

# GEOG 507: GEOGRAPHIES OF DIFFERENCE

Winter 2019

Mondays 11:35-2:25, Burnside 429

Prof. Natalie Oswin

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**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:

Requirement	Value	Date
Reading Responses	30%	Ongoing
Participation	20%	Ongoing
Essay proposal	10%	March 18
Essay	40%	April 23

### 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>

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

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#### **1. Jan 7** Introduction to the course and each other

- Rose-Redwood, Reuben, Rob Kitchin, Lauren Rickards, Ugo Rossi, Ayona Datta, and Jeremy Crampton (2018) The possibilities and limits to dialogue. *Dialogues in Human Geography* 8(2): 109-123.

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#### **2. Jan 14**

- Spivak, Gayatri C. ([1988] 2010) 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' in R. Morris (ed) *Can the Subaltern Speak? Reflections on the history of an idea*. Columbia University Press, New York, pp.237-292.
  - Said, Edward (1984) Permission to narrate. *Journal of Palestine Studies* 13(3): 27-38.
  - Munoz, Jose Esteban (1999) 'Performing disidentifications', in his *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1-25.
  - Tuck, Eve (2009) Suspending Damage: A Letter to Communities. *Harvard Educational Review* 79(3): 409-428.
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### 3. Jan 21

- Combahee River Collective (1995 [1977]) 'The Combahee River Collective Statement,' in B. Guy-Sheftall (ed) *Words of Fire: An Anthology of African-American Feminist Thought*, New York: New Press, pp. 231–240.
  - Moraga, Cherríe (2015 [1983]) 'La Güera,' in Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa (eds) *This Bridge Called my Back: Writings by Radical Women of Colour*, SUNY Press, pp. 22-29.
  - Crenshaw, Kimberle (1991) Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color. *Stanford Law Review* 43(6): 1241–1299.
  - Harris, Cheryl (1993) Whiteness as property. *Harvard Law Review*, 106(8): 1707-1791.
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### 4. Jan 28

- Joshi, Shangrila and Priscilla McCutcheon (2015) Visceral geographies of whiteness and invisible microaggressions. *Acme: An International Journal for Critical Geographies* 14(1): 298-323.
  - Mollett, Sharlene and Caroline Faria (2018) The spatialities of intersectional thinking: fashioning feminist geographic futures. *Gender, Place and Culture* 25(4): 565-577.
  - Ybarra, Megan (2019) On becoming a Latinx geographies killjoy. *Society and Space* online.
  - McKittrick, Katherine (2013) Plantation futures. *small axe* 17(3): 1-15.
  - Bledsoe, Adam and Willie Jamaal Wright (forthcoming) The anti-blackness of global capital. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*.
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### 5. Feb 4

- Christopherson, Susan (1989) On being outside 'the project'. *Antipode* 21(2): 83-89.
- Deutsche, Rosalyn (1991) Boys town. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 9(1): 5-30.

- Wright, Melissa (2001) Feminine villains, masculine heroes, and the reproduction of Ciudad Juarez. *Social Text* 19(4): 93-113.
  - Katz, Cindi (2001) On the grounds of globalization: A topography for feminist political engagement. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 26(4): 1213-1234.
  - Pratt, Geraldine and Victoria Rosner (2006) Introduction: the global and the intimate. *WSQ: Women's Studies Quarterly* 34(1): 13-24.
  - Wilson, Ara (2016) The infrastructure of intimacy. *Signs* 41(2): 247-280.
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#### 6. Feb 11

- Rubin, Gayle (1984) 'Thinking sex: Notes for a radical theory of sexuality,' in Carole Vance (ed) *Pleasure and Danger*. Routledge, pp. 267-319.
  - Butler, Judith (1993) Critically Queer. *GLQ* 1(1): 17-32.
  - Cohen, Cathy (1997) Punks, bulldaggers, and welfare queens: The radical potential of queer politics? *GLQ* 3(4): 437-465.
  - Eng, David L. with Judith Halberstam and Jose Munoz (2005) What's queer about queer studies now? *Social Text* 23(3-4): 1-17.
  - Stryker, Susan and Aren Aizura (2013) 'Introduction: Transgender studies 2.0,' in their edited collection *The Transgender Studies Reader 2*, Routledge, pp. 1-12.
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#### 7. Feb 18

