

FACULTY OF ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
COURSE OUTLINE

ENGLISH 607.90
Queer Young Adult Literature & Theory

Fall 2019
M. 9:30am-12:15pm | SS 1015

Instructor: Dr. Derritt Mason

Office: SS 1112

Phone: 403-220-3395

E-mail: derritt.mason@ucalgary.ca

Office hours: M. 1:30-2:30pm, or by appointment

Course Description:

It would be an understatement to say that we are currently witnessing an explosion of young adult (YA) titles featuring LGBTQ2S+ characters. YA author Malinda Lo reports that the number of such books released annually by mainstream publishers has more than quadrupled over a span of two decades, surging from fewer than twenty titles per year in the early 2000s to over 100 in 2018. Readers are now able to select from a rapidly growing, intersectional body of titles that depart from the gay problem novels of the twentieth century—which largely featured white, middle-class, male protagonists—and engage thoughtfully with race, class, religion, disability, mental health, and Indigeneity. Moreover, queer YA titles span form and genre, and now include graphic narrative, fantasy, science fiction, memoir, and poetry.

This class aims to equip students with an array of theoretical and methodological strategies for critically reading, interpreting, and writing about queer YA literature and culture, a toolkit that accounts for the ever-expanding formal and thematic diversity of queer YA as well as the development in recent years of queer childhood and adolescent theory. This class takes a theoretically broad and principally contemporary approach to its topic, aiming to help students become thoughtful readers of YA who are conversant in how the genre speaks to other popular media (e.g. video games, television) at the intersection of adolescence and queerness.

Required Readings:

Fiction:

John Donovan, *I'll Get There. It Better Be Worth the Trip.* (1969)

Justina Ireland, *Dread Nation* (2018)

Nina LaCour, *We Are Okay* (2018)

David Levithan, *Two Boys Kissing* (2013)

Anna Marie McLemore, *When the Moon Was Ours* (2016)

Adam Silvera, *They Both Die at the End* (2017)

Joshua Whitehead, *Jonny Appleseed* (2018)

Theory:

Roberta Seelinger Trites, *Disturbing the Universe: Power and Repression in Adolescent Literature* (2000)
+ An assortment of critical articles (see reading schedule for details)

Other Media:

Big Mouth (Netflix, 2017-)

Caper in the Castro (video game, 1989)

Assignments & Evaluation:

This class is structured as a term-long **inquiry project**, which consists of the following components:

1. Reading & Research Journal (20%)
2. Critical Text Overview (15%)
3. Seminar Presentation (10%)
4. Capstone Project (40%)

Reading & Research Journal (20%)

Throughout the term and on an alternating biweekly schedule, you will log responses to and reflections on our course texts, in-class discussions, and capstone progress. Your entries should be informal, written in the first person, and focused on making observations, raising questions, and proposing avenues of inquiry instead of offering formal arguments. Your entries will also be used as the basis for in-class discussion. You are encouraged to include photos (screencaps and hand-written marginal notes, for example), collect article links and PDFs, and gather any other objects of interest for your research and writing. This journal will be invaluable to the completion of your term project, so you are encouraged to maintain a regular, consistent journal-writing schedule!

All entries must be shared on your personal Padlet by Friday at 5pm *before* the class on your assigned week, and I will grade three of them without prior notice. Your final grade will reflect the quality and consistency of these entries, as well as the overall completeness of the journal, which will be worth 5%. A third of a grade will be deducted from this total per missing entry. Late entries (i.e. those submitted after 5pm on Friday) will result in an automatic deduction of a third of a grade (i.e. A- to B+). Extensions will be permitted only under exceptional/emergency circumstances.

Critical Text Overview (Max. 1250 words, 15%)

In advance of your seminar presentation, you will select and discuss **two peer-reviewed sources** related to your inquiry topic (i.e. scholarly journal articles or book chapters; *not* reviews, dissertations/theses, or magazine/newspaper/web articles). This is *not* an annotated bibliography, in which you would focus on summarizing these texts. Instead, I'm asking you to put these sources into conversation with one another, thinking about how they fit (or don't fit) together and shed (or don't shed) new light on your primary text. What are the key themes and issues described in these sources? Do they seem to agree or disagree with one another? How do they engage (or invite engagement) with your inquiry project text? Have they altered the way you read and understand this text? If so, how?

