

GRADUATE PROGRAMME IN SOCIOLOGY
York University

Studies in Sexual Regulation
SOCI 6181 3.0

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Office Hours by Appointment
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Classroom: S202 Ross
Time: 2:30-5:30, Wednesdays

Course Description

This course is designed to introduce graduate students to the critical study of gender and sexual regulation from a postcolonial and queer perspective. Using a variety of disciplinary orientations, we examine queer theories of gender and sexuality inspired by the seminal works of French philosopher Michel Foucault (1926-1984) and the scholarship of Judith Butler. Although sexuality studies is multidisciplinary, diverse, and not confined to the Foucauldian or Butlerian frames, these two theorists have, arguably, had the greatest influence on the trajectory of queer theory in the North American context. Butler's work on gender performativity and Foucault's work on bio-politics (power over life) will thus be subject to analysis and critique. Specifically, Foucault's writing on bio-politics will be read through the lens of postcolonial and critical race theory. Joseph-Achille Mbembe, Alexander Weheliye and others have all written on death and necropolitics in the postcolony in ways that have enormous implications for the bio-politics of sex. Just as the history of sexuality as written by Foucault is also a history of race, colonialism and empire, bio-political power must also be understood in terms of racialization.

Attention will be devoted to Jasbir Puar's writing on homonationalism alongside Scott Morgensen's scholarship on white settler colonialism to understand the limits of queer theorizing in the west. Students are welcome to further explore how sexuality figures in the building of empires, in histories of colonization, globalization, migration, militarism, sex tourism, in processes of racialization, etc.

Judith Butler's work on gender performativity will be used as an entry point into thinking about gender regulation, heterosexuality, melancholia, race and transgender subjectivities. Although influential and important, we will engage trans scholarly critiques of Butler's writing on gender performativity, particularly as it relates to the question of sex embodiment. Students will be introduced to important work by trans studies scholars including, but not limited to, Susan Stryker, Jay Prosser and Gayle Salmon.

As Halley and Parker (2011) note in their introduction to *After Sex: On Writing Since Queer Theory*, there has been a split between affect-based theories (inspired by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick) and what Jack Halberstam has called the 'anti-social' turn (inspired by Lacanian psychoanalysis) in queer theory. We will examine the work of Lee Edelman, Tim Dean and Leo Bersani who write from a Lacanian perspective to better understand what it means for 'queers' to embrace abjection in the Symbolic (a position characterized by not having a future). Lee

Edelman's (2004) analytic of white reproductive futurism will also be used to understand the deployment of race, gender and sexuality in heteronormative and imperial projects. Feminist and queer scholars of color have offered important critiques of the 'anti-social' turn with respect to the whiteness of the imagined future citizen (Teresa De Lauretis, José Esteban Muñoz, David Eng, etc.). What, for example, is the role of nationalism and western imperialism in shaping sexual futures and who can afford to give them up?

Evaluation:

Presentation: 25%

Participation: 25%

Essay: 50%

Recommended Texts

NOTE: If you are new to queer theory read:

Nikki Sullivan. 2003. *A Critical Introduction to Queer Theory* New York: New York University Press. (Especially chapters 1, 3 and 4).

Steven Seidman. 1996. *Queer Theory/Sociology* Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers.

Riki Wilchins. 2004. *Queer Theory, Gender Theory: An Instant Primer*. Los Angeles: Alyson Books.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Introduction to Critical Sexualities Course

Sept. 13

**No Readings Assigned*

Presentation Sign-up, administration and lecture.

Queer Theory: An Introduction

Sept. 20

Required Readings:

Janet Halley and Andrew Parker. 2011. *After Sex? On Writing Since Queer Theory* Duke University Press: Durham and London. (Introduction).

Steven Seidman. 1996. "Introduction" in *Queer Theory/Sociology* (Eds.) Steven Seidman. Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers, pp. 1-30.

Michael Warner. 1993. "Introduction" In *Fear of a Queer Planet: Queer Politics and Social Theory* (Eds.) Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, pp. vii-xxxii.

Recommended Readings:

Claire Colebrook. 2009. "On the Very Possibility of Queer Theory," In Chrysanthi Nigianni and Merl Storr (Eds.) *Deleuze and Queer Theory*, Stockport, United Kingdom: Edinburgh University Press.

