



## History MA Thesis Defence

**Student:** Robin Blaise-Kirwin

**Date:** Monday, May 4<sup>th</sup> 2026

**Time:** 10:00am – 12:00pm

**Place:** Hybrid (virtual for all new attendees) –  
email [histacademic@uoguelph.ca](mailto:histacademic@uoguelph.ca) for the link.

**“And the Stars Look Very Different Today: Bowie, Bolan, County,  
and the Immovable Queerness of the Glam/Punk Years, 1969-1980”**

### Abstract

This thesis argues that the development of glam rock during the 1970s existed in symbiosis with queer and trans identities in a manner which simultaneously exalted and exploited them. By arguing this, it seeks to address and further problematize glam's borrowing of trans signifiers for the benefit of a mostly cisgender and male group of artists without necessarily denying the queer identities of said artists, something which existing literature often struggles with. It illustrates this through the case studies of American trans punk artist Jayne County (1947 - present) and British bisexual glam artists Marc Bolan (1947 - 1977) and David Bowie (1947 - 2016), analyzing them through a theoretical framework borrowing from interdisciplinary scholarship such as trans history and musicology. Findings on the three case studies are varied but generally synthesize that the responses to all three performers have been significantly distorted among popular histories due to transphobia, homophobia, and presence of issues like substance abuse and addiction. The thesis concludes with calling attention to these systemic issues and recommends further reading on the queer artists involved in the later 1980s postpunk movement, many of whom were overtly inspired by the artists in this project.

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