COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The course will examine LGBT autobiographical writing from roughly 1900 to the present. The focus will be on how gay and lesbian and transgender writers have adapted to longstanding cultural disapproval and the stigmatizing, often bitter constraints of the “Closet.” We will also examine what happens to the memoir form when social taboos against homosexuality (and/or transgenderism) come to be relaxed or overturned—as has been the case in many Western societies in the new millennium.

REQUIRED READING WITH PREFERRED EDITIONS:

- Oscar Wilde, *DE PROFUNDIS* (available Project Gutenberg)
- Gertrude Stein, *THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF ALICE B. TOKLAS* (Vintage paperback)
- Quentin Crisp, *THE NAKED CIVIL SERVANT* (Penguin Classics paperback)
- Marilyn Hacker, *LOVE, DEATH, AND THE CHANGING OF THE SEASONS*
- Leslie Feinberg, *STONE BUTCH BLUES* (Alyson Books or Read How You Want)
- Alison Bechdel, *FUN HOME* (Mariner Books paperback)

(Plus selected shorter pieces if we have time) by E.M. Forster, Vita Sackville-West, “Diana” of DIANA: A STRANGE AUTOBIOGRAPHY, Joe Brainard, Colm Toibin, David Wojnarowicz)
Requirements

a) ATTENDANCE, READING, AND CLASS PARTICIPATION:

Students will complete all readings for the course according to the schedule below. 100% attendance is required; casual absences are not acceptable. (Students absent for any reason are expected to notify the instructor in advance.) more than one absence will affect your grade adversely! all students should be prepared to participate fully in every class discussion.

**classroom participation will account for 25% of your final grade. (***note: no incompletes will be given in this course except in authentic cases of illness or emergency***)

As a courtesy to me and to your fellow students: may I also ask 1) that you not arrive late; and 2) that you turn off cellphones and laptops at the beginning of class?  Thank you!  The Panopticon (me) can see you, even if you think it can’t.
b) SHORT WRITING ASSIGNMENTS:

We will have a Course Blog, to which each student will be asked to contribute at least one or two well-honed paragraphs of writing (i.e., a critical ‘gloss’) each week. (5-7 blog notes total.) (BLOG POSTS SHOULD BE NO MORE THAN 300 WORDS. PLEASE DO NOT EXCEED LIMIT.) You will post your blog note by 8 pm on Monday night, for the following day.)

The format for each entry will be this: the student will select and reproduce a short (or short-ish) passage from the assigned reading that he or she finds particularly striking or puzzling or potentially illuminating. He or she will then ‘gloss’ it: that is, describe as succinctly and compellingly as possible what it is saying and doing in the fictional context, why we should find it interesting or important, what kinds of critical questions and challenges it poses, and indeed, how one might generate from it some more extended critical statement or essay topic.

Issues highlighted can be thematic, stylistic, linguistic, formal, reception-oriented, or indeed anything else one might find intriguing. All blog entries will be shared with one’s classmates, and students will be asked to keep up with and comment in class on one another’s entries. Blog work will count as 50% of your final grade.

In class we will use these glosses as our discussion ‘prompts.’ Not only will they help us identify key themes and topics in the works under discussion, we’ll consider each gloss itself as a piece of concise critical rhetoric to be analyzed. How well has the author conveyed the passage’s significance? What’s the author’s goal here and how successfully does he or she get it across?

I will not grade blog entries per se, but would like each of you to meet with me at least once to get feedback on blog work, once the quarter is under way. (I’m also happy, needless to say, to offer one-on-one advice and/or feedback on any aspect of your reading and written work at any point in the quarter.) Don’t be a stranger!

Please proofread your blogs and treat them as relatively polished statements. I DO notice typos, grammatical errors, diction issues, etc., so do be conscious of your readers, in class and out.

SEMINAR PAPER:

PhD. students will write one longer more formal paper, 12-14 pp. in length. Co-term students will write an 8-10 p. essay. NO LONGER, PLEASE!

