

ANG 6190 English-Canadian Literature: Historiographic Metafiction
Professor Lianne Moyes
Autumn 2020, Mondays 4-7pm

Description

The title of this course, “Historiographic Metafiction,” is a provisional one, and only one of the possible concepts through which we might explore the interface between writing and history in the field of Canadian letters. Dorothy Livesay’s “The Documentary Poem: A Canadian Genre” (1969; 1971) or Smaro Kamboureli’s *On the Edge of Genre* (1991), for example, invite us to consider prose poems, lyric poems and long poems alongside various narrative forms. Several of the texts we will discuss fracture and superimpose different kinds of writing; they collage disparate voices and standpoints; they confront readers with an a-chronological montage of moments. History, in these texts, is contingent, dependent for its authority and legitimacy on conventions and practices that are interested, mediated and unstable. Literature, too, is undone: authorship is complicated by the logic of quotation and citationality; and texts, in a meta-fictional gesture, break the frame of representation and encourage readers to take a sideways glance at the workings of time, subjectivity, power, progress, truth, agency, referentiality, and so forth. In these texts, we find a form of productive traffic between the literary and the documentary, traffic that draws our attention to the status of both as practices rooted in the social and material, practices with distinct effects in bodies and lives.

Corpus

Literary texts by Jeannette Armstrong, Margaret Atwood, George Bowering, Afua Cooper, Esi Edugyan, Timothy Findley, Lionel Kearns, Lenore Keeshig-Tobias, Thomas King, Robert Kroetsch, Daphne Marlatt, Erin Moure, Michael Ondaatje, Gail Scott.

Please see STUDIUM for detail.

Requirements

Full participation in seminar (in-class discussion and written exchanges)

Seminar presentation on a literary work
Revised seminar presentation (based on feedback)

Reading report on a critical essay

Research paper