

GAY AND LESBIAN LITERATURE

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COURSE OBJECTIVES

Gay and Lesbian Literature is a literature selective or elective course offered by the Department of English and Speech. Throughout the semester, the course reading will consist primarily of fiction, poetry, and drama from the mid-nineteenth through twentieth centuries, as we examine such themes as gender, sexuality, race, class, same-sex desire, homosociality, and the trope of the closet. We will also consider the construction of and criteria for a "gay and lesbian canon" of literature to understand the ways in which writers (both gay- and straight-identifying) have evolved a particularly gay and/or lesbian aesthetic.

Upon completion of this course, you will be able to:

- Identify and discuss a canon of gay and lesbian literature
- Describe key terms that characterize gay and lesbian literature
- Describe the interrelation of gender, race, class and sexuality and how they change over the late 19th and 20th centuries
- Think critically about, analyze, and respond to literary texts
- Demonstrate skills in academic writing about literary texts

REQUIRED TEXTS

Bechdel, Alison. *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic*. Mariner, 2007.

Kushner, Tony. *Angels in America*. Theatre Communications Group, 1993.

Mishima, Yukio. *Confessions of a Mask*. New Directions, 1958.

Wilde, Oscar. *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. The Modern Library, 1998.

Woolf, Virginia. *Mrs. Dalloway*. Harcourt, 1990

READING RESPONSES

In addition to completing the assigned reading each week, on most weeks you will also be asked to write a 1-page response to the literature you have just read. Your focus in the 1-page response should be on your reaction to what you have read and not a summary of what you read. What did you notice? What thoughts and feelings did the literature inspire in you? Why? You may choose to respond to the entire reading or deal with a particular section, or even highlight particular lines or a line.

WEEK | INTRODUCTIONS

1

Richard von Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1892)

WEEK | Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (p. 1-142)

2

WEEK | Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (p. 143-254)

3

WEEK | Walt Whitman's *Song of Myself* (verses 1-12) , "Whoever You Are Holding Me Now in Hand," "For You O Democracy," "City of Orgies," "Behold This Swarthy Face," "I Saw in Louisiana a Live-Oak Growing," "To a Stranger," "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd," "O Captain! My Captain!"

4

WEEK | Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* (p.1-100)

5

- WEEK
6 | Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* (p.101-194)
- WEEK
7 | Sigmund Freud's "Female Sexuality"
Joan Riviere's "Womanliness as Masquerade"
- WEEK
8 | Yukio Mishima's *Confessions of a Mask*
- WEEK
9 | Adrienne Rich's *Twenty-One Love Poems*
- WEEK
10 | Susan Sontag's "Notes on 'Camp'"
Audre Lorde's "Poetry Is Not a Luxury"
and "Uses of the Erotic: Erotic as Power"
- WEEK
11 | Excerpt from Edmund White's *A Boy's Own Story*
In-class screening of *Paris Is Burning*
- WEEK
12 | Tony Kushner's *Angels in America*
- WEEK
13 | Annie's Proulx's "Brokeback Mountain"
and "Uses of the Erotic: Erotic as Power"
- WEEK
14 | Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic*