Theocrit 9425: Psychoanalysis and Indigenous Critical Theory
Fridays 9:30-12:30

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Office Hours: by appointment (Zoom/Fridays in person)

***Course Description*:**

This course brings Indigenous critical theory and psychoanalytic theory into a dialogue to create new understandings and possibilities. The aim is to (re)imagine the (potential) relationship between the fields and how they may intersect in ways that interrogate or disrupt our expectations and encourage creativity. This course is also an attempt to incorporate Indigenous critical theory into "mainstream" theoretical discussion, to move the field beyond critique and the siloing of Indigenous voices that often occurs within academia.

Indigenous critical theory has been hostile to Western psychology, yet much of it contains remarkable parallels with psychoanalysis (noting, however, that Indigenous criticism of psychology often neglects psychoanalysis). For instance, both Indigenous thought and psychoanalytic theory value experience and recognize *something* beyond what we can easily talk about or understand. This recognition is not (exactly) a willingness to naively believe or believing without "evidence"; this recognition is that unspeakable experience, even in absence of double-blind randomized controlled trials, *is* evidence. Neither area denies scientific facts; instead, both recognize the (Lacanian) logic (as described by Zupančič) that fantasy is the frame of reality—that our subjectivity is what permits objectivity, and "fantasy" is inherent in the *structure* of reality.

A selection of texts from Indigenous critical theory and psychoanalytic theory will be looked at in a sort-of pseudo dialogue related to overlapping themes from each field. Through the various pairings, we will explore topics such as fantasy, dreams, creativity/arts, self/subject/relationality, identity, human nature, the body/phenomenology, narrative/repetition, and theories of change, among others.

Although the focus is on Indigenous critical theory and psychoanalysis, the topic of focus overall will be broad enough for you to bring their own research interests into the dialogue. There are no predetermined understandings that you must attain; rather, we will develop ideas through ongoing discussions, and you could explore (in you final paper or reflection piece) how new understanding(s) might influence sociological theories or philosophical ideas of what it means to be a subject (or human) or what could be gained by incorporating critical race theory or anti-colonial, post-colonial, de-colonial thought (e.g., Franz Fanon, Fred Moten, Sara Ahmed) into the dialogue, etc.

***Schedule*:**

January 9 - Recognition

Klein, "Notes on Some Schizoid Mechanisms," International Journal of Psycho-Analysis, vol. 27 (1946): 99–110

Benjamin, "An Outline of Intersubjectivity: The Development of Recognition," https://doi.org/10.1037/h0085258

Coulthard, *Red Skin White Masks*, pages 1–49

Optional: Barad, Diffracting Diffraction: Cutting Together-Apart, https://doi.org/10.1080/13534645.2014.927623

January 16 – Identity, Self, Subject

Freud, *The Ego and the Id*, sections I–III

Lacan,"The Mirror Stage as Formative of the / Function as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience," in *Écrits*

Winnicott, "Mirror-Role of Mother and Family in Child Development, in *The Collected Works of D. W. Winnicott*, Vol. 8

Kristeva, "The Mirror and Castration Positing the Subject as Absent from the Signifier," in *Revolution in Poetic Language*, 46–51

Whitinui, P. (2013). "Indigenous Autoethnography: Exploring, Engaging, and Experiencing 'Self' as a Native Method of Inquiry," https://doi.org/10.1177/0891241613508148

Moreton-Robinson, "I Still Call Australia Home: Indigenous Belonging and Place in a Postcolonizing Society," in *The White Possessive*

January 23 – The Body

Winnicott, "Mind and Its Relation to the Psyche-Soma," in *Through Paediatrics to Psychoanalysis*

Freud, "Instincts and Their Vicissitudes," in *SE 14*

Klein, "The First Three or Four Months of Life," part I of Theoretical Considerations Regarding the Emotional Life of the Infant, in *Envy, Gratitude, and Other Works*

Haebich, "Marked Bodies: A Corporeal History of Colonial Australia," https://www.jstor.org/stable/48782366

Hokowhitu, "Indigenous Existentialism and the Body," https://doi.org/10.5130/csr.v15i2.2040

Kensish, Lui-Chiuvizhe, & Slater, "Indigenous Bodies," https://www.jstor.org/stable/48782364

January 30 – Space and Time

Lacan, "Logical Time and the Assertion of Anticipated Certainty," in *Écrits*

Winnicott, "Transitional Objects and Transitions Phenomena" (pages 1–27 only) and "The Location of Cultural Experience," in *Playing and Reality*

Matamua, "Matariki and the Decolonisation of Time," Ch 5 in *Routledge Handbook of Critical Indigenous Studies*

Smith, Conceptions of Space and Conceptions of Time sections in chap 2 of *Decolonizing Methodologies* (pages 52–59)

Awâsis, "Anishinaabe Time"

Little Bear, "Jagged Worldviews Colliding," in *Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision*

February 6 – Humour and Jokes
Freud, "Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious," part C, in *SE 8*
Freud, "Humour," in *SE 21*
Lacan, *Seminar 5*, first two seminars
Horn-Miller, "IO STER IS (It's funny): Humor as medicine in Kanienkehaka society"
Fagan, Kristina. "Teasing, Tolerating, Teaching: Laughter and Community in Native Literature," in *Me Funny*
Bhalla, "Laugh 'Til You Cry, Cry 'Til You Laugh: The Role of Humour in Reconciliation," https://www.canlii.org/en/commentary/doc/2023CanLIIDocs2349#!fragment//BQCwhgziBcwMYgK4DsDWszIQewE4BUBTADwBdoByCgSgBpltTCIBFRQ3AT0otokLC4EbDtyp8BQkAGU8pAELcASgFEAMioBqAQQByAYRW1SYAEbRS2ONWpA

February 13 – Fantasy (Phantasy) and Dreams
Freud, "The Dream Work" parts A-C, in *The Interpretation of Dreams*
Freud, "Formulations On the Two Principles of Mental Functioning," in *SE 12*
Ward, "Indigenous Resilience and Healing Through Dreams and Spirituality," https://doi.org/10.1037/drm0000273
Ward, "Dream Knowledge – Understanding the Dreamworld Utilizing the Medicine Wheel," https://doi.org/10.54760/001c.90963
Million, "Intense Dreaming"

February 20 – Narrative and Repetition (NO CLASS – READING WEEK)
Lacan, "The Unconscious and Repetition," in *Écrits*
Freud, "Remembering, Repeating and Working-Through," in *SE 12*
Justice, "How Do We Learn to Be Human?" in *Why Indigenous Literatures Matter*

February 27 – Creativity, Arts
Winnicott, "Playing: Its Theoretical Status in the Clinical Situation," *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 49, no. 4 (1968): 591–599
Freud, "Creative-Writers and Day-Dreaming," in *SE 9*
Freud, Chapter 2 of *Civilization and Its Discontents*
Lacan, "On Creation *Ex Nihilo*," in *Seminar 8*
Robertson, "The Beauty of a Story: Toward an Indigenous Art Theory," in *The Routledge Handbook of Intercultural Arts Research*
Garneau, "Imaginary Spaces," in *Arts of Engagement: Taking Aesthetic Action In and Beyond the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*
Goeman, "Disrupting a Settler-Colonial Grammar of Place," in *Theorizing Native Studies*

March 6 – Knowledge, Truth
Lacan, *Seminar 17*, 11–68
Simpson, "Land as Pedagogy: Nishnaabeg Intelligence and Rebellious Transformation," *Decolonization, Indigeneity, Education, & Society* 3, no. 3 (2014): 1–25
Gehl, "Valuing a New Paradigm," Ch. 6 in *Claiming Anishinabee*
Kovach, "Being Indigenous in the Academy," in *First Nations, First Thoughts*

March 13 – Revolution, Change, Cure

Lacan, *Seminar 17*, 79–101 and 180–193
Freud, “Analysis Terminable and Interminable,” in *SE 23*
Freud, “The Dynamics of Transference,” in *SE 12*
Tuck & Yang, “Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor, *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 1, no. 1 (2012): 1–40
Kuokkanen, Chapter 1 in *Reshaping the University*, available as free sample here: https://www.ubcpress.ca/asset/9128/1/9780774813563.pdf

March 20 – Community, Civil Society, Group Nature
Freud, *Group Psychology and Analysis of the Ego*, excerpts
Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, excerpts
Mills, “What is a Treaty: On Contract and Mutual Aid,” *The Right Relationship*,
Wildcat, M., & Voth, D. Indigenous Relationality: Definitions and Methods. AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples 19, no. 2 (2023): 475–483. https://doi.org/10.1177/11771801231168380

