Queer and trans of colour theorizing

GRSJ 425A: Topics in Gender, Race and Sexuality
Term 1 (2017-2018) | W 9am - 12pm | LASR 105

Institute for Gender, Race, Sexuality and Social Justice
University of British Columbia

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Office hrs.: W 130pm-230pm
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Course description ...

This course critically engages queer and trans of colour theorizing as a mode of scholarly inquiry and a political project. At base, queer and trans of colour theorizing examines the mutual constitution of racial and imperial projects with the normalizing practices of gender and sexual categorization and differentiation. It emerged in response to the intellectual and political isolation of issues of race and empire from issues of gender and sexuality, both in the academy and in social movements. Forcefully interdisciplinary, queer and trans of colour theorizing is located at the nexus of queer studies, critical race and ethnic studies, trans studies, anti-colonial studies and intersectional feminisms.

This course has three main tasks:

1. To engage in a genealogical analysis of the scholarly and political foundations of queer and trans of colour theorizing: We will unpack its critiques of white normativity in queer studies and activism and of cisheteronormativity in critical race studies and in communities of colour. We will also map out its genealogical linkages to women of colour feminisms.

2. To examine queer and trans of colour theorizing’s complicated relationship to settler colonialism and settler colonial studies: We will pay attention to the ways that indigenous and scholars, including Two-Spirit thinkers, have named and exceeded the limits of this scholarship. We will also examine the gender and sexual politics of settler colonialism and imperialism.

3. To put queer and trans of colour theorizing in conversation with critical studies of nation, citizenship, diaspora and empire: We will analyze to what extent the former has engaged questions of mobilities, borders, nationalism, migrations, transnationalisms and imperialisms in its examination of the nexus of racial, sexual and gender politics.

Taken together, an examination of these issues will enable students to apply queer and trans of colour insights to understanding local sexual and racial politics as well as to specific media and literary representations of their choosing.
Projected learning outcomes ...

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Describe the social, political, economic and intellectual conditions within which queer and trans of colour theorizing emerged as a field of knowledge and form of politics
- Articulate critiques of queer and trans of colour theorizing, including of its relationship to settler colonialism and indigenous activisms
- Deconstruct institutional and formal forms of equality and inclusion, with specific attention to their racial, gender and sexual politics
- Apply insights from queer and trans of colour theorizing to understand local forms of LGBTQ, sexual, gender and racial politics
- Discuss how queer and trans of colour theorizing extends our understandings of the political geographies of nation, borders, empire and diaspora

In addition, throughout the course, students will be able to hone the following skills:

- Critical reading
- Collaboration
- Summarization and annotation
- Seminar moderation
- Public discussion
- Writing, editing and argumentation
- Library research
- Project planning
- Public knowledge production

Assignments

If you are unable to meet these deadlines or to come to class due to conflicting responsibilities (e.g., religious observances) or unforeseen circumstances (e.g., illness), please contact me as soon as possible.

Where needed, please provide APA style citations in the in-text author-date-page format.

Reading reflection journal (x10): 15%

You will write short reflections (up to 400 words each) on readings for 10 weeks of your choosing. These reflections are meant to collect your thoughts and to serve as a resource for you for in-class discussions.

Due: Each reflection is due in-class on the Wed. for which it is written

Some questions to consider in your reflection include: What resonated (and didn’t) for you? What concepts need further unpacking? What examples can you think of that parallel the content of the readings? How might we apply the piece to local contexts and personal experiences?

Seminar moderation: 15%

In pairs, you will plan a 45 minute seminar that will engage the class in collective discussion about the main contributions, critiques and limits of your week’s readings (except weeks 1, 2 and 13). Part of your seminar moderation will consist of an activity that is centered on an ‘artifact’ of your choosing. You will lead the class in an analysis of your chosen artifact using the readings for that week (and previous weeks, where applicable).
### Mapping local QTBIPOC issues and activisms: 30%

As a collective, we will produce a publicly oriented website that documents QTBIPOC life and politics in Greater Vancouver / Coast Salish territories.

Each student will submit 2 standalone entries to the website. Entries could feature events, places, issues or organizations – both historical and recent. You are encouraged to use media sources, archival documents and other types of “evidence” to round out your profiled entries. You are also encouraged to use images provided that you acquire permissions and/or provide proper citations.

The project has three parts:

1. A public pitch in which you will identify and provide background on your 2 entries and sources you intend to use. (5%)
2. The final entries (up to 500 words each) (15%)
3. The website (10%), produced using the UBC Blogs website, for which we will make collective decisions on design, aesthetic, division of labour and other content and production issues.

### Participation (10%)

As this is a seminar, you will be assessed for your preparedness, participation, analytical quality, and engagement with course readings. The quality of your membership in the learning community – i.e., how you relate to your classmates and their ideas – will also be considered.

### Term paper (25%) + Proposal (5%)

You will submit a term paper (8-9 pages each) on a specific media or literary representation (e.g., film, television, short story, song) of issues of importance to queer and trans of colour theorizing. Your paper must demonstrate deep engagement with your chosen case study, as well as with the insights of required course readings. In addition, you are expected to engage insights from at least 4 outside academic sources.

You will also submit a brief proposal (up to 250 words) identifying your topic, providing background, why it is worth examining, and articulating the preliminary arguments and themes that will make it to your paper.

### Late submissions ...

If you anticipate having difficulty meeting deadlines, please talk to me sooner rather than later, if possible. Within reason, I am more than open to discussing alternative deadlines.

