

This syllabus has been provided as a reference tool for students considering this course. It has been modified to follow Senate regulations. Current students enrolled in any undergraduate course must obtain the most recent syllabus from their course instructor or from their course website. This is not the latest version.



Department of English & Writing Studies

Sexuality & Literature: Queer Sexuality in Victorian and Edwardian Literature **English 3886F (001)** Fall 2013

Instructor: Frederick D. King

Date/Time: Monday 3:30pm-4:30pm
Wednesday 3:30pm-5:30pm

Location: Health Sciences Building 236

Prerequisites

At least 60% in 1.0 of English 1020E or 1022E or 1024E or 1035E or 1036E or both English 1027F/G and 1028F/G, or permission of the Department.

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

WARNING: This course will require students to discuss, read, and critically analyse works that deal with sexuality, including depictions of explicit sexual acts between men and/or between women. If you find graphic depictions of sexuality offensive, this course may not be right for you. If you have any questions throughout the year, please see the instructor during office hours to discuss your concerns.

Course Description

Literary representations of same-sex desire are not a recent development in English literature. In fact, many authors in the nineteenth century published, or at least privately exchanged, works of fiction, poetry, and prose that challenged Victorian social constructions of sexual desire, masculinity, and femininity. Our goal in this class will be to explore and understand literary expressions of same-sex desire at a time when many considered such expressions to be “the love that dare not speak its name.” Focusing on English literature from the *fin-de-siècle* (1880-1900) but also reading works from the early Victorian period and the Edwardians, we will explore the relationship between literary innovation and sexual discourse. Lyric poetry, the realist novel, symbolist theatre, popular fiction, and even erotica all provided a queer space for examinations of same-sex desire for women and men. We will study the role of literary experiment in the development of political, medical, and social commentary on “homosexuality.” Discussion topics will include Aestheticism and Decadence, the New Woman, Greek Love (both Sapphic and Platonic), socialism, and homogenic comradeship. We will also explore how changes in the marketplace and printing technologies in the Victorian age provided opportunities to publish and distribute subversive expressions of sexuality. The course will be an interdisciplinary study of how experimentation in literature and sexuality inform and influence one another giving rise to both early political agitation for sexual equality and the literary revolution of Modernism in the twentieth century.

Objectives:

Successful students who complete the course will be better able to:

- Understand the complexities of sexual expression in the nineteenth century and how past constructions of sexual identity differ from contemporary perceptions of sexuality;
- Understand the role that literature played in defining a role in sexuality for the writers we will be studying;
- Understand the role of science and literature in defining categories of sexual identity in use today;
- Write clearly and persuasively about the complexities of sexual desires, sexual identity, and the role of literature and science in the development of this discourses;
- Apply critical analysis, historical research, and theoretical interrogations to the study of the texts in this class;
- Engage with your fellow students by completing assigned readings before class and actively contributing to all classroom discussions.

Course Materials

Required Texts:

Maurice (Penguin Classics)

Miss Brown (Wildside Press)

Nineteenth-Century Writings on Homosexuality: A Sourcebook (Routledge) (D all reading selections on the schedule below with the acronym "NC WH" are from this anthology)

Psychopathia Sexualis (Arcade)

Roderick Hudson (Penguin Classics)

Salome (Dover) (includes Beardsley Illustrations)

The Sunless Heart (Broadview)

Teleny (Valancourt)

Additional Course Material available online with appropriate hyperlinks provided within the Class Schedule.

Methods of Evaluation

Essay 1	10%
Essay 2	15%
Essay 3	25%
Classroom Reports on Owl	15%
Final exam	35%

A student must receive a passing grade for both term work and the final examination in order to receive a passing grade for the course. This applies to all courses in all programs offered by the department. Students whose term and final exam grades average 50% or above, even though one of the two is a failure, shall receive a default grade of 48%. **Please note:** The department of English & Writing Studies does not release final grades. All undergraduate grade reports will be available online from the Office of the Registrar.

Students are fully responsible for looking at and being familiar with the information posted on the department website at <http://www.uwo.ca/english/undergraduate/info%20for%20students.html#grade>.

