

# GEOG 507: QUEER GEOGRAPHIES

Winter 2017

Wednesdays 2:35-5:25, Burnside 429

Prof. Natalie Oswin

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Office hours: Wednesday 10:00-11:00 (or by appointment)

**Course description:** Over the last few decades, geographers have been engaging with queer theory to explore the relationship between sexuality and space. The resulting body of work has greatly expanded our understanding of the spatial productions and expressions of sexual identities. But this important contribution is somewhat paradoxical since queer theory advances a critique of the idea of sexual identity. In this seminar we will go beyond locating ‘queers in space’ to instead advance a ‘queer approach to space’. We will consider the ways in which queer theory can be used in concert with postcolonial, critical race, feminist, and materialist theories. Moving away from a literal sexual referent, we will consider how broad constellations of power involving dynamics of race, gender, class, colonialism, geopolitics, migration, nationalism, and globalization are central to expressions of heteronormativity and homonormativity.

Though our focus is on developing understanding of queer geographies, the questions we will explore are thoroughly interdisciplinary. As such, the reading list comes from various fields including geography, sociology, cultural studies, law, history and anthropology.

**Prerequisites:** Permission of the instructor. No geography background necessary. This course qualifies as complementary for women’s studies and sexual diversity studies students.

**Readings:** Readings will be made available on myCourses.

## Evaluation:

Requirement	Value	Date
Participation	50%	Ongoing
Essay proposal	10%	March 8
Essay	40%	April 5

### Participation

I expect that you will engage with all course materials and attend all classes. As our meetings will be entirely discussion-based, the success of the seminar depends on the quality and thoughtfulness of your critical questions and comments. The fundamental requirement is therefore that you do the readings, think carefully about them, and participate fully in class discussions.

To facilitate our discussions, you are required to submit a short statement (1-2 pages) in reaction to the week's readings followed by three questions for potential discussion during class. This task is to be completed for eight of our nine meetings between weeks 2 to 8 and 10 to 11 (there are no assigned readings for week 9). You may choose to focus on one or two specific readings or to draw out themes across all of them. Do not summarize the articles. Instead, provide a *critical and analytical* response to them. The aim is to clarify, elaborate, complicate or critique key issues and arguments in the material that you find interesting.

These reading responses must be e-mailed to me by 5 pm on the day before the class to which they relate. They should be saved as a Word document, and the file titled 'LastnameWeek#' (eg. OswinWeek2). Late submissions will not be accepted.

Your participation grade will be based on the quality and clarity of both your weekly written responses and in-class participation.

### Essay proposal

On **March 8**, you will submit a 3-4 page essay proposal. The proposal will present your plan for the final essay, including a description of what you intend to write about, a short review of the existing literature on the topic, a statement of its significance in light of the course and our readings, and a brief overview of your potential argument. The proposal must include a bibliography of sources you will be drawing upon from the course, and any preliminary library research you have conducted.

### Essay

The essay can be on any topic insofar as it engages with the themes of the course. You may wish to conduct a critical literature review that either expands on one of the themes directly examined in class or a complementary one of your choosing. Alternatively, you could explore a relevant case study related to a current event, an urban site, a film or a piece of fiction. You are welcome to meet with me to discuss your ideas.

The word limit is 3500-4000 for undergraduates and 5000-5500 for graduates (excluding the bibliography).

**Language:** In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

**Academic integrity:** McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see [www.mcgill.ca/integrity](http://www.mcgill.ca/integrity) for more information).

For information on university and department policies for student assessment, please go to <http://www.mcgill.ca/geography/studentassessment>

### **Class schedule and readings:**

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1. Jan 4 Introduction to the course

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2. Jan 11 Queer as critique

- Foucault, Michel (1990 [1978]) *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction, Volume 1*. Translated by Robert Hurley. New York: Vintage Books, pp. 1-13, 92-114.
- Butler, Judith (1993) 'Critically Queer,' *GLQ* 1(1): 17-32.
- Berlant, Lauren and Michael Warner (1998) 'Sex in Public,' *Critical Inquiry* 24(2): 547-66.
- Eng, David L. with Judith Halberstam and Jose Munoz (2005) 'What's queer about queer studies now?' *Social Text* 23(3-4): 1-17.

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3. Jan 18 Thinking sex, thinking race

- Bell, David, Jon Binnie, Julia Cream, & Gill Valentine (1994) 'All hyped up and no place to go,' *Gender, Place and Culture*. 1(1): 31-47.
- Responses to Bell et al article in *Gender, Place and Culture* (1995) 2(1): Lise Walker, 'More than just skin deep: fem(me)ininity and the subversion of identity,' pp. 71-76, and Elsbeth Probyn, 'Lesbians in space: Gender, sex and the structure of missing,' pp. 77-84.
- Cohen, Cathy (1997) 'Punks, bulldaggers, and welfare queens: The radical potential of queer politics?' *GLQ* 3(4): 437-465.
- Nast, Heidi (2002) 'Queer patriarchies, queer racisms, international,' *Antipode* 34: 874-910.