Seminar Presentation (Approx. 20 min, 10%)

The goals of your presentation are to provide the class with (1) your take on the week's topic based on the assigned readings, and (2) highlights from your own research findings (i.e. from your critical research overview). A good presentation will function as both informal mini-essay and conversation starter. In other

words, you should propose some kind of working thesis about your topic, but you should also raise questions that you would like to pose to the class, inviting connections between class texts and themes. You may present on whatever aspect of the assigned readings and your own research interests you the most. You might also consider bringing in other texts related to your inquiry topic to share with the class, and/or screening clips from other relevant media.

Capstone Project:

8-10 pp. Conference Papers (2) or 16-20 pp. Article-Length Paper (1)

(40% or 2 x 20%)

You will have the choice of submitting two conference-length papers or one article-length paper at the end of term. It is highly recommended that you meet with me in advance to discuss essay topics.

Additionally, **class participation** will make up **15%** of your final grade. This will reflect your overall level of engagement with the class and course materials. When determining your grade, I will ask myself the following questions: did you regularly attend class and participate in discussions? Did you meet with me during office hours if you had questions or concerns about course content? In-class, did you demonstrate a good level of preparedness—having completed and engaged with the readings, putting them into conversation with other course texts and themes? When scheduled to do so, did you comment on your colleagues' Padlet entries? Although regular attendance is crucial to success in a graduate seminar, I recognize that illness, emergencies, and personal situations occasionally arise. If you must miss class, please inform me as soon as possible. Three unexplained absences will result in the forfeiture of your participation grade.

Assignment Policies:

- No assignments will be given for extra credit.
- Assignments are to be submitted via D2L unless otherwise specified.
- Assignments submitted after the deadline will be penalized with the loss of a third of a grade (an A- to B+) for each day that the assignment is overdue. No assignments will be accepted one week past the assignment deadline without the prior consent of the instructor.
- Rounding of final grades is performed at the instructor's discretion.

Grading System:

In this course, your assignments will be marked on the University of Calgary's Graduate Grading System, as described in the Calendar: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/grad/current/gs-h-1.html>

Grade	Grade Point Value	Graduate Description
A+	4.00	Outstanding
A	4.00	Excellent - superior performance showing comprehensive understanding of the subject matter.
A-	3.70	Very good performance
B+	3.30	Good performance
B	3.00	Satisfactory performance
B-	2.70	Minimum pass for students in the Faculty of Graduate Studies
C+	2.30	All grades below "B-" are indicative of failure at the graduate level and cannot be counted toward Faculty of Graduate Studies course requirements. Individual programs may require a higher passing grade.
C	2.00	
C-	1.70	
D+	1.30	
D	1.00	
F	0.00	

Although the A+ is solely an honorific that entails no additional points in the four-point system, the course instructor will employ this mark to distinguish superlative work that exceeds expectations in style, correctness, intellectual depth and breadth, sophistication, and originality.

Plagiarism:

Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense. Consequences include failure on the assignment, failure in the course and possible suspension or expulsion from the university. Please refer to the following information and make sure you are familiar with the statement below on plagiarism. <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-5.html>

English Department Website:

For more information about courses, programs, policies, events and contacts in the Department of English, please go to our website at <http://english.ucalgary.ca/graduate>. Please note that the course outlines posted on the English Department website constitute the official course outline for purposes of appeals. Students should verify any hard copies against this posted version. For courses which employ numerical grades, the official departmental percentage to letter grade conversion scale is also posted on the department website.

Writing support:

The Student Success Centre offers both online and workshop writing support for U of C students. <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>

Library and Research Support:

Melanie Boyd Librarian for English, offers research support to students, including strategies for finding articles, books, and other library materials. Contact: maboyd@ucalgary.ca.

Find The English Pages research guide here: https://library.ucalgary.ca/sb.php?subject_id=52619

Follow the Department of English on Facebook & Twitter:



Academic regulations and schedules:

Consult the Department of English's graduate website for courses, departmental deadlines, and other related program information at <https://arts.ucalgary.ca/english>. Consult the Faculty of Graduate Studies Calendar for university and faculty regulations, dates, deadline, fees, and schedules, student, faculty and university rights and responsibilities. The homepage for the Faculty of Graduate Studies Calendar is <http://grad.ucalgary.ca>.

For registration (add/drop/swap), paying fees and assistance with your Student Centre, contact the Graduate Office at 403 220 5484 or visit us in Social Sciences Tower 1148 in the first instance.

For program planning and advice, contact the Graduate Program Administrator at enggrad@ucalgary.ca to make an appointment with Dr. Suzette Mayr, Graduate Program Director.

Grade appeals:

Consult the following University Calendar link and request advice from the English Department office, SS 1152. Please note that "mere dissatisfaction with a decision is not sufficient grounds for the appeal of a grade or other academic decision."

