

**Carleton University
Winter 2022
Department of English**

ENGL 2109a: Gender, Sexuality, and Literature

Prerequisites: second-year standing or permission of the department.

Preclusions: ENGL 2902 (no longer offered)

Time: Monday and Wednesdays, 8:30-9:50 am (lectures will be posted at these times)

Location: fully online at Brightspace

Format: asynchronous

Instructor: Dr. Esther Post

Email: estherpost@cunet.carleton.ca

Office hours: weekly via Zoom (day TBD) and by appointment

Course description:

In this course, we will study and critically analyze literature that represents a diverse array of marginalized gender and sexual identities. Drawing upon a wide range of critical discourses on gender, sex, and sexuality, we will examine how gender and sexuality is constructed in literature, and will explore issues of gender identity, sexual identity, sexual relations and experiences, desire, the body, and the intersections between. We will investigate the various cultural, religious, political, and historical forces that have shaped gender and sexual norms, and will consider the ways in which literature of the last century reproduces and/or resists such norms. All course content, included recorded lectures, will be delivered online at CULearn asynchronously.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Vladimir Nabokov, *Lolita* (novel)

Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomedy* (graphic novel)

André Aciman, *Call Me By Your Name* (novel)

Alice Walker, *The Color Purple* (novel)

Philip Roth, *Portnoy's Complaint* (novel)

Waawaate Fobister, *Agokwe* (play) [ARES]

Jeanette Winterson, "The Poetics of Sex" (short story) [ARES]

Ivan Coyote, "No Bikini" (short story) [ARES]

Danez Smith, selected poems (links provided)

*The five required novels can be purchased new at Chapters-Indigo, Amazon, and any other bookstore; they can also be purchased used from abebooks/Canada. All other readings, including plays, short stories, and poetry, will be available online through Brightspace and/or ARES.

Learning Outcomes:

This course will teach students how to:

- critically read, interpret, and analyze literature
- understand and implement terminology related to gender, sexuality, and literature
- examine and challenge representations of gender and sexual identity in society and in literature
- place literature in its important historical, cultural, and political contexts
- write critically about literature

Course Format:

This course is fully online (at Brightspace) and fully asynchronous; however, students must remain up to date with the readings, lectures, and assignments (see more info highlighted below). At each scheduled class time, I will post recordings of lectures and accompanying Powerpoint slides for each assigned text and the specific topic for that class. Lectures will be recorded in small segments, usually around 20 minutes each. While classes are scheduled for 80 minutes, I will NOT be posting an eighty-minute lecture for each class, as I will allot time for students to take notes while listening to my recorded lectures and to post to discussion forums so that we may try to digitally replicate the actual classroom experience of lively discussions, debates, and participation from students. **It is imperative that students keep up to date with the readings, lectures, and assignments, complete the assigned readings before our scheduled class time, and meet assignment deadlines.** Ideally, students will use our scheduled class time to view lectures so that they can stay up to date.

Technical Requirements:

Students will need a computer with high-speed Internet access to view videos, lectures, and slides, and to post discussion forum posts and submit assignments. Ideally, students will have a webcam and mic to meet with the instructor and/or other students virtually.

Evaluation

Weekly Discussion Forums/Participation (ongoing; two posts per week)	25%
Passage analysis (3-4 pages; due Mon. Jan. 31)	15%
Outline for final essay/project (due Wed. Mar. 23)	10%
Final essay/project (due April 11)	25%
Final exam (formally scheduled by the university during the exam period in April)	25%

Important notes:

- 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
- If one of your assignments is lost, misplaced, or not received by the instructor, you are responsible for having a backup copy that can be submitted immediately upon request.

- All course materials, including but not limited to recorded lectures, Powerpoint slides, assignments, and discussion prompts are copyright of the instructor and are made available only to students registered in the course. Any reproduction or distribution of any of the course material is strictly prohibited.

COURSE POLICIES:

Assignment Submission:

- All assignments MUST be submitted as Word documents. Those submitted as PDFs, shared Google files, or any other form will NOT be accepted, nor will they be graded.
- Please note that as a Carleton University student, you have free access to Microsoft Word 360 (<https://carleton.ca/its/help-centre/get-microsoft-office-for-students/>).
- All essays and other written assignments must be double spaced, formatted in Times New Roman font 12, with one-inch margins on all sides, and must conform to MLA style and documentation guidelines. Please consult the MLA style and documentation guidelines at https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_formatting_and_style_guide.html.

Late Policies and Due Dates:

- Weekly Participation via Discussion Forum Posts (25%): Your active participation in the course through weekly discussion forums is absolutely essential to your success in the course. You are expected to regularly post to forums on a weekly basis, and specifically to the prompts I will post each week; you are also expected to post responses to other students' posts to demonstrate your engagement with your peers' ideas. While forums will be open for the entirety of the course, posts must be made on time each week to gain full marks for participation. Late posts will have a significant impact on your participation grade. More detailed information about discussion forum participation will be posted to Brightspace and discussed during the first few classes.
- Given the unprecedented circumstances due to COVID, there will be no late penalties for major assignments; **however, assignments which are submitted 5 days past the due date will be given a grade, but may receive few or no comments/feedback.** I urge you to please do your best to keep up with the assignment schedule and submit them on time so that you can get detailed feedback from me. **Please note that the university has mandated that all final fall term work (including your final essay) is due by Apr. 11, 2022; assignments submitted after Apr. 11 will not be accepted without prior approval for a deferral – no exceptions.**