Timetable:

- M Sept 9 Course Introduction; *NCWH*: Oscar Wilde Trials (pp. 49-61)
- W Sept 11 *Psychopathia Sexualis* I & II pp 1-27; *NCWH*: "The Mute Sin" (pp. 9-24); Henry Harland "A Responsibility" George Colman's Don Leon (Falsely attributed to Lord George Gordon Byron)
- M Sept 16 *NCWH*: "Law" (pp. 25-65) *NCWH*: Lord Alfred Douglas's "In Praise of Shame" (p. 56) & "Two Loves" (pp.54-56); *Psychopathia Sexualis* IV pp 333-337 374-408
- W Sept 18 *NCWH*: "Science" (pp 66-115); Walter Pater's "Winckelmann" Ada Levenson's "A Suggestion" and "The Quest for Sorrow"
- M Sept 23 Henry James's *Roderick Hudson*
- W Sept 25 Henry James's *Roderick Hudson*
- M Sept 30 Henry James's *Roderick Hudson* / Vernon Lee's *Miss Brown*
- W Oct 2 Vernon Lee's *Miss Brown*
- M Oct 7 Vernon Lee's *Miss Brown*
- W Oct 9 **ESSAY 1 Due Today** Oscar Wilde's *The Portrait of Mr. W. H.*
- M Oct 14 **CAMPUS HOLIDAY - NO CLASSES**
- W Oct 16 *NCWH*: "Love: Men" pp 236-263; *Psychopathia Sexualis*: pp 187-261 & 291-332
- M Oct 21 Edith Johnstone's *The Sunless Heart*
- W Oct 23 Edith Johnstone's *The Sunless Heart*
- M Oct 28 *NCWH*: "Women" (pp. 264-280)
- W Oct 30 *NCWH*: "Love: Women" (pp. 264-280); *Psychopathia: Sexualis*: (pp. 262-291)
- M Nov 4 *NCWH*: "Modes of Defence" (pp. 116-211)
- W Nov 6 **ESSAY 2 DUE Today** *NCWH*: "Modes of Defence" (pp. 21 1-235); Walt Whitman's "Calamus" Cluster from *Leaves of Grass* (1891-92 edition)
- M Nov 11 E.M. Forster's *Maurice*
- W Nov 13 FINAL EXAM RUBRIC; E.M. Forster's *Maurice*
- M Nov 18 E. M. Forster's *Maurice*; *Teleny*
- W Nov 20 *Teleny*

- M Nov 25 NCWH: "Sex" (pp. 281-341); *Psychopathia Sexualis* selections: pp. 80-143
- W Nov 27 NCWH: "Sex" (pp. 281-341); *Psychopathia Sexualis* selections: pp. 143-184
- M Dec 2 Oscar Wilde's *Salome*
- W Dec 4 **ESSAY 3 Due Today** Oscar Wilde's *Salome*

Assignments:

Late Assignments: Assignments will be penalized 2% per day for each day they are late for the first 10 days. Students must submit Late Assignments via the Assignment Drop Boxes on the wall outside UC 173. Any assignment more than 10 days late will receive a failing grade of 0% unless you have an Academic Accommodation approved by the Office of the Dean for YOUR home Faculty (ex. the Faculty of Arts and Humanities). Neither the Instructor nor the Department may grant an Academic Accommodation (see details below).

Classroom Reports: I will give students access to post on the course OWL website. Every week before Friday at 4pm EST, you must post a one- or two-sentence response to that week's classroom discussions. What I am looking for is that you have not only read the material and attended class, but that you have taken something away from the comments of other students and your professor. Demonstrate your contribution to that week's conversation. You should also declare how class discussion clarified your understanding of a text or idea. It is particularly important that you give credit to your classmates and your professor in your comments. I will moderate your posts so that you cannot see anyone else's comments until after the deadline has passed. You will be allowed to skip comments only once during the term so plan wisely. 5% of your mark will be deducted for missing a second report. If you miss a third report, all 15% of your mark will be deducted for missing a third report and your final mark for "Classroom Reports on Owl" will be recorded as 0%.

