

QUEER & TRANS OF COLOUR CREATIVITY & WORLDMAKING

Institute for Gender, Race,
Sexuality and Social Justice
University of British Columbia

CSIS 500: Critical Studies in Sexuality:
Multidisciplinary Perspectives

Instructor: Dr. JP Catungal



LaWhore Vagistan, performing at Brandeis University
(Photo by Tim Correira)

... the aesthetics
of **queer of color
life** are tied to
the daily work of
creating and
thriving in a
phobic world ...

KYLA WAZANA TOMPKINS

"Intersections of Race, Gender, and Sexuality:
Queer of Color Critique" (2015: 175)

Course description

What kinds of worlds do queer and trans people of colour imagine and create, and how – through what ways of knowing and being – can we sense them? What can practices of queer and trans of colour creativity tell us about the present moment and how we have arrived here? How do they orient us towards more socially just, more abundant and more capacious futures?

This graduate seminar concerns queer and trans of colour ways of being, knowing and doing, and the political and intellectual resources they offer for understanding the world as we know and experience it. Our focus will be on “queer and trans of colour” in multiple registers: (1) as a set of subject positions, (2) as ways of sensing and navigating the world, and (3) as practices of making place and making home.

Our interlocutors in this course – guests, readings, case studies, each other – engage variously artistic, academic and activist forms of practice and ways of being in the world. Along with attending to the aesthetic and formal dimensions of their life’s work, we will also think with queer and trans of colour creative practices as cultural and political analyses of the ‘sexual’ in its entanglements with racism, coloniality, empire and capitalism. Along the way, we will linger on the sensual, bodily and felt ways that queer and trans of colour thinkers and creators make sense of the world, and imagine and enact other ways of being and becoming anew.

Projected learning outcomes

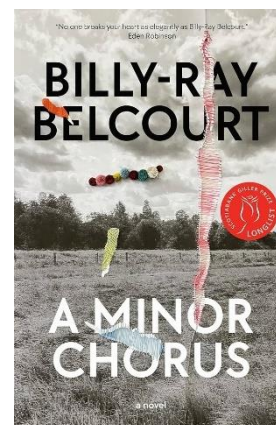
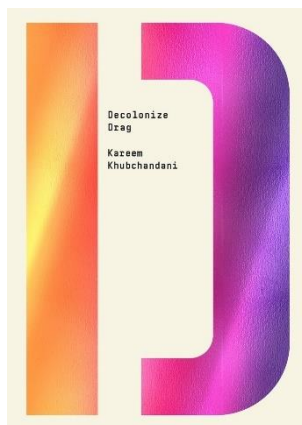
By the end of this graduate seminar, students will be able to:

- Identify, explain and critically assess how the creative and intellectual practices of queer and trans people of colour intervene in the world and our understandings of it
- Describe the social, political, economic and intellectual conditions out of which queer and trans of colour theorizing emerged as a field of knowledge, form of politics and set of practices
- Analyze specific examples of queer and trans of colour creativity and worldmaking
- Apply insights from queer and trans of colour creatives, activists and thinkers to deconstruct institutional and formal forms of equality and inclusion, with specific attention to their racial, gender and sexual politics

Required texts

- Billy-Ray Belcourt. (2022). *A minor chorus*. Hamish Hamilton / Penguin Canada.
- Kareem Khubchandani. (2023). *Decolonize drag*. Toronto: Between the Lines Press.

Please acquire the above books as quickly as possible. Local bookstores (e.g., Massy, Iron Dog, Upstart and Crow, UBC Bookstore) usually have them available in stock or to order. In addition, the UBC library system has hard copies, as well as an ebook version of Belcourt's novel.



Apart from the above, all other assigned texts should be available online via the UBC Library website or in the appropriate module in our course Canvas page.

Deliverables and deadlines

NB: Grades will be assigned based on the following UBC grading scale:

<https://students.ubc.ca/enrolment/courses/grades/>

- **Short reflections** (20%) – weekly
- **Seminar facilitation** (10%) – sign-up on Week 2
- **Preparation and participation** (10%) – weekly
- **Conference paper presentation** (10%) – in-class, March 31
- **Final research paper** (30%) – due April 11 (Friday EOD)
- **Research paper proposal** (5%) – due February 24 (Monday EOD)
- **Collective creative assignment** (15%) – due March 24 (Monday (EOD))

Course deliverables (in greater detail)

Short reflections (20%)

Each student will contribute short reflections (~400 words) on course readings (or a subset) in advance of each week's class. There are several ways to approach your reflection. You could focus on threads that cut across the readings; discuss concepts or issues that resonate with you; develop critical analyses or offer questions about the readings; apply insights from the readings to an example or issue of your choosing; or a combination of any of these. However you approach them, your reflections should demonstrate critical engagement with, and ideally understanding of, course material and their insights on queer and trans of colour creativity and worldmaking.

