GEOG 507: GEOGRAPHIES OF DIFFERENCE
Winter 2019
Mondays 11:35-2:25, Burnside 429

Prof. Natalie Oswin
E-mail: natalie.oswin@mcgill.ca
Tel: 514-398-5232
Office: Burnside 418
Office hours: by appointment

Course description: In the academic discipline of human geography, the ‘cultural turn’ brought geographers into concerted conversation with a range of alternative theoretical frameworks (especially critical race, postcolonial, Indigenous, feminist, and queer theories) in the 1990s and early 2000s. This course examines the legacy of this turn - or more accurately, turns, since the ‘cultural turn’ is a shorthand for a series of epistemological turns – and its connection to related disciplines. Through engagement with readings from various fields including geography, sociology, cultural studies, law, history, anthropology, gender and sexuality studies, and urban studies, we will think through the relations between social and spatial justice, as they play out in the academy and beyond. Put differently, we will look at the ways in which racism, patriarchy, (settler) colonialism, elitism, hetero- and cis-normativity, and elitism take place across space and time, and the implications of their confluence for critical scholarship as well as social/political response.

Prerequisites: Permission of the instructor. No geography background necessary. This course qualifies as complementary for undergraduates enrolled in the gender, sexuality and feminist studies major or minor, and for graduates participating in the option in gender and women’s studies.

Readings: Readings will be made available on myCourses.

Evaluation:

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<td>Reading Responses</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 ten meetings between weeks 2 to 9 and 11 to 12. 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).

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 18, 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 relation to 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 4000-4500 for undergraduates and 5500-6000 for graduates (excluding the bibliography).
**Language:** In accord with McGill University’s Charter of Students’ Rights, students in this course 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](http://www.mcgill.ca/geography/studentassessment)

**Class schedule and readings:**

1. Jan 7  
   Introduction to the course and each other

2. Jan 14

   
   
   
3. Jan 21


4. Jan 28


5. Feb 4


6. Feb 11


7. Feb 18


8. Feb 25


*** Reading break March 5-9 ***

9. March 11


10. March 18

No class – Essay proposals due

11. March 25


12. April 1


- Daigle, Michelle (forthcoming) The spectacle of reconciliation: On (the) unsettling responsibilities to Indigenous peoples. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*


- Simpson, Leanne Betasamosake (2017) *As we have always done: Indigenous Freedom through Radical Resistance.* University of Minnesota Press. Selections TBD.

13. April 8   Wrap up