Tuhkanen, Mikko. 2009. "Queer Hybridity," Chrysanthi Nigianni and Merl Storr (Eds.) *Deleuze and Queer Theory*, Stockport, United Kingdom: Edinburgh University Press.

The FREUDIAN LEGACY

Sigmund Freud and Psychoanalysis

Sept. 21

Required Readings:

Freud, Sigmund, James Strachey, and Angela Richards. *On Sexuality: Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality and Other Works. Translated from the German Under the General Editorship of James Strachey. The Present Volume Compiled and Edited by Angela Richards.* Penguin Books, 1977.

Eros, Civilization and Herbert Marcuse

Oct. 4

Required Readings:

Marcuse, Herbert. *Eros and civilization: A philosophical inquiry into Freud.* Vol. 496. Beacon Press, 1974.

Recommended Readings:

Freud, Sigmund. *Totem and taboo.* London: Pelican Books, 1938.
Freud, Sigmund. *Civilization and its discontents.* Broadview Press, 2015.

MICHEL FOUCAULT

Michel Foucault and the History of Sexuality

Oct. 11

Required Readings:

Foucault, Michel. "The history of sexuality: An introduction, volume I." *Trans. Robert Hurley.* New York: Vintage (1990).

Recommended Readings:

Foucault, Michel. *Abnormal: lectures at the Collège de France, 1974-1975.* Vol. 2. Macmillan, 2007.
Foucault, Michel, François Ewald, and Alessandro Fontana. *The birth of biopolitics: lectures at the Collège de France, 1978-1979.* Ed. Michel Senellart. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

Necropolitics and Death

Oct. 18

Required Readings:

Weheliye, Alexander G. *Habeas Viscus: Racializing Assemblages, Biopolitics, and Black Feminist Theories of the Human.* Duke University Press, 2014. (Chapters 2 and 4).
Mbembe, J-A., and Libby Meintjes. "Necropolitics." *Public culture* 15.1 (2003): 11-40.

Suggested Readings:

Haritaworn, Jin, Adi Kuntsman, and Silvia Posocco. *Queer necropolitics*. Routledge, 2014.

JUDITH BUTLER

Gender Performativity

Oct. 25

Required Readings:

Judith Butler. "Melancholy Gender/Refused Identification" In Maurice Berger, Brian Wallis and Simon Watson (Eds.) *Constructing Masculinity* New York: Routledge, 1995.

Judith Butler. 1993. "Critically Queer" *GLQ* 17(32): 17-32.

José Esteban Muñoz. 1991. *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics*. Introduction. (Pages 1-34).

Recommended Readings:

Nikki Sullivan. 2003. "Performance, Performativity, Parody, and Politics." In *A Critical Introduction to Queer Theory* by Nikki Sullivan. New York: New York University Press.

Butler, Judith. 1990. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge.

Butler, Judith. 1993. *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex."* New York: Routledge.

Butler, Judith. 1997. *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Butler, Judith. 2004. *Undoing Gender*. New York: Routledge.

Judith Butler. 1993. "The Lesbian Phallus and the Morphological Imaginary" In *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'*," New York: Routledge.

Butler, Judith. 2006. *Precarious life: The powers of mourning and violence*. Verso: New York.

Butler, Judith. "Bodily Vulnerability, Coalitions, and Street Politics." *Critical Studies* 37.1 (2014): 99-119.

Butler, Judith. "Precarious Life, Vulnerability, and the Ethics of Cohabitation." *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 26.2 (2012): 134-151.

TRANS* STUDIES

Trans* Studies and Queer Theory

Nov. 1

Required Readings:

Susan Stryker. Rage, Performing Transgender. "My Words to Victor Frankenstein above the Village of Chamounix." *The Transgender Studies Reader* (2013): 244.

Stryker, Susan. "Transgender studies: Queer theory's evil twin." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 10.2 (2004): 212-215.

Jay Prosser. 2006. "Queer Feminism, Transgender, and Transubstantiation of Sex" In *The*

Transgender Studies Reader (Eds.) by Susan Stryker and Stephen Whittle, New York: Routledge, 257-280.

