GSWS 306: Women’s Autobiography, Memoirs & Journals
Topic: Queer/Trans Life Narratives Across Media

Professor: Dr. Helen Leung
Email: hhl@sfu.ca
Lecture: Tuesdays 8:30 – 12:20; Harbour Centre 1530

Course Description:
This course studies experimental forms of life narrative by queer/trans subjects and their families, with a focus on North American and European writers, filmmakers, and performers. We will examine how life narratives challenge the boundaries between fact and fiction; play with genre expectations and straddles different media; tell stories of gender and sexual non-conformity while exploring issues of intimacy, family, and community. Forms studied include autobiographical fiction, auto-documentary, storytelling, stand-up comedy, and pedagogical memoir. Students will also be encouraged to engage in creative life narrative practices and experiment with genre and medium.

Learning Outcomes:
At the end of the course, students are expected to: (1) demonstrate knowledge of how queer/trans subjects and their families experiment with life narratives; (2) be conversant with critical issues regarding the autobiographical mode, its impact on concepts of the gendered and sexualized “self,” and its significance for queer, trans, and feminist thought; (3) develop a capacity to engage creatively with one or more life narrative forms.

Course Texts and Courseware:
Kate Bornstein, A Queer and Present Danger (Beacon, 2012)
Anna Camilleri, I Am A Red Dress (Arsenal Pulp, 2004)
Ivan E Coyote, Loose Ends (Arsenal Pulp, 2005)
Custom courseware

FILMS & VIDEOS
Kimberly Reed, Prodigal Sons (2008)
Jules Rosskam, Against A Trans Narrative (2008)
Margaret Cho, excerpts from I Am The One That I Want (2000) and other tours
Eddie Izzard, excerpts from Dressed To Kill (1999), Sexie (2003) and other tours

Course Evaluation and Assignments:
Attendance & Participation 10%
Individual Project Presentation 10%
Short Reading Responses (up to 2 pages) x 3 30%
Final Paper (8-10 pages) 30%
Collaborative Project 20%

Prerequisite: 30 units including 3 units in GSWS or WS or GDST.
Students who have completed WS 306 may not complete this course for further credit.