Plagiarism: There will be a policy of ZERO TOLERANCE for 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 form of intellectual theft. It is a serious offence that cannot be resolved directly with the course's instructor. The Associate Deans of the Faculty conduct 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 failure of the assignment, failure of the entire course, or suspension from a program. For more information please go to: <https://carleton.ca/secretariat/wp-content/uploads/Academic-Integrity-Policy.pdf> and <https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/>.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS and CLASSROOM NETIQUETTE

- Students are expected to have read the assigned material before our scheduled class time
- **Brightspace:**
 - You will be required to use Brightspace on a regular basis, as all relevant documents related to our course, including the syllabus, assignment instructions, lectures, etc. will be uploaded to this page. **Most importantly, treat this syllabus as your bible for this course**, as it provides all necessary information in terms of reading and assignment schedules, submission policies, etc.
 - You should also **frequently check the announcements** on our course page at Brightspace, as this is where I will post important announcements and information
- **“classroom” netiquette/discussion forums/chats:** I will be discussing this in more detail in my intro lectures, but these are some of the most important principles:
 - Always remember that there are real people behind screens and be respectful
 - No harassing, racist, homophobic, sexist, or transphobic language will be tolerated
 - Avoid using all caps, as it often comes across as shouting at and/or bullying
 - Emoticons can be helpful to convey tones, but avoid using them too much
 - Avoid dominating discussions online so that everyone gets the chance to participate
 - Always read over your posts before sending them
 - Be careful when using humour or sarcasm and ensure that your tone is properly conveyed
 - Keep an open mind, so that you are prepared to have your thinking challenged
 - Debates are certainly welcome, but again, ensure that you are respectful of others' opinions

Contact with the instructor:

- The best way to get in contact with me is by email (EstherPost@cunet.carleton.ca). I check email at least once a day, and will respond to emails within 48 hours, though it could take longer on weekends.

- When emailing, please be professional. Do not use text speak, do not begin your email with an informal greeting such as “hey!”, and identify yourself by your full name as well as the course code. Remember you are not sending an informal text message to a friend, but a formal email to your professor.
 - Emails should be reserved for clear, precise questions; they should not be used to ask questions such as, “what should I read for next week?” or anything else that simply requires you to read the syllabus.
- My office hours will be offered by Zoom for one hour per week (day and time TBD). Otherwise, I am available to meet with students at another time by request. Please email me if you would like a meeting or have any questions or concerns.

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 accommodation regarding a formally-scheduled final exam, you must complete the [Pregnancy Accommodation Form](#).

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 [click here](#).

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 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).

Survivors of Sexual Violence

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and where survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton’s Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: <https://carleton.ca/equity/focus/sexual-violence-prevention-survivor-support/>

Accommodation for Student Activities

Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation will be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. 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. <https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>

Reading Schedule (*subject to change)

Week 1:

Mon. Jan. 10: Introduction to course, overview of syllabus; plagiarism

Wed. Jan. 12: overview of important terms; Michel Foucault, “We ‘Other’ Victorians” and excerpts from “The Repressive Hypothesis” [ARES]

Week 2:

Mon. Jan. 17: *Lolita**

Wed. Jan. 19: *Lolita*

Week 3:

Mon. Jan. 24: *Lolita*

Wed. Jan. 26: *Fun Home**

Week 4:

Mon. Jan. 31: *Fun Home* *Passage Analysis due*

Wed. Feb. 2: *Fun Home*

Week 5:

Mon. Feb. 7: *Call Me By Your Name* *

Wed. Feb. 9: *Call Me By Your Name*

Week 6:

Mon. Feb. 14: *Call Me By Your Name*

Wed. Feb. 16: Essays by Audre Lorde (“The Erotic as Power”), Adrienne Rich (“Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence”) and Judith Butler (excerpts from selected essay) [ARES] *

Mon. Feb. 21- Fri. Feb. 25: READING WEEK (NO CLASSES)

Week 7:

Mon. Feb. 28: Walker, *The Color Purple**

Wed. Mar. 2: *The Color Purple*

Week 8:

Mon. Mar. 7: *The Color Purple*

Wed. Mar. 9: Roth, *Portnoy's Complaint* *

Week 9:

Mon. Mar. 14: *Portnoy's Complaint*

Wed. Mar. 16: *Portnoy's Complaint*

Week 10:

Mon. Mar. 21: Winterson, "The Poetics of Sex" (short story) [ARES] *

Wed. Mar. 23: "The Poetics of Sex" *Final Essay/Project Outline due*

Week 11:

Mon. Mar. 28: Fobister, *Agokwe** (play) [ARES] *

Wed. Mar. 30: *Agokwe*

Week 12:

Mon. Apr. 4: Ivan Coyote, "No Bikini" * (short story) [ARES]

Wed. Apr. 6: Danez Smith, "the 17-year-old and the gay bar," "sometimes I wish I felt the side effects," and "& even the black guy's profile reads 'sorry, no black guys'" (poems)

Mon. Apr. 11: FINAL CLASS; course review and exam prep *Final Essay/Project due* *All outstanding assignments must be submitted by 11:59 pm, Mon. Apr. 11*