- Oswin, Natalie (2008) 'Critical geographies and the uses of sexuality: Deconstructing queer space,' *Progress in Human Geography* 32(1): 89-103.
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#### 4. Jan 25      Queer time, postcolonial space

- Edelman, Lee (2004) 'The future is kid stuff', chapter one of his *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1-32.
  - Hoad, Neville (2000) 'Arrested development or the queerness of savages: resisting evolutionary narratives of difference,' *Postcolonial Studies* 3(3): 133-158.
  - Arondekar, Anjali (2005) 'Without a trace: Sexuality and the colonial archive,' *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 14(1-2): 10-27.
  - Smith, Andrea (2010) 'Queer theory and Native studies: The heteronormativity of settler colonialism,' *GLQ* 16(1-2): 42-68.
  - Martin, Fran (2011) 'No future: Tomboy melodrama', chapter four of her *Backward Glances: Contemporary Chinese Cultures and the Female Homoerotic Imaginary*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, pp. 93-117.
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#### 5. Feb 1      National desires

- Puar, Jasbir K. and Amit S. Rai (2002) 'Monster, terrorist, fag: The war on terrorism and the production of docile patriots,' *Social Text* 20(3): 117-148.
- Alexander, M. Jacqui (1994) 'Not just (any) body can be a citizen: The politics of law, sexuality and postcoloniality in Trinidad and Tobago and the Bahamas,' *Feminist Review* 48: 5-23.
- Ritchie, Jason (2010) 'How do you say "come out of the closet" in Arabic?: Queer activism and the politics of visibility in Israel-Palestine,' *GLQ* 16(4): 557-575.
- Livermon, Xavier (2012) 'Queer(y)ing freedom: Black queer visibilities in postapartheid South Africa,' *GLQ* 18(2-3): 297-323.
- Dave, Naisargi (2011) 'Indian and lesbian and what came next: Affect, commensuration and queer emergences,' *American Ethnologist* 38(4): 650-665.
- Fortier, Ann-Marie (2008) 'Children of multicultural Britain: The good, the bad, the uncanny,' in her *Multicultural Horizons: Diversity and the limits of the civil nation*, New York: Routledge, 39-65.

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6. Feb 8      Metronormativities

- Bell, D. and J. Binnie (2004) 'Authenticating queer space: Citizenship, urbanism and governance', *Urban Studies*, 41: 1807-1820.
- Manalansan, Martin (2005) 'Race, violence and neoliberal spatial politics in the global city,' *Social Text* 23(3-4): 141-155.
- Delaney, Samuel (1999) Part I: Times Square Blue, of his *Times Square Red, Times Square Blue*, New York: New York University Press, pp. 1-108.
- Halberstam, Judith (2005) 'The Brandon Archive,' in her *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives*, New York: NYU Press, pp. 22-46.

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7. Feb 15      The global gay

- Altman, Dennis (1997) 'Global gaze/ Global gays,' *GLQ* 3(4): 417-436.
- Rofel, Lisa (2007) 'Qualities of desire: Imagining gay identities,' in her *Desiring China: Experiments in Neoliberalism, Sexuality, and Public Culture*, Durham: Duke University Press, 85-110.
- Manalansan, Martin (2005) 'Race, violence and neoliberal spatial politics in the global city,' *Social Text* 23(3-4): 141-155.
- Benedicto, Bobby (2008) 'The haunting of gay Manila: Global space-time and the specter of *Kabaklaan*,' *GLQ* 14(2-3): 317-338.

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8. Feb 22      Queer migrations I

- Weston, Kath (1995) 'Get Thee to a Big City: Sexual Imaginary and the Great Gay Migration,' *GLQ* 2(3): 253-78.
- Luibheid, Eithne (2008) 'Sexuality, migration, and the shifting line between legal and illegal status,' *GLQ* 14(2-3): 289-315.
- Reddy, Chandan (2005) 'Asian diasporas, neoliberalism, and family: Reviewing the case for homosexual asylum in the context of family rights,' *Social Text* 23(3-4): 101-119.

- Aizura, Aren (2012) 'Transnational transgender rights and immigration law,' in A. Finn Enke (ed) *Transfeminist Perspectives in and beyond Transgender and Gender Studies* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press), pp. 133-151.
  - White, Melissa Autumn (2013) 'Ambivalent homonationalisms: transnational queer intimacies and territorialized belongings,' *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*, 15(1): 37-54.
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\*\*\* Reading break Feb 27-March 3 \*\*\*

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## 9. March 8 Queer migrations II

- *Paper dolls* [documentary to be shown in-class]

No Readings \*\*\* Essay proposals due

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## 10. March 15 Adoption

- Briggs, Laura (2012) Introduction, and Chapter One: African American Children and Adoption, 1950-1975, in her *Somebody's Children: The Politics of Transracial and Transnational Adoption*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, pp. 1-58.
  - Dubinsky, Karen (2010) 'The hybrid baby: Domestic interracial adoption since the 1950s,' chapter three of her *Babies without Borders: Adoption and Migration across the Americas*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, pp. 57-92.
  - Dorow, Sara and Amy Swiffen (2009) 'Blood and desire: the secret of heteronormativity in adoption narratives of culture,' *American Ethnologist* 36(3): 563-573.
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## 11. March 22 Criminalization and incarceration

- *Cruel and Unusual* [documentary to be shown in-class]
- Kunzel, Regina (2010) Introduction, Chapter two: 'Every prison has its perverts', and Chapter five: 'Rape, race and the violent prison', in her *Criminal Intimacy: Prison and the Uneven History of Modern American Sexuality*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 1-14, 45-76, and 149-190.

- Spade, Dean (2008) 'Documenting Gender,' *Hastings Law Journal* 59: 731-841.

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**12.** March 29 Wrap up

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**13.** April 5 No class – I'll be away at a conference

\*\* Essays due