- Binnie, Jon (1997) Coming out of geography: towards a queer epistemology? *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 15(2): 223-237.
- Oswin, Natalie (2008) Critical geographies and the uses of sexuality: Deconstructing queer space. *Progress in Human Geography* 32(1): 89-103.
- Smith, Andrea (2010) Queer theory and Native studies: The heteronormativity of settler colonialism. *GLQ* 16(1-2): 42-68.
- Amin, Kadji (2016) Haunted by the 1990s: Queer theory's affective histories. *Women Studies Quarterly* 44(3/4): 173-189.

- Aizura, Aren (2018) 'Introduction: Provincializing trans,' in his book *Mobile Subjects: Transnational Imaginaries of Gender Reassignment*. Duke University Press, pp. 1-28.
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#### 8. Feb 25

- McClintock, Anne (1992) The angel of progress: Pitfalls of the term 'post-colonialism'. *Social Text* 31/32: 84-98.
  - Jacobs, Jane M. (2002) '(Post-colonial) spaces,' in her book *Edge of Empire: Postcolonialism and the City*, Routledge, New York, pp. 13-37.
  - Mignolo, Walter D (2009) Epistemic Disobedience, Independent Thought and Decolonial Freedom. *Theory, Culture and Society* 26(7-8): 159-181.
  - Coulthard, Glen (2014) *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*. University of Minnesota Press. Selections TBD.
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\*\*\* Reading break March 5-9 \*\*\*

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#### 9. March 11

- McEwan, Cheryl (2003) Material geographies and postcolonialism. *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 24(3): 340-55.
- Robinson, Jennifer (2011) Cities in a world of cities: The comparative gesture. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 35(1): 1-23.
- Roy, Ananya (2011) Subaltern urbanism. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 35(2): 223-238.
- Jazeel, Tariq (2018) Singularity: A manifesto for incomparable geography. *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography*, doi:10.1111/sjtg.12265
- Sultana, Farhana (2018) The false equivalence of academic freedom and free speech: Defending academic integrity in the age of white supremacy, colonial nostalgia, and anti-intellectualism. *Acme: An International Journal for Critical Geographies* 17(2): 228-257.

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10. March 18

No class – Essay proposals due

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11. March 25

- Wolfe, Patrick (2006) Settler colonialism and the elimination of the native. *Journal of Genocide Research* 8(4): 387–409.
  - Blomley, Nicholas (2008) Law, property and the geography of violence: The Frontier, the Survey, and the Grid *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 93(1): 121-141.
  - Smith, Linda Tuhiwai (2012) *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition*. Zed Books. Selections TBD.
  - Hunt, Sarah (2014) Ontologies of Indigeneity: The Politics of Embodying a Concept. *Cultural Geographies* 21(1): 27-32.
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12. April 1

- Tuck, Eve and K. Wayne Yang (2012) Decolonization is not a metaphor. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education and Society* 1(1): 1-40.
  - de Leeuw, Sarah and Sarah Hunt (2018) Unsettling decolonizing geographies. *Geography Compass* <https://doi.org/10.1111/gec3.12376>
  - Daigle, Michelle (forthcoming) The spectacle of reconciliation: On (the) unsettling responsibilities to Indigenous peoples. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*
  - Pasternak, Shiri (2014) How capitalism will save colonialism: The privatization of reserve lands in Canada. *Antipode* 47(1): 179-196.
  - Simpson, Leanne Betasamosake (2017) *As we have always done: Indigenous Freedom through Radical Resistance*. University of Minnesota Press. Selections TBD.
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13. April 8      Wrap up