March 27 – Identity: Bringing it All Together
Klein, “Love, Guilt and Reparation,” in *Love, Hate and Reparation* by Klein and Riviere, (57-119)
Kristeva, “Approaching Abjection,” in *Powers of Horror*
Andersen, “Mixed,” Ch. 1 in *Métis*
Taylor, *The Pretendians*, https://gem.cbc.ca/the-pretendians

April 3 – Guilt, Survival, and Trauma (NO CLASS – GOOD FRIDAY)
Winnicott, “Psychoanalysis and the Sense of Guilt,” https://doi.org/10.1093/med:psych/9780190271374.003.0030
Bromberg, “Something Wicked This Way Comes,” https://doi.org/10.1037/0736-9735.20.3.558
Fagan, Kristina "Weesageechak Meets the Weetigo: Storytelling, Humour, and Trauma in the Fiction of Richard Van Camp, Tomson Highway, and Eden Robinson,” Studies in Canadian Literature / Études en littérature canadienne 34, no. 1 (2009): 204–226

Most of the reading are available (free) through the library. For those not in the library, the majority are available from the Theory Centre (for the comps reading list). Those not available elsewhere will be provided, and PDFs are available for all from the instructor if necessary.

A list of supplementary readings will be provided during the first class.

***Evaluation*:**
You will sign up for your presentation/seminar and two respondent dates during the first class. Seminars will take place weeks 2–11 only (January 16–March 20).

Presentation/Seminar (20–30 minutes): 30% **due throughout class**
Presentations will be on the readings from *either* the Indigenous critical theory *or* psychoanalytic theory readings for the week. You are not expected to relate the readings from one area to another (see below re. Respondents), although you may. There are up to two seminars a week, one from each area: presenters are welcome to work together if they wish but it is by no means

required. Focus is on understanding(s) and analysis of the text itself but should not just explain that text; rather, student should make an argument about the text.

Respondent to seminar (x2): 10% x 2 = 20% **due throughout class**
Prepare to lead/encourage class discussion on the two works (or two areas discussed in that day's seminars. Since the presenter's focus in on only one area, the respondent's role is to synthesize or problematize the readings in combination and to raise ideas and facilitate a larger group discussion on about the intersections (or tensions) between the two areas.

Research paper (5000-7000 words): 35% **due April 3**
Taking the overall theme of the class into account, you will explore in-depth one or more aspects arising from the course material. Papers must take both Indigenous critical theory and psychoanalytic theory into account but may also (but need not) delve into areas not covered by the course. Take this opportunity to weave your own interests into the course material and see how your thoughts on the material might apply to those interests.

Reflection (500-1000 words or the equivalent): 10% **due up to 1 week after the week containing the reading(s) you choose to reflect on (latest March 31)**
A short submission on any of the readings, in any of the areas, from week 1 to week 1. The paper can be on the readings (plural) for the week or one reading that is of particular interest. The paper does not have to follow a standard format, and you are free to be creative, that is, your response does not *have* to be a paper; however, if you wish to develop a response using another medium, please discuss it with me first so we can establish some parameters.

Participation: 5%
Participation isn't merely about talking. Participation can include active listening, emails that raise issues that you didn't bring up in class, discussion in the hallway, etc. I just need to know you've engaged with the material.

***Policy Information*:**
Academic Offences
Scholastic offences are taken seriously, and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following website: https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_offences.pdf

Health/Wellness
Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health Support at https://www.uwo.ca/health/psych/index.html for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Accessible Education
Western is committed to achieving barrier-free accessibility for all its members, including graduate students. As part of this commitment, Western provides a variety of services devoted to promoting, advocating, and accommodating persons with disabilities in their respective graduate program.

Graduate students with disabilities (for example, chronic illnesses, mental health conditions, mobility impairments) are strongly encouraged to register with Accessible Education (AE), a confidential service designed to support graduate and undergraduate students through their academic program. With the appropriate documentation, the student will work with both AE and their graduate programs (normally their Graduate Chair and/or Course instructor) to ensure that appropriate academic accommodations to program requirements are arranged. These accommodations may include individual counselling, alternative formatted literature, accessible campus transportation, learning strategy instruction, writing exams and assistive technology instruction.

Gender-Based and Sexual Violence
Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website:
https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html
To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca

Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)
The use of generative AI is not permitted in this course.