

**ENGL 470F Canadian Studies (3 credits) – Section 005 – Term 2 2008/09**

MWF 2:00-3:00

West Mall Swing Space 105

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**“Here is Queer”: Gay and Lesbian Writing in Canada**

“We’re here, we’re queer”. . . but where is “here”? Although contemporary Canadian literature is increasingly characterized by diversity and heterogeneity, this has not been the traditional approach to our national canon. As Peter Dickinson suggests, “discourses of nationalism and sexuality” have been “repeatedly yoked together in order to exclude certain writers from this aggressively masculinist and heterosexual tradition.” Hence, “queerness” became “an absent presence” in the Canadian literary tradition.

In this course, we will explore some of the ways in which Canadian writers have begun to challenge this “absent presence” by openly representing alternative and transgressive expressions of sexuality. We will discuss works as wide ranging as Shyam Selvadurai’s witty account of growing up gay, Ivan Coyote’s pithy short stories and Tremblay’s evocative dramatization of an aging drag queen.

**Reading List:**

- Highway, Thomson. *The Kiss of the Fur Queen*. 1998.
- Coyote, Ivan. *Loose End*. 2005.
- Mootoo, Shani. *Cereus Blooms at Night*. 1996.
- Rule, Jane. *Contract with the World*. 1980.
- Selvadurai, Shyam. *Funny Boy*. 1994.
- Tremblay, Michel. *Hosanna*. 1984. Trans. Burek & Glassco, 1991. (play)
- Custom Course Package including critical/theoretical readings

**Course Requirements:**

- Critical Response – 15%
- In-class essay – 15%
- Term paper – 30%
- Participation – 10%
- Final examination – 30%