Course Outline

Course Description:
Within the social sciences we tend to imagine space as a background for the social world that simply exists as an empty stage or a flat surface on which our lives play out (Massey, 2005). This course seeks to challenge such assumptions by drawing on a range of geographers who recognize space as a dynamic dimension that shapes our subjectivities and our everyday experiences of the world in a Western context (Massey, 2005; Johnston and Longhurst, 2010). Students will be asked to consider the mutually constitutive relationship between space and subjectivity within an intersectional framework, as well the way that experiences of space shift across time and space. In this course, we will investigate what it means to queer geography with an attentiveness to dominant discourses that construct both “straight space” and “queer space” in homogenous ways (Oswin, 2008; Hubbard, 2002; Browne, 2006).

In this course we will consider what it means to queer a space, what it means and/or has meant to take up space on behalf of a particular group, and the relational dynamics between and among spaces and subjectivities. Throughout the semester we will look specifically at mapping practices, affective and emotional geographies, decolonizing geography, trans spaces and trans and nonbinary folks’ experiences navigating particular spaces, as well as queer and trans experiences of belonging and visibility in rural areas specifically. Students will think critically about the politics of queer space, how notions of queer space are challenged and deconstructed, and about who is understood as belonging in queer spaces.

The impetus of this course is to question how we think about space, what it means to take up space and what it means that some bodies are able to extend into and flow more freely through spaces than others (Ahmed, 2006, 2017). Students will learn to think critically and relationally about how gender, (dis)ability, sexuality, race, class and other axes of identity affect our experiences of space and place, why we need to study feminist, queer, decolonial and other critical approaches to geographies, and why it matters who is “doing” geography (Cresswell, 2013).

Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Apply and extend their knowledge of feminist and queer theories;
- Identify and critically engage with key concepts and approaches in queer geographies, affective geographies, and rural queer studies;
- Develop an awareness of the political implications of how we think about spaces, sexuality and subjectivities;
- Reflect, both personally and analytically, on the relationship between spaces, sexuality and subjectivities;
• Appraise a variety of methodological approaches to studying spaces, sexuality and subjectivities;
• Construct a relief map.

This course will also enable students to:
• Develop analytical and critical thinking skills;
• Improve oral and written communication skills;
• Synthesize theoretical ideas and draw connections between concepts;
• Engage in generous and scholarly debate with peers.

Note for students with disabilities: Please contact ws-ugrad@uwo.ca if you require any information in plain text format, or if any other accommodation can make the course material and/or physical space accessible to you.

Please note:
Western University is situated on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Lunaapeewak and Attawandaron peoples who have longstanding relationships to the land and region of southwestern Ontario and the City of London. The local First Nation communities of this area include Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, Oneida Nation of the Thames, and Munsee Delaware Nation. In the region, there are eleven First Nation communities and a growing Indigenous urban population. Western values the significant historical and contemporary contributions of local and regional First Nations and all of the Original peoples of Turtle Island (North America).

Required Texts:
ALL course readings will be posted on OWL Sakai.

Methods of Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Methods of Assessment</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Critical Syntheses</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Ongoing throughout the semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Relief Mapping Assignment</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Due in class on February 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Final Paper Proposal</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Due in class on March 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Final Paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Due in class on March 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Participation and Attendance</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Ongoing throughout the semester</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Critical Synthesis (20% total: 10% each)
This critical synthesis assignment asks students to critically engage with the recommended readings. On the first week of class, students will sign up for two recommended readings- one in the first half of the course and one in the second half of the course. Each paper is due the week your selected recommended reading is assigned- if you select the recommended reading for Week 4, your paper is due at the beginning of class on Week 4. If there are no recommended readings for a particular week, you cannot select that week for this assignment.

The objective of this assignment is for students to synthesize their selected reading, which includes highlighting the author’s thesis and central concepts. Students are expected to reflect on
the reading, to make connections with required readings, and to pose a thoughtful discussion question. Completed papers should be 3 double-spaced pages in length.

Students will receive detailed feedback on their first critical synthesis assignment and will be expected to take that feedback into account while writing their second critical synthesis. We will review the expectations for this assignment further in class.

**Relief Mapping Assignment (30% total: 10% for the map, 20% for analysis)**

Students will create a relief map, as outlined in our readings for Week 3 by Rodó-de-Zárate (2014, 2016) and Ferré and Rodó-de-Zárate (2016) This assignment asks students to demonstrate a reflexive understanding of the way that our identities, subjectivities and embodiment affect the way we move through and perceive spaces. As you approach this assignment, think about the complex nature of our relationships to spaces and places and what the social and political implications of those relations might be.

In addition to creating a relief map, students will provide an analysis of their relief map. Analysis papers will be between 7-8 pages, double spaced. Students are expected to cite a minimum of two academic articles as well as two reading from the course reading list (in addition to Rodó-de-Zárate 2014, 2016 and Ferré and Rodó-de-Zárate, 2016).

Students will meet with the professor during Week 4 (January 27) to discuss their plan for this assignment, which will be due at the end of Week 6 (February 10).

**Final Paper Proposal (5%)**

Two weeks prior to the submission of the final paper, students will be asked to submit a one-page proposal of their selected topic for the final paper. The proposal should include: a rough thesis statement, outline, and 3-5 sources that you are intending on using in the final paper. The proposal is due in class on Week 11 (March 16).

**Final Paper (30%)**

For your final assignment, students are required to write a 13-15 page research essay on a topic of your choice pertaining to Queering Geography. Papers must be informed by course content and external research. Students will be required to use at least five external, scholarly sources and three assigned readings for this assignment.

Successful papers will be attentive to how gender, (dis)ability, sexuality, race, class and other axes of identity affect our experiences of space and place, why we need to study feminist, queer and other critical approaches to geographies, and why it matters who is “doing” geography.

Final papers will be due at the end of Week 13 (March 30).

**Participation and Attendance (15%)**

Participation and attendance marks will be assessed based on student’s regular attendance and engagement in class in the form of active listening, responding to questions and participating in class discussions. At the beginning of each class, students will have the opportunity to pose a question, to challenge something that came up in a reading, to provide a quote as an entry point.
into discussion, or to pass. I encourage students who may have issues with participation to make use of this format or to speak with the instructor in person or via e-mail about alternative ways of participating in this exercise. Participation and attendance marks will be given out at the end of class in Week 13 (March 30).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schedule of Topics and Readings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>January 6 - Week One: Introduction to Studying Spaces, Sexualities and Subjectivities</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introductions; syllabus, in-class activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Required:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recommended:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>January 13 - Week Two: Queer(ing) Geography</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Required:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recommended:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>January 20 - Week Three: Queer(ing) Maps</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Required:</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
January 27 - Week Four: Trans Experiences, Trans Spaces

Required:

Recommended:

February 3 - Week Five: Lesbians in Space

Relief Mapping Assignment Due


Required:

February 10 – Week Six: The Home

Required:

**Recommended:**

**February 17 - Week Seven: NO CLASS (reading week)**

**February 24 - Week Eight: Rural Queer Spaces**

**Required:**

**Recommended:**

**March 2 - Week Nine: In Place/Out of Place**

**Required:**

**Recommended:**
March 9 - Week Ten: Race & Space

Required:

Recommended:

March 16 - Week Eleven: Disability & Geography

**Final Paper Proposal Due**

Required:

Recommended

March 23 - Week Twelve: Decolonizing Queer Spaces

Required:

Recommended:

**March 30 - Week Thirteen: Queer(er) Futures**

**Final Paper Due**

**Required:**