Reflections should be posted to the appropriate Canvas discussion board the Friday (end of day) prior to the relevant seminar. As part of your preparation for class, you are expected to spend at least part of the weekend before the seminar reading your classmates' reflections.

Reflections will be assessed on a credit / no credit basis. Full credit will be given as long as your reflections are submitted on time and demonstrates good faith effort and engagement with the readings. The first time one of your reflections falls below expectations, I will ask you to meet with me to discuss ways to elevate the quality of future reflections. Subpar submissions will receive either half-credit or no credit, depending on the severity of issues.

Seminar facilitation (10%)

Options:
Weeks 3, 4, 5, 6, 7,
8, 9, 13

Each student will sign up to lead and facilitate a one-hour portion of the weekly seminar. Each facilitation should begin with an 10-12 minute presentation that sets up the class for conversation. The presentation should begin to contextualize and discuss the week's theme and assigned material; and offer your thoughts on how specific concepts, passages and examples from course material offer insight into queer and trans of colour creativity and worldmaking. The presentation should be followed by an open-ended class-wide engagement that the presenter will facilitate. Participation and engagement of your classmates should be prompted through questions and/or participatory activities. Facilitation should also include follow-up questions, clarification, and re-direction of conversations, as needed.

Evaluation of the seminar facilitation will take into account preparation; quality of content and delivery of presentation; the productiveness of discussion prompts and/or activities; and your skill in facilitating the seminar.

Preparation and participation (10%)

Graduate seminars are meant to spaces of collective learning and engagement. In order for our graduate seminar to succeed, each member of our learning community should come to class prepared, and having read and reflected on assigned material. Seminar participation includes, but is not limited to, active engagement in and contribution to in-class dialogue and activities. Along with taking part in conversations about course themes and

texts, participation can also take other forms, including active listening, asking questions and providing other examples.

For our purposes, quality of participation is just as, if not more, important than quantity. To do well in this portion of your mark, you need to be actively engaged – with course materials, in-class activities and your classmates. This means coming to class having done the readings, formulating your thoughts, making connections with other readings and/or your own experiences and knowledge, and asking questions. Quality participation also means being an active and respectful part of our learning community by engaging with your classmates' thoughts and questions. Thoughtful consideration and awareness of class dynamics and differences are important to the development of a successful and supportive learning community.

Conference paper presentation (10%)

We will hold a one-day “conference” in which each student will present a 15-minute conference paper (up to ~7 double-spaced pages), which will be followed by discussion and Q&A. The paper presentation should outline a preliminary argument, methodology and analysis that will then be developed for submission as the final paper for the course.

Your conference paper should be prepared as an essay written for oral recitation. Along with being situated in relevant theories, your conference paper should communicate your conceptual direction as well as the specific object or case study that will be the focus of your analysis. Make sure to engage course readings and/or conduct your own research.

I highly recommend the use of audio-visual material (e.g., slides) as part of your conference paper presentation.

The presentation will be evaluated based on both content and delivery. Successful conference papers will contain and communicate original, interesting and well formulated analysis; be well situated in scholarly literature; and be presented in a well-structured and clear way.

Note: We will invite the GRSJ community to our conference.

Final research paper (30%)

The final research paper (15 pages, double spaced, + Works Cited) should offer a fulsome scholarly analysis of a specific example of queer and trans of colour creativity and worldmaking of your choosing. Your paper should include a close reading and contextualization of your “case study”; develop an argument about queer and trans of colour creativity and worldmaking; and be situated in conversation with course readings and your own research into other relevant academic and non-academic sources. Evaluation will be based on effectiveness of analysis; engagement with and application of scholarly literature and other sources; & quality of argumentation and writing.

Research paper proposal (5%)

You will submit a two-page double-spaced proposal that outlines your plan for your final research paper, including the analytical direction that you are taking and the “case study” and method that you will use to pursue your analysis. Along with identifying questions or issues that your paper will examine, your proposal should also compile and discuss a short working bibliography (of three sources) that you will use for your research paper. Make sure that your proposal includes a preliminary title for your final research paper.

**“Making queer and trans of colour worlds in the university”:
Collective creative assignment (15%)**

For this class-wide assignment, you will collaborate to produce a public-facing creative output (e.g., zine, short video, Instagram reels, photo essay, short podcast) that articulates a vision for what queer and trans of colour worlds in the university might look like and how they might be produced. You will draw on course readings as well as other sources to inform the content and form of your chosen creative output.

We will spend a portion of the Week 6 seminar (Feb. 10) in “studio-style” collective work to conceptualize, envision and plan the implementation of the creative assignment. In preparation for studio work, your reflection for the Week 6 readings should be about what the assigned material offers in terms of imagining and enacting queer and trans of colour worlds in the university.

Additional assignment information

Formatting & submission requirements: Written submissions must be submitted as .DOC or .PDF on Canvas. These must be **double-spaced & in 11-point Calibri**. Please provide **APA style citations** using the **in-text (parenthetical) author-date-page** format. Email submissions will not be accepted.

Grace period: Except for the reflections, everyone can have a three-day grace period to submit late without penalty any individual written assignment – no notice or approval needed, no questions asked.

Concessions and accommodations: If you require more time beyond the deadlines, please email me or come by during office hours to discuss options for concession (e.g., extensions, alternate assignments). Request for extensions must be arranged at least 36 hours before the original deadline.

Unexcused late submissions: Unexcused or undiscussed late submissions will be penalized 5% (out of a mark of 100%) per day. These will only be accepted up to seven calendar days after the original due date, and will receive limited feedback (grade + rubric).

If you encounter challenges to your capacity to take part in our CSIS 500 learning community

e.g., if you are unable to attend class or submit assignments in time due to conflicting responsibilities (e.g., religious observances), illness or other unforeseen circumstances, please let me know as soon as possible via email or during office hours. We will figure out together how best to ensure that your learning needs are met.

Academic integrity and other expectations

Academic integrity is crucial to rigorous and responsible knowledge production in the academy. It is our collective responsibility to ensure that standards of academic integrity are honoured. It is your responsibility as a graduate student to inform yourself of academic guidelines. As your teacher, I am here to help you be aware of expectations, policies and best practices. Please do not hesitate to consult with me during office hours should you have questions about what is acceptable or not acceptable.

Violations of academic integrity standards include but are not limited to plagiarism, falsification of sources and documents, and submission of works you did not do yourself (i.e., paid-for or auto-generated). They are subject to possible disciplinary measures, including course failure, suspension or expulsion.

On the use of generative AI tools: Students are permitted to use AI tools for formative work such as gathering information or brainstorming. However, they may not be used to generate any graded deliverables, in part or in whole.

On the use and distribution of course content: I will provide all the materials you need to succeed in this course. In return, please respect my work and course content. All course material (including the syllabus, assignment instructions, announcements, slides, handouts, assessments, Canvas modules, and other materials provided to you) are for use only by students currently enrolled in this course. It is unacceptable to share any of these materials beyond our course in any way, including by posting online, on file-sharing websites (e.g., CourseHero, Studoc, Google Docs) or on for-profit software (e.g., Quizlet). Please note that making your own recordings of class is prohibited except with a written accommodation from the Centre for Accessibility and notification of and discussion with me. CfA accommodated recordings are only for the use of the student with the accommodation on record.

On academic integrity & proper use of citations:

<https://learningcommons.ubc.ca/academic-support/academic-integrity-citations/>

More info on UBC's academic misconduct policy & process:

<https://vancouver.calendar.ubc.ca/campus-wide-policies-and-regulations/student-conduct-and-discipline/discipline-academic-misconduct>

Course schedule

Week	Date	Theme	Readings
1	Jan 6	Introduction	None.
2	Jan 13	Queer and trans of colour theorizing	<p>Kyla Wazana Tompkins. (2015). Intersections of race, gender, and sexuality: Queer of color critique. In Scott Herring (ed.), <i>The Cambridge Companion to American Gay and Lesbian Literature</i>, pp. 173-189.</p> <p>Jose Esteban Munoz. (1999). Introduction: Performing disidentifications. In his <i>Disidentifications</i>, pp. 1-34.</p> <p>Nayan Shah. (2018). Queer of color estrangement and belonging. In Dom Romesburg (ed.), <i>The Routledge History of Queer America</i>, pp. 262-275.</p>
3	Jan 20	Feminist of colour genealogies	<p>Audre Lorde. (1984). Uses of the erotic. In her <i>Sister Outsider</i>, pp. 53-59.</p> <p>Siobhan Brooks, Ariane Cruz and Angela Jones. (2023). Black feminist uses of the erotic. <i>The Black Scholar</i>, 53(3-4): 4-18.</p> <p>Combahee River Collective. (1982). The Combahee River Collective statement. In Smith, Barbara (ed.), <i>Home girls: a Black feminist anthology</i>, pp. 264-274.</p> <p>Gloria Anzaldua. (1991/2009). To(o) queer the writer—Loca, escritora y chicana. In AnaLouise Keating (ed.), pp. 163-175.</p> <p>Cathy Cohen. (1997). Punks, bulldaggers, and welfare queens: The radical potential of queer politics?. <i>GLQ</i>, 3(4): 437-465.</p>
4	Jan 27	Decolonizing queer	<p>Alex Wilson. (2015). N'tacimowin inna nah': our coming in stories. <i>Canadian Woman Studies</i>, 26(3/4): 193-199.</p> <p>Madi Day. (2020). Indigenist origins: Institutionalizing Indigenous queer and trans studies in Australia. <i>Transgender Studies Quarterly</i>, 7(3): 367-373.</p>

