

**** tentative course description****

Jodie Medd

ENGL 4003A/5610H / WGST 4812 & 5901A (Fall)

Queer Historical Fiction & Temporal Re/Imaginings

This course explores how queer novels engage with historical fiction, historiographic metafiction (*definitions below), and related genres to reflect critically and creatively on history, historiography, memory, and time. We will ask how and why queer novels of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries return to, rework, (re)imagine, revise, and complicate ways of knowing, thinking, and feeling about the past, “history,” and temporality (including the future!). In this context, we will consider how these novels represent and explore queerness in relation to key historical events and personages; subject formation under historical processes of colonialism, slavery, racialization, capitalism, and the biopolitical production, categorization, and regulation of bodies and conceptualizations of “the human”; historical periodization; literary history; historiography; time; biography and memoir; ancestral memory and queer genealogies; and the discursive production, regulation, and proliferation of nonnormative sexualities and genders, “then,” “now,” and yet to come. Theoretical frames will include considerations of literary genre; queer theory considerations of time, history, and historiography; theorizing and feeling the archive; and interactions among feminist, queer, sexuality, (post)colonial and critical race studies. The course will emphasize supportive peer learning and an openness to interdisciplinary exchange. These are engaging, moving novels with a wide affective and stylistic range that I hope will be pleasurable and absorbing for us to read, discuss, and learn about together.

*Queer literature: literature that addresses non-normative sexualities and genders, and/or critically engages with issues of gender and sexuality. In this course, we’ll attend to homoerotic desire and/or cross-gender or transgender identifications, with attention to the racialization, nationalization, and colonization of gender and sexuality.

*Historical fiction: fiction set in the past that often relies on established ideas about a particular moment of history and the types of human subjects in that period.

*Historiographic meta-fiction: fiction that invokes the historical past, while self-consciously questioning how history is written and represented (historiography), and how we “know,” access, and interpret the past.

Our novels also engage in additional relevant genres including the neo-slave narrative, neo-Victorian fiction, speculative fiction, the gothic, historical romance, and more.

Novels will most likely include (in this order):

Virginia Woolf, *Orlando* (Oxford: 9780199650736)

Jordy Rosenberg, *Confessions of the Fox* (Random House: 9780399592287)

Sara Collins, *The Confessions of Frannie Langton* (Harper Collins: 97814434561890)

Jewelle Gomez, *The Gilda Stories* (City Lights: 9780872866744)

Sarah Waters, *Tipping the Velvet* (Little, Brown and Company: 9781860495243)

Monique Truong, *The Book of Salt* (Mariner: 9780618446889)

Robert Jones, Jr., *The Prophets* (G.P. Putnam’s Sons: 9780593329023)

*reading list is tentative and will be finalized closer to the class start date

*All novels will be available through Haven Book (and on reserve at the library). Any novels published in e-format will also be available online through the library.

Selected additional/suggested theory readings *may* also include work by:

Aliyyah Abdur-Rahman, Carolyn Dinshaw, Laura Doan, Lee Edelman, David Eng, Roderick Ferguson, Elizabeth Freeman, Jack Halberstam, Saidiya Hartman, Annamarie Jagose, José Esteban Muñoz, Christopher Nealon, Christina Sharpe, Siohban B. Somerville, C. Riley Snorton, Ann Laura Stoler, and Valerie Traub.

Course Requirements:

Active participation (including discussion board), regular written reflections, research seminar presentation and facilitation of discussion, final research paper (research expectations adjusted if access to library materials is limited).

Course Delivery:

This will be a synchronous online course, but will we modify class meetings to allow asynchronous time to participate on the discussion board and to avoid “Zoom fatigue.”