WS. 306-4- Women's Autobiographies, Memoirs & Journals “Queer Self-Writing”

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Thursday, 12:30-4:20

In this course, we will read contemporary queer autobiographies, with a focus on lesbian and transgender narratives. We will examine how queer selves are narrated in relation to the recurrent themes of trauma, journey, and transformation. Visual modes of autobiographical expression, such as film and photography, will also be considered. Students will be introduced to current theoretical debates on the autobiographical genre and their impact on concepts of the gendered and sexualized “self.” Finally, we will also explore emergent autobiographical modes such as the personal web site and consider their significance for queer and feminist theorizing.

REQUIRED TEXTS
Jeanette Winterson, Oranges Are Not The Only Fruit (Grove, Reprint Edition, 1997)
Audrey Lorde, Zami: A New Spelling of My Name (Crossing Press, 1982)
Kate Bornstein, Gender Outlaw (Vintage, Reprint Edition, 1995)
Course Reader (with a selection of theoretical essays)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADING PROFILE
Attendance & participation 15%
2 take-home short essays (3-4 pg) 20 x 2 = 40%
Research paper (8-10 pgs) 30%
Collaborative creative project 15%

DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENTS
Attendance & participation: The course consists of a combination of lecture and tutorial. The attendance and participation grade will reflect students’ attendance at both lecture and tutorial classes, their degree of involvement during class discussion and their contribution to the learning environment.

Take-home short papers: A 3-4 pg critical analysis of selected course texts.

Research Paper: A critical essay that develops a relevant topic of the student’s choice based on a combination of class reading and independent research outside of the course syllabus.

Collaborative creative project: A group project that makes use of or reflects on the autobiographical genre critically and creatively.

Prerequisites: Six credit hours in Women’s Studies including WS 101 and/or WS 102.

The Department of Women’s Studies encourages clarity of thought and expression and good writing. Students will be evaluated on these skills in all courses given by the Department.