			<p>Hōkūlani K. Aikau. (2023). Mana wahine and mothering at the Lo'i: a two-spirit/queer analysis. <i>Australian Feminist Studies</i>, 38(117): 358-372.</p> <p>Channette Romero (2024). Centering Two-Spirit and Indigiqueer futurisms. In <i>The Routledge Handbook of CoFuturisms</i>, pp. 87-99.</p>
5	Feb 3	Storytelling	Billy-Ray Belcourt. (2022). <i>A minor chorus</i> . Hamish Hamilton / Penguin Canada.
6	Feb 10	Queer and trans of colour worldmaking in the university	<p>Paola Bacchetta, Fatima El-Tayeb, Jin Haritaworn, Jillian Hernandez, SA Smythe, Vanessa E. Thompson and Tiffany Willoughby-Herard. (2018). Queer of color space-making in and beyond the academic industrial complex. <i>Critical Ethnic Studies</i>, 4(1), 44-63.</p> <p>Taveesi Singh & Tayler J. Mathews (2019). Facilitating queer of color feminist co-mentorship: reflections on an online archive of scholar-activism. <i>Gender, Place & Culture</i>, 26(12), 1701-1720.</p>
Midterm break: Feb 17-21 (no classes)			
7	Feb 24	Mess, traces and archives	<p>José Esteban Muñoz. (1996). Ephemera as evidence: Introductory notes to queer acts. <i>Women and Performance</i>, 8(2): 5-16.</p> <p>Martin Manalansan IV. (2014). The 'stuff' of archives: mess, migration and queer lives. <i>Radical History Review</i>, 2014(120): 94-107.</p> <p>Syrus Marcus Ware. (2017). All power to all power?: Black LBTTIQQ activism, remembrance and archiving in Toronto. <i>Transgender Studies Quarterly</i>, 4(2): 170-180.</p>
NOTE: Special Mar 2 (Sun.) event: "Lessons in Drag" Public Lecture-Performance w/ LaWhore Vagistan			

8	Mar 3	Drag and performance	Kareem Khubchandani. (2023). <i>Decolonize Drag</i> . Toronto: Between the Lines Press.
9	Mar 10	Night life and party politics	Kemi Adeyemi. (2022). <i>Feels Right: Black Queer Women and the Politics of Partying in Chicago</i> . Duke University Press.
10	Mar 17	Abolition as worldmaking	Marquis Bey and Jesse Goldberg. (2022). Special issue: Queer fire and liberation. <i>GLQ</i> , 28(2). (Selections) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Queer as in Abolition Now! (Bey and Goldberg) • Queers Against Corrective Development (Rodriguez) • Representational Refusal and the Embodiment of Gender Abolition (Triburgo and Van Dyck) • (Trans)gendering Abolition: Black Trans Geographies, Art, and the Problem of Visibility (Janak)
11	Mar 24	No class or readings (in lieu of the lecture-performance on Sunday, Mar 2)	
12	Mar 31	Conference presentations	No readings.
13	Apr 7	Imagining and enacting futures	Michael Tristano Jr. (2022). Performing queer of color joy through collective crisis: Resistance, social science, and how I learned to dance again. <i>Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies</i> , 22(3): 276-281. Michael Tristano Jr. (2024). Lingering longer: Performance, queer of color joy, and Baltimore's VERSION. <i>Sexualities</i> , OnlineFirst. Ian Rafael Ramirez. (2024). Forming brown commons through queer joy in butiki/baboy: A pride conversation series. <i>Sexualities</i> , OnlineFirst. Joseph M. Pierce. (2024). NDN love: poetics, land, and decolonial eroticism. In <i>The Routledge Companion to Postcolonial and Decolonial Literature</i> , pp. 301-313.