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i.html>

Deferral of term work and final examinations:

Should you require an extension for completion of term papers or assignments beyond the deadline of five days after the end of lectures, an Application of Deferment of Term Work form must be completed. The University also has regulations governing the deferral of final examinations. See Calendar:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-6.html>,

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html>.

Student Accommodations:

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

The student accommodation policy can be found at: ucalgary.ca/access/accommodations/policy.

Students needing an Accommodation because of a Disability or medical condition should communicate this need to Student Accessibility Services in accordance with the Procedure for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities <http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.pdf>.

Students needing an Accommodation based on a Protected Ground other than Disability, should communicate this need, preferably in writing, to the course instructor.

The full policy on Student Accommodations is available

at http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy_0.pdf

Emergency Evacuation/Assembly Points:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>;

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/legalservices/foip/>

“Safewalk” Program:

Campus Security will escort individuals day or night: call 220-5333 for assistance. Use any campus phone, emergency phone or the yellow phone located at most parking lot pay booths.

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/safewalk/>

Contact for the Graduate Student Association: <http://gsa.ucalgary.ca/>

Contact for Students Ombudsman’s Office: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/student-services/ombuds/role>

Universal Student Ratings of Instruction (USRI):

"At the University of Calgary, feedback provided by students through the Universal Student Ratings of Instruction (USRI) survey provides valuable information to help with evaluating instruction, enhancing learning and teaching, and selecting courses (www.ucalgary.ca/usri). Your responses make a difference – please participate in USRI Surveys."

Students who are absent from class assessments (tests, participation activities, or other assignments) should inform their instructors as soon as possible. Instructors may request that evidence in the form of documentation be provided. If the reason provided for the absence is acceptable, instructors may decide that any arrangements made can take forms other than make-up tests or assignments. For example, the weight of a missed grade may be added to another assignment or test. For information on possible forms of documentation, including statutory declarations, please see

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/m-1.html>.

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is an extremely serious offence. Please read the following information carefully. The penalty routinely recommended by the English Department for documented plagiarism is failure of the course in which the offence occurred; academic probation is also routinely applied at the Faculty level. Suspension or expulsion can result from severe or repeated plagiarism.

The University Calendar states:

1. Plagiarism - Essentially plagiarism involves submitting or presenting work in a course as if it were the student's own work done expressly for that particular course when, in fact, it is not. Most commonly plagiarism exists when:

- a) the work submitted or presented was done, in whole or in part, by an individual other than the one submitting or presenting the work (this includes having another impersonate the student or otherwise substituting the work of another for one's own in an examination or test),
- b) parts of the work are taken from another source without reference to the original author,
- c) the whole work (e.g., an essay) is copied from another source, and/or,
- d) a student submits or presents work in one course which has also been submitted in another course (although it may be completely original with that student) without the knowledge of or prior agreement of the instructor involved.

While it is recognized that scholarly work often involves reference to the ideas, data and conclusions of other scholars, intellectual honesty requires that such references be explicitly and clearly noted.

Plagiarism occurs when direct quotations are taken from a source without specific acknowledgement, or when original ideas or data from the source are not acknowledged. Citing your sources in a bibliography is not enough, because a bibliography does not establish which parts of a student's work are taken from other sources. MLA (Modern Language Association) documentation or other recognized forms of citation must be used for this purpose. Advice on adequate documentation can be found at the following web sites: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

Students who are absent from class assessments (tests, participation activities, or other assignments) should inform their instructors as soon as possible. Instructors may request that evidence in the form of documentation be provided. If the reason provided for the absence is acceptable, instructors may decide that any arrangements made can take forms other than make-up tests or assignments. For example, the weight of a missed grade may be added to another assignment or test. For information on possible forms of documentation, including statutory declarations, please see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/m-1.html>

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH STATEMENT ON PRINCIPLES OF CONDUCT

According to the University Calendar, <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-2.html> "The University of Calgary community has undertaken to be guided by the following statements of purpose and values: to promote free inquiry and debate, to act as a community of scholars, ..., to respect, appreciate, and encourage diversity, [and] to display care and concern for community". The Department of English, like the university as a whole, is committed to a "positive and productive learning and working environment." This environment is characterized by appreciation and encouragement of diversity and respect for the dignity of all persons: students, support staff, and faculty. The department will not tolerate unacceptable behaviour, such as threatening gestures, threatening or abusive verbal or written communication (including e-mails), or any conduct that "seriously disrupts the lawful education and related activities of students and/or university staff". Any cases of such misconduct should be reported immediately to the department Head, who, depending on the nature and severity of the incident, may then take further appropriate action.