Essay 1 | 1000 Words | Due October 9th

Write an essay that studies a social, legal, or medical text included in either the "Mute Sin," "Law," or "Science" sections of *Nineteenth-Century Writings on Homosexuality: A Sourcebook*. Find additional information from the period such as medical texts, legal transcripts, newspaper accounts, book reviews, letters, or autobiographical writings in order to write a cultural analysis of sexual discourse at any period between 1830 and 1914. You may incorporate any literature already covered in the course; however, focus your analysis on the cultural impact of sexual discourse in the fields of Law, Science, or Society. Incorporate additional information from at least one archival source. You must also use at least one traditional secondary source such as a peer-reviewed book or journal article found using the MLA International Bibliography. Essay formatting and citations must follow MLA Guidelines.

Essay 2 | 1500 Words | Due November 6th

Write an essay that place a work of literature on the course list that you have not already written about into conversation with Dr. Richard von Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia Sexualis*. Explore how the novel, short story, or poetry of a particular author engages with, reacts to, or challenges Krafft-Ebing's research and/or ideology. Is the text you have chosen a mode of defense? Does the literary work support Krafft-Ebing's work? How does literature enrich or change our perceptions of sexual discourse in the nineteenth century? You are welcome to use information in the "Modes of Defence" from *Nineteenth-Century Writings on Homosexuality: A Sourcebook*. Ideas to consider: What mode of defence does the literary text use? Does the literary text use or

resist the modes of defence studied? How does Krafft-Ebing's work inform your reading of the literary text? Bring primary and secondary archival resources into your argument. You must also use contemporary secondary sources such as books from the library, peer-reviewed articles from MLA International Bibliography. Essay formatting and citations must follow MLA Guidelines.

Essay 3 | 2500 -3000 Words | Due December 4th

Write a COMPARATIVE essay using TWO literary texts that you have not yet written about. Argue a thesis of your choice that allows you to compare and contrast the ways in which your two texts present sex, gender, and/or sexual identity within the historical context of the Victorian and / or Edwardian age (1830-1914). Ideas you may consider include alienation; marginalization; androgyny; violence; anachronism; gender as performance; desire as identity; homogenic comradeship, etc. Your thesis and subsequent argument must justify why you have chosen to explore these two particular texts. Be sure to incorporate primary and secondary resources from the historical period as well as current literary criticism. You must also use traditional secondary sources such as books from the library, peer-reviewed articles from MLA International Bibliography. 5-9 sources required. Essay formatting and citations must follow MLA guidelines.

Final Exam | 3 Essay responses | Date TBA by Registrar

The final exam will be a series of essay questions. I will distribute a rubric in class on Nov. 13th outlining the specific exam format. You will have the full three-hour exam period to complete the exam. I expect students to demonstrate that they read and critically analysed the course material, engaged with classroom lectures and discussions. Student writing should be at an academic level, be grammatically correct, and incorporate terminology from the course material.

Recommended Secondary Readings for Student Essay Research:

James Eli Adams *Dandies and Desert Saints*

Joseph Bristow (ed.) *The Fin-de-Siècle Poem*

Colette Colligan *The Traffic in Obscenity from Byron to Beardsley*

Matt Cook *London and the Culture of Homosexuality, 1885-1914*

Richard Dellamora *Masculine Desire*

Michel Foucault *History of Sexuality Vol. 1*

Ellis Hanson *Decadence and Catholicism*

Sharon Marcus *Between Women: Friendship, Desire, and Marriage in Victorian England.*

Alan Sinfield *The Wilde Century*

Students are strongly encouraged to rehearse their own critical and theoretical approaches in the classroom and in their writing in order to bring alternative schools of thought to bear on the course material.

Students are also encouraged to research medical, legal, and social discourses from the period we are studying. Some authors, whose works you may want to research for you papers include Sigmund Freud, Magnus Hirschfeld, Edward Carpenter, Karl Heinrich-Ulrichs, Queen Victoria, Havelock Ellis, John Addington Symonds, and Eliza Lynn Linton.

Attendance:

Excessive absenteeism is grounds for debarring a student from taking the final examination. The 2013 Academic Calendar states: "Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course, will be reported to the

Dean of the Faculty offering the course (after due warning has been given). On the recommendation of the department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course” (p. 35).

Accommodation

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the Office of the Dean of the student's Faculty of registration, together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested. The UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness and further information regarding this policy can be found at

http://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf.

Downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC):

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf

Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Plagiarism:

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence.

Plagiarism Checking:

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com <http://www.turnitin.com>.

Support Services

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Student Development Centre <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western: <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.