GEOG 507: QUEER GEOGRAPHIES
Winter 2017
Wednesdays 2:35-5:25, Burnside 429

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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 heternormativity 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:

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<td>Participation</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<td>Essay proposal</td>
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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 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:

1. Jan 4  Introduction to the course

2. Jan 11  Queer as critique


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.


4. Jan 25  Queer time, postcolonial space


5. Feb 1  National desires


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6. Feb 8  Metronormativities


7. Feb 15  The global gay


8. Feb 22  Queer migrations I


*** Reading break Feb 27-March 3 ***

9. March 8 Queer migrations II

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

No Readings *** Essay proposals due

10. March 15 Adoption


11. March 22 Criminalization and incarceration

• Cruel and Unusual [documentary to be shown in-class]


12. March 29  Wrap up

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

** Essays due**