



Department of Geography
Personal Space: Exploring Geographies of Gender, Sexuality and Identity
Geography 409, Spring 2026
Course Syllabus

*****IMPORTANT*** IT IS REALLY IMPORTANT TO YOUR SUCCESS THAT YOU ATTEND CLASS.**

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|--------------------------------------|---|
| Instructor | Professor Teresa Dawson (she/her), tdawson@uvic.ca , DTB B316 |
| Class time & Office Hours | Tuesdays and Wednesdays 2:30 – 3:50PM CLE C113 (followed by office hours) Tues and Wed , 4PM