

Field Notes 7: Transgender Day of Remembrance

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Welcome to Field Notes, a series from the Reconciliation & Inclusion team, offering curated resources to support deeper learning and inclusive practices across Seneca Polytechnic. Each issue features a bespoke collection of resources – such as books, TV shows and events – that the team has personally engaged with, reflected on and found meaningful in our own learning.

Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR) is observed each year on November 20 to honour the lives of trans and gender-diverse people lost to violence, discrimination and neglect. Founded in 1999 by activist Gwendolyn Ann Smith, it began as a vigil and grew into a global call for awareness, mourning and action. TDOR reminds us that behind every statistic is a person whose life was cut short because of hate and that we have a shared responsibility to protect their right to live safely and authentically. The resources below highlight trans voices and remind us that remembrance also means actively listening, learning and standing beside trans communities.

[Read](#)

[Watch & Listen](#)

[Other Recommendations](#)

READ

[Waking to Dream: The Life Stories of Saylesh Wesley, Trans Stó:lō Elder-to-Be](#), by Jamey Jesperson and Saylesh Wesley

A biography of Saylesh Wesley, an Indigenous trans Stó:lō woman, documenting her early life, transition and rise to an elder-to-be in her community.

Why: It honours the lives of trans and Two-Spirit people who carry both ancestral wisdom and personal transformation.



[Metatron's Children](#), by Chy Ryan Spain

Set after global collapse, this story follows Yren, a young Black non-binary child with emerging powers, as they leave their haven to uncover truths about their family and the world beyond.

Why: It honours trans and non-binary youth by centring them in a world of magic and possibility. The book is a reminder that remembrance is not only about loss, but about imagining a future where trans lives thrive.

WATCH & LISTEN



Disclosure

A documentary that traces over 100 years of transgender representation in Hollywood. It explores how film and television have depicted trans people and what those depictions say about culture, power and identity.

Why: It challenges the portrayals that have dehumanized trans lives while celebrating the courage of those who fight to be seen. It's a call to visibility and accountability in how stories are told.



CBC Gem's Sort Of

A drama-comedy following Sabi Mehboob, a non-binary Pakistani Canadian navigating life, family and identity while working as a caregiver in Toronto. Created by Bilal Baig, it's the first Canadian series led by a non-binary, transfeminine actor.

Why: It portrays transition as growth, care and connection while honouring everyday resilience and living openly and fully.



The Goddamn Flowers

A rock album by Canadian musician Lucas Silveira, the first openly trans man signed to a major record label. The record explores love, loss and self-acceptance through poetic, emotionally raw songwriting.

Why: Music, like remembrance, is testimony. Lucas' art carries proof that trans lives don't just endure but also create and bloom despite systems that try to silence them.

Student Resource Feature

The Student Resource Feature highlights recommendations submitted by Seneca students who share works that have inspired their learning and perspective. Students interested in contributing can email us to be featured.

Oscar Guerrero (He/Him)

Business Administration Marketing, member of the *Rainbow Hangout*



Veneno

Veneno is a Spanish biographical drama that tells the story of Cristina Rodriguez, known as "La Veneno," an icon from Spain with an unapologetic personality. The series explores her struggles, triumphs and the impact she had on 2SLGBTQ+ representation in Spanish media.

Why: It captures the braveness and vulnerability of a trans woman who dared to live her authentic self in 1990s Spain. Cristina's raw honesty and visibility challenged prejudice while opening crucial conversations about gender and identity. At the same time, it reveals how exploitation and lack of understanding from the media ultimately contributed to her downfall.

What inspires you most in your day-to-day life as a student?

What inspires me most as a student is having a clear vision of the future I want to create for myself. Knowing that every semester I complete brings me one step closer to achieving that goal keeps me focused and motivated. It reminds me that it's all about building the foundation for the life I aspire to live.

What's one thing you hope other students take from Veneno?

I hope students understand the importance of recognizing and valuing the people who paved the way for the freedoms we have today. By understanding the struggles and resilience of past generations, we can appreciate the progress made and feel inspired to build a more inclusive and respectful community. To me, this show is a reminder that visibility and courage can create lasting change, and I hope other students feel the same.

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

Trans Day of Remembrance

40 Kensington Ave, Toronto

Thursday, November 20

A community event held at Lola Bar in Kensington Market that honours the lives of trans people lost to violence and celebrates those still here. The evening blends reflection and joy through live music, spoken word and performance.

Why: It centres trans voices and resilience, showing how community spaces can hold remembrance and celebration together. The event models inclusive gathering rooted in art, love and collective care.

The Reconciliation & Inclusion team knows the best learning happens in conversation. Let us know if you explore any of the resources above, or if there's something you'd recommend we include in future editions. Share your thoughts and suggestions in the comments, or email us at ri@senecapolytechnic.ca.

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