WS 823-5: Graduate Seminar: Queer Self-Writing

Helen Hok-Sze Leung
Email: helen_leung@sfu.ca
Room AQ 5104A

COURSE DESCRIPTION
In this course, we will read contemporary queer and transgender autobiographies and examine how queer/trans selves are narrated in relation to the recurrent themes of trauma, journey, and transformation. We will also discuss other modes of autobiographical expression such as film, photography, stand-up comedy, and the personal website. In addition, students will be introduced to current theoretical debates on the autobiographical genre and examine their impact on concepts of the gendered and sexualized “self” as well as their significance for queer and feminist theorizing.

REQUIRED TEXTS
Audre Lorde, *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name* (Crossing Press, 1982)
Minnie Bruce Pratt, *S/he* (Firebrand, 1995)
Margaret Cho, *I Am The One That I Want* (Ballentine, 2002)
Course Reader (with additional short stories & a selection of theoretical essays)

FILMS
B. H. Vael, *Fresh Blood: A Consideration of Belonging*
Kate Davis, *Southern Comfort*
Ivan E. Coyote, *Transmission*
Even Benestad, *All About My Father*

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADING PROFILE
Attendance & Participation  20%
Reading Response (2 pgs)  10%
Short Critical Paper (3-4 pgs)  20%
Research Paper (8-10 pgs)  30%
Collaborative Creative Project  20%

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.
*Reading Response:* A 2-pg reader’s response to an assigned course text.
*Short Critical Paper:* A critical analysis (3-4 pgs) of selected texts based on assigned questions.
*Research Paper:* A critical essay (8-10 pgs) 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 and/or reflects on the autobiographical genre in creative explorations of issues of sex/gender/sexuality. The project will be graded collectively (i.e. students in one group will receive the same grade for that assignment).

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.