Suggested Readings:

Stone, Sandy. *The empire strikes back*. 1994.

Salmon, Gayle. 2004. "The Bodily Ego and the Contested Domain of the Material." *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 15.3: 95-122.

Oren Gozlan. (2011) "Transsexual surgery: A novel reminder and a navel remainder" *International Forum of Psychoanalysis*.

Oren Gozlan. (2008) "The Accident of Gender" *Psychoanalytic Review*, 95(4).

HOMONATIONALISM

Homonationalism and Queer Theory

Nov. 8

Required Readings:

Jasbir K. Puar. 2005. "Queer Times, Queer Assemblages" *Social Text* 84-85(23): 121-139.

Puar, Jasbir K. "Homonationalism as assemblage: Viral travels, affective sexualities." *Jindal Global L. Rev.* 4 (2013): 23-387.

Puar, Jasbir K. "I would rather be a cyborg than a goddess": Becoming-Intersectional in Assemblage Theory." *PhiloSOPHIA* 2.1 (2012): 49-66.

QUEER SETTLER COLONIALISM

Queer Settler Colonialism and Indigeneity

Nov. 15

Required Readings:

Morgensen, Scott Lauria. "The biopolitics of settler colonialism: Right here, right now." *Settler Colonial Studies* 1.1 (2011): 52-76.

Morgensen, Scott Lauria. "SETTLER HOMONATIONALISM Theorizing Settler Colonialism within Queer Modernities." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 16.1-2 (2010): 105-131.

Smith, Andrea. "QUEER THEORY AND NATIVE STUDIES The Heteronormativity of Settler Colonialism." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 16.1-2 (2010): 41-68.

QUEER FUTURITY

Queer Anti-sociality

Nov. 22

Required Readings:

Edelman, Lee. "The future is kid stuff: Queer theory, disidentification, and the death drive." *Narrative* (1998): 18-30.

Bersani, Leo. "Is the rectum a grave?" *October* (1987): 197-222

Suggested Readings:

Lee Edelman. *No future: Queer theory and the death drive*. Duke University Press, 2004.

Bersani, Leo. *Homos*. Harvard University Press, 2009.

Dean, Tim. "Breeding culture: Barebacking, bugchasing, giftgiving." *The Massachusetts Review* (2008): 80-94.

Halberstam, Judith. "The anti-social turn in queer studies." *Graduate Journal of Social Science* 5.2 (2008): 140-156.

Dean, Tim. "Lacan and queer theory." *The Cambridge Companion to Lacan* (2003): 238-52.

De Lauretis, Teresa. "Queer texts, bad habits, and the issue of a future." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 17.2-3 (2011): 243-263.

Huffer, Lynne. "Are the Lips a Grave?." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 17.4 (2011): 517-542.

Muñoz, José Esteban. *Cruising utopia: The then and there of queer futurity*. NYU Press, 2009.

José Esteban Muñoz. 2007. "Cruising the Toilet: LeRoi Jones/Amiri Baraka, Radical Black Traditions and Queer Futurity." *GLQ* 13.2-3: 353-367.

Queer liberalism, Racialization and the Future

Nov. 29

Required Readings:

Eng, David L. *The feeling of kinship: Queer liberalism and the racialization of intimacy*. Duke University Press, 2010.

Duggan, Lisa. *The twilight of equality?: Neoliberalism, cultural politics, and the attack on democracy*. Beacon Press, 2012.

Recommended Readings:

Puar, Jasbir K. "Coda: The cost of getting better suicide, sensation, switchpoints." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 18.1 (2012): 149-158.

Eng, David. "Queer Orphans and Their Neoliberal Saviors." *Mothering Queerly, Queering Motherhood: Resisting Monomaternalism in Adoptive, Lesbian, Blended, and Polygamous Families* (2013): 85.

Eng, David L. "Transnational adoption and queer diasporas." *Social Text* 21.3 (2003): 1-37.

Muñoz, José Esteban. *Cruising utopia: The then and there of queer futurity*. NYU Press, 2009.

Chen, Mel Y. "Toxic animacies, inanimate affections." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 17.2-3 (2011): 265-286.

The End is Only the Beginning...