Unless negotiated with me or accompanied by official documentation from UBC or a health professional, late submissions will be penalized 5% (out of a mark of 100%) per day. Unexcused and/or undiscussed late submissions will only be accepted up to seven days (including holidays and weekends) after the due date. Extensions cannot be granted for in-class activities.
Communications policy ... 

The best way to reach me is during office hours (on a first come, first served basis) or by appointment. Emails are also fine, but they should be used conscientiously. Extended discussions, including ones that require back-and-forth (e.g., discussing ideas for your assignments), are best done in person.

In an attempt to encourage work-life balance (both yours and mine), I try not to send or reply to email on weekends or after 6pm on weekdays (unless absolutely necessary). I usually reply to emails within 24 hours of receipt. However, at certain times of the term, my mailbox backs up and I am unable to get to all emails in a timely manner. If you do not receive a reply within 48 hours (excluding weekends), please re-send your email.

Statement of respect and inclusion ... 

The Social Justice Institute (GRSJ) is a multidisciplinary field, which brings together teachers and students from diverse academic and personal backgrounds, ways of learning, communicating and responding to assignments. This diversity is an intellectual asset that can benefit from common principles of critical thinking and academic guidelines in evaluation procedures across all Institute courses. Instructors will adapt these general principles and guidelines where necessary in their own courses. Non-sexist, non-racist, non-homophobic, non-transphobic and non-heterosexist language is expected in GRSJ class discussions and course assignments.

The Social Justice Institute is committed to creating a respectful workplace and learning environment that supports inclusion based on the principles of equity, diversity and social justice. Our Institute’s commitments and approach to ensuring these principles at the institutional level include progressive approaches to inclusive campus culture; equitable demographic composition; orienting new students, faculty, and staff to relevant policies and procedures; and a social justice perspective on learning, teaching and research in order to create an educational and employment environment that supports our community members’ full participation. The Institute is committed to providing accessible, usable, and welcoming spaces for faculty, staff, students, and visitors with disabilities, members of racialized communities, trans and gender-diverse peoples, regardless of their age, income, social status, religion, ethno-linguistic, nationality and citizenship status.

GRSJ courses occur in learning environments that are inclusive of gender identity, gender expression, sex, race, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, ability, age, etc. Students, instructors, visitors and readings/media in GRSJ courses often raise controversial issues. Learners and educators expect to be treated respectfully at all times and in all interactions. Disagreements can occur among course participants without being disagreeable and offensive.

Please e-mail me your name and pronoun and how you would like these to be used.
Course schedule ...

Week 1  
(Sept. 6)  
**Introduction** (No readings)

Week 2  
(Sept. 13)  
**Unpacking ‘queer’**


Week 3  
(Sept. 20)  
**Women of colour feminisms theorizing the nexus of racial, gender and sexual politics**


Week 4  
(Sept. 27)  
**Dis/articulating queer and trans of colour critique**


Week 5
(Oct. 4)

**Producing QTPOC spaces**


Week 6
(Oct. 11)

**Settler colonialism as a gender-sexual project**


**In-class: PITCHES (Entries on local QTBIPOC politics)**

Week 7
(Oct. 18)

**Queer indigenous and Two-Spirit scholarship beside/beyond queer of colour theorizing**


Finley, Chris. (2011). Decolonizing the queer Native body (and recovering the Native bull-dyke): bringing ‘sexy back’ and out of Native studies’ closets. In Driskill, Q-L, et. al. (eds.), *Queer indigenous studies*, pp. 31-42.

Film screening: A Place in the Middle (2014) and Two Spirits (2007)
Week 8  
(Oct. 25)  
** Queering borderings, immigrations and diasporas **  

** Due: TERM PAPER PROPOSALS  

Week 9  
(Nov. 1)  
** De/Constructing the racial Other as threat to queerness **  

Week 10  
(Nov. 8)  
** Neoliberal seductions **  

** Due: ENTRIES (local QTBIPOC politics)  

Week 11  
(Nov. 15)  
** Queerness and war on/as terror **  


**In-class: WEBSITE (local QTBIPOC politics)**

**Week 12 (Nov. 22)**

### Global(izing) queer and trans of colour


**Week 13 (Nov. 29)**

### Without conclusion: Worlding queer and trans of colour into being


Munoz, Jose Esteban. (2010). The future is in the present. In his *Cruising utopia*, pp. 49-64.

**Due: TERM PAPERS**
### Grading scale ...

The following grading scale, as found in the UBC Academic Calendar, will form the basis for the assignment of component and total marks in this course.

More information on UBC grading practices and best practices can be found here: [http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/Vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,42,96,0](http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/Vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,42,96,0).

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### Academic integrity ...

Academic integrity is crucial to rigorous and responsible knowledge production in the academy. It is our collective responsibility to ensure that standards of academic integrity are honoured. It is your responsibility as a student to inform yourself of academic guidelines. As your teacher, I am here to help you be aware of policies and best practices. Please do not hesitate to consult with me should you have questions about what is acceptable or not acceptable.

Violations of academic integrity standards include but are not limited to plagiarism, falsification of data and documents, and cheating on tests. They are subject to possible disciplinary measures, including course failure, suspension or expulsion.

For more information on UBC’s policy on academic misconduct: [http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,54,111,959](http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,54,111,959)

For more information on what constitutes and for tips on how to avoid it, consult the following website: [http://learningcommons.ubc.ca/resource-guides/avoiding-plagiarism/](http://learningcommons.ubc.ca/resource-guides/avoiding-plagiarism/).