thurs 11:30-1:30 & by appt.

Office: 1804 DT

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

### Course Description

This course focuses on literature that represents transgressions of normative sexuality and gender—including same-sex desire, pederasty, adultery, incest, inter-racial and cross-class sexuality, and transgender identification—with attention to how gender and sexuality are categorized and conceptualized in specific historical and cultural contexts, including their intersection with race, class, nation, colonialism, place, religion, and family. With a focus on the 1950s to now, we will explore how select literary texts set in England, the United States, Europe, the Caribbean, Vietnam, Canada, and transnationally engage with, reflect, resist, and transform cultural discourses about sexuality and gender through the stories that they tell. Topics will include sexuality and secrecy, sexuality in history, sexual exile, coming out narratives, the queer diaspora, queer of colour, trans identities, and more. We will consider how the literature and lives of select 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? Sissy? Queer? Butch/Femme? Straight/Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual? Transgender?

### Required Texts (listed in the order we will read them)

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

Jeanette Winterson, *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* (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)

Elisha Lim, *100 Crushes* (Koyana Press)

Books will be 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

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

**Reflect on and challenge** ideas, concepts, assumptions, and representations of gender and sexuality

**Understand and apply** historical contexts and key theoretical concepts of gender and sexuality.

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

**Write more, write better:** practice 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 details and big ideas, between your ideas and others', between the texts and your own knowledge or experiences

**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, concepts, 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 out-of-class writing you submit to this course.**

### **Requirements and Assessment at a Glance**

Attendance, Participation, & Preparation (includes in-class group discussions & in-class writing): 10%

Short in-class Quizzes: 5% (usually 6 quizzes/term, dropping the lowest mark)

Five Short Critical Reflections (based on close readings): (2 X 5% + 2 X 15% + 1 X 10 = 50%)

Final (Self-)Reflection: 5%

Final Examination: 30%

### **Attendance, Participation & Preparation: 10%**

Taking this class means a commitment to attend all 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 additional marks from your final grade. 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. Please 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. Informal 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. Quizzes give you credit for keeping up with the reading and help introduce content for discussion. Missed quizzes cannot be made up; however, I will drop the lowest quiz mark you receive (including 0 for absence).

### **Five Short Critical Reflections: 50% (2 X 5%, 1 X 10%, 2 X 15% )**

You will write five critical reflections (750 to 1000 words) to practice your skills in close reading, critical thinking, and writing about literature, and explore other ways of responding to literature. Submission as follows:

1. in-class writing on *Giovanni's Room*, January 24: 5%
2. *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* (including pre-writing exercise), submitted on February 14: \*10 or 15%
3. Submitted on or before March 14 (on *Fun Home* or *Cereus Blooms at Night*): 10 or 15%
4. Your choice of another text in second part of the term: 10 or 15%
5. Your choice of another text in second part of term that may be a creative response (with some interpretation of your work) or an informal reflection that links with a non-English disciplinary approach: have fun! (5%).

\* The lowest assessment of reflections 2, 3, 4, will be worth 10%; the other two will be 15% each

You may submit reflections 3-5 on any class when we are discussing the text that is the basis of your reflection. You may submit 4 & 5 (your choice of critical and creative reflections) in any order in the second half of term; they will be assessed together at the end of term.

You cannot write on the same text twice; you cannot write on both *Gender Failure* and *100 Crushes*.

Reflections will be assessed for the clarity of writing and depth of thought and analysis. They are not formal essays, but do require organization, structure, primary citation, focus, and editing. Expectations will be discussed in class. Please follow “Paper Format Requirements.”

**This is a mandatory requirement and the major writing component of the class: miss one reflection = 0/5 or 0/10; miss two (or more) = you cannot pass the course.**

### **Final (Self-)Reflection: 5%**

At the end of term you will submit a final, brief reflection (500 to 750 words). It will be a self-reflection on your work and progress of your thinking over the course of the term.

### **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. You will be expected to address all the literary authors on the course and demonstrate understanding of the theory & historical contexts. Details about exam format and expectations will be distributed in class.

