


Carleton University
Fall 2026 Course Outline
Department of English

ENGL 5900F/4607A & WGST 5901D/4812C

Topic: Queer/ Feminist/ Life/ Writing

Prerequisites: ENGL 4607A/WGST4812C: fourth year standing in appropriate ENGL/WGST program
ENGL5900F/WGST5901C: enrolled in ENGL or WGST graduate program
Or permission of the department

Format: In-person, not suitable for online students

Instructor: Prof. Jodie Medd  [hear my name](#)

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Carleton University is located on the traditional, unceded and un-surrendered Territory of the Anishinaabe Algonquin Nation, the customary keepers and defenders of the Kichi Sibi (Ottawa River) watershed. Carleton occupies this land as a settler institution, a result of an economy of property and allocation of public space facilitated by the nation-state of Canada. As a settler whose ancestors came as uninvited visitors to this land, my responsibility is to work to develop right relationship to this land, including the earth, water, and non-human plants and animals, and to the Indigenous peoples who are the original and ongoing stewards of this land.

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

Welcome to our seminar!

Course Description

This course takes queer/feminist/life/writing as a suggestive constellation for exploring a range of hybrid texts that include elements of biofiction/biostory, autobiography, memoir, creative nonfiction, the personal essay, critical fabulation, autotheory, and more. We will study twentieth- and twenty-first-century texts—many by writers working across literary and academic forms—to consider how authors have engaged with, innovated, and disrupted forms and genres for narrating feminist and queer lives; how they have blended personal writing with political, theoretical, philosophical and academic discourse; how their texts mattered to the moment of their composition; and how and why they matter now. The writers on our course are attuned to how individual, embodied experience is formed—and de-formed—by structures of power and narrative modes. Their work engages these connections through formal innovations to make us perceive, think, and read differently. Students will have leeway to research, write, and present on areas of interest to them, from literary form and style to theoretical frameworks and socio-cultural-political issues. Students will have the option to develop a final creative/critical project of personal interest to them, inspired by the hybrid life/writing from the course.

Content may include (but is not limited to) childhood; parenthood; loss and grief; Black life and the afterlife of slavery; racial capitalism; trans narratives; queer Indigeneity and the Canadian colonial project; illness narratives; disability justice; subjectivity, representation and the writing “I;” community and care; lifewriting and the archives; the literary institution and the work of empire; intimate partner abuse; trauma and recovery; art, academia and activism; genrication . . . and more.

Expect authors/creators on the course to include: Billy-Ray Belcourt, Dionne Brand, Saidiya Hartman, Audre Lorde, Carmen Maria Machado, Maggie Nelson, Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, Paul B Preciado, Christina Sharpe, Joshua Whitehead, and Virginia Woolf.

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

Through reading, written work, interactive exchange, independent research, and preparing for presentations and class discussion, our course invites you to:

- 1) ***pay attention to***
 - the literary texts
 - your writing and communication
 - one another
 - your own presence
- 2) ***practice and develop key skills in***
 - communication: written and oral, formal and informal
 - teaching and group facilitation: presenting material and leading discussion
 - group engagement/collegial peer exchange
 - conducting and curating independent research
 - time management/project management
 - self-assessment and self-reflection; giving and receiving feedback
- 3) ***gain familiarity and facility with***
 - a range of life writing (particularly auto/biographical) genres and forms
 - past, recent, and current issues and ideas related to select forms of auto/biographical writing (20th-21st c)
 - select terms and concepts in contemporary feminist, queer, and intersectional analysis and critique
- 4) ***appreciate, enjoy, and care about***
 - what you read and research
 - what and how you write
 - the members of our class

Community Agreements and Guidelines

Early in the course we will discuss and establish Community Agreements & Guidelines for our learning environment. These will be posted in Brightspace and refined over the term if necessary.

Course Requirements & Assessments

1. Research Seminar Presentation and write-up
2. Written Reflections & Reflection Presentation (TBD: and/or in-class informal writing)
3. Final Research-Creation Project

#1-3: highest assessment = 35%, second highest = 30%, third highest = 25%

4. Class Attendance and Participation 10%