(Due date to be announced: it will come near the end of the quarter.) Essay will constitute the remaining 25% of your final grade.

TWO IMPORTANT ADVISORIES:

1) Just to be clear: all students taking the class realize that they will be obliged to share their writing assignments (blog posts, essay drafts) with other students in the class, as well as the instructor. However, your writing will not be shared without your permission with anyone other than your classmates and me. We will have a course blog, but it will be private. As for in-class work: everyone will be in the same boat; so any hesitation one might have, I hope, about sharing writing and ideas will rapidly fall away.
2) We will be reading and discussing works of literature and looking at images dealing with homosexuality, male and female, not to mention specific—often highly controversial—sexual beliefs and practices. If you feel that you won’t be able to engage with the material intellectually or emotionally because of these sensitive themes, I recommend that you speak to me first about it; then, if your doubts become severe, I suggest—upfront—that you not enroll in the class.

Tentative Reading Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Mon</th>
<th>September 26</th>
<th>Introduction</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wed</td>
<td>September 28</td>
<td>Wilde, <em>De Profundis</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>October 3</td>
<td>Ackerley, <em>My Father and Myself</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Wed</td>
<td>October 5</td>
<td>Ackerley, cont.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>October 10</td>
<td>Stein, <em>Autobiography of ABT</em></td>
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<td>Wed</td>
<td>October 12</td>
<td>Stein, cont.</td>
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<td>Week 4</td>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>October 17</td>
<td><em>Naked Civil Servant</em></td>
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<td>Wed</td>
<td>October 19</td>
<td>Crisp, cont.</td>
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<td>Week 5</td>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>October 24</td>
<td>Lorde, <em>Zami</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Wed</td>
<td>October 26</td>
<td>NO CLASS, PROFESSOR CASTLE OUT OF TOWN</td>
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<td>Week 6</td>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>October 31</td>
<td>Lorde, cont.</td>
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Wed November 2  Shorter essays if time.

Week 7  Mon November 7  Hacker, *Love, Death, and the Changing Seasons*

Wed November 9  Hacker, cont.

Week 8  Mon November 14  Feinberg, *Stone Butch Blues*

Wed November 16  Feinberg (cont.)

Week 9  Mon November 21  THANKSGIVING BREAK

Wed November 23  THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week 10  Mon November 28  Bechdel, *Fun Home*

Th December 1  CONCLUSION

December 5th-11th---End of Quarter Period (Dead Week)
Seminar paper due date: TBA

Relevant University Coursework Policies:

**Students with Documented Disabilities**
Students who may need an academic accommodation based on the impact of a disability must initiate the request with the Office of Accessible Education (OAE). Professional staff will evaluate the request with required documentation, recommend reasonable accommodations, and prepare an Accommodation Letter for faculty dated in the current quarter in which the request is being made. Students should contact the OAE as soon as possible since timely notice is needed to coordinate accommodations. The OAE is located at 563 Salvatierra Walk (phone: 723-1066, URL: http://studentaffairs.stanford.edu/oae).

**Honor Code**

The Honor Code is the University's statement on academic integrity written by students in 1921. It articulates University expectations of students and faculty in establishing and maintaining the highest standards in academic work. The Honor Code is an undertaking of the students, individually and collectively:

1. that they will not give or receive aid in examinations; that they will not give or receive unpermitted aid in class work, in the preparation of reports, or in any other work that is to be used by the instructor as the basis of grading;

2. that they will do their share and take an active part in seeing to it that others as well as themselves uphold the spirit and letter of the Honor Code.

3. The faculty on its part manifests its confidence in the honor of its students by refraining from proctoring examinations and from taking unusual and unreasonable precautions to prevent the forms of dishonesty mentioned above. The faculty will also avoid, as far as practicable, academic procedures that create temptations to violate the
Honor Code.

4. While the faculty alone has the right and obligation to set academic requirements, the students and faculty will work together to establish optimal conditions for honorable academic work.