**This is a mandatory requirement of the course; if you do not write the exam, you cannot pass the course.**

### **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 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 12.0: <http://calendar.carleton.ca/undergrad/regulations/academicregulationsoftheuniversity/academicintegrity/>

**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: <https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Academic-Integrity-Policy1.pdf>

**Your reflections are focused on the primary reading and your own ideas—do not go to other sources of criticism on the text.** You are welcome, when indicated in the assignment, to make direct connections to your other courses or previous knowledge. If you do go to outside research on the text, you must cite your sources appropriately. If you have questions about when and how to cite reference sources, please ask me or the T.A.

## **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/seo/>) 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

- January 8 Introductions & Expectations
- January 10 **Discourse & Sexuality:** Michel Foucault, “We ‘Other Victorians,’” (3-13) and “The Incitement to Discourse” (17-35), *The History of Sexuality, Volume I*  
[p. 3-13 only available through ARES; p. 17-35 available online. Full book at Reserves desk]
- January 15 **Gender Performativity:** Judith Butler, “Imitation and Gender Insubordination,” *Inside/Out* [ARES]  
Butler, “Performative Acts and Gender Constitution,” *Theatre Journal* [ARES]  
Ivan Coyote, “Imagine a Pair of Boots” [ARES]
- January 17 **Queer (Literary) History Before Stonewall**  
Jeffrey Weeks, Ch. 6, “The construction of homosexuality,” *Sex, Politics and Society* [ARES]  
\*start reading *Giovanni’s Room!* Need to read to p. 118 by next Wednesday’s in-class writing!
- January 22 James Baldwin, *Giovanni’s Room* Part 1, to p. 71  
Michael S. Kimmel, “Masculinity as Homophobia” [ARES]
- January 24 Baldwin, *Giovanni’s Room*, Part II, Chapters 1-3, p. 75-118 \* #1: IN-CLASS WRITING \*
- January 29 Baldwin, *Giovanni’s Room*, finish the novel
- January 31 Baldwin, *Giovanni’s Room*, discussion completed [\*start reading the next novel!]
- February 5 Jeanette Winterson, *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus)
- February 7 Winterson, *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* (Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua)
- February 12 Winterson, *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* (Judges, Ruth)
- February 14 Documentary: *After Stonewall* \* #2: CRITICAL REFLECTION ON ORANGES DUE \*
- February 19 & 21: Winter Reading Break
- REMINDER: Submit reflections on three different texts in the second half of the course. At least one critical reflection is due by or before March 14 (#3: *Fun Home* or *Cereus Blooms*). Of the remaining two, one may be creative, informal, and/or rely on another discipline. Do not write on both *Gender Failure* and *100 Crushes*.**
- February 26 Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home*, Chapters 1-3
- February 28 Bechdel, *Fun Home*, Chapters 4-5
- March 5 Bechdel, *Fun Home*, Chapters 6-7 (finish the book) \* last day for *Fun Home* reflection
- March 7 Shani Mootoo, *Cereus Blooms at Night*, Part I
- March 12 Mootoo, *Cereus Blooms at Night*, Part II
- March 14 Mootoo, *Cereus Blooms at Night*, Parts III to V \* last day for *Cereus Blooms* reflection
- March 19 Monique Truong, *The Book of Salt*, Chapters 1-6 (to p.63)
- March 21 Truong, *The Book of Salt*, Chapters 7-12 (p.133)
- March 26 Truong, *The Book of Salt*, Chapters 12-18 (p.189)
- March 28 Truong, *The Book of Salt*, Chapters 19-24 (finish the novel) \* last day for *Book of Salt* reflection
- April 2 Ivan Coyote and Rae Spoon, *Gender Failure*
- April 4 Coyote and Spoon, *Gender Failure* \* last day for *Gender Failure* reflection  
Elisha Lim, *100 Crushes*
- April 9 Elisha Lim, *100 Crushes* \* last day for *100 Crushes* reflection  
**FINAL (SELF-)REFLECTION DUE!** (or as late as April 11, to cuLearn)
- April 11 Follows Friday Schedule: No class! Absolute last day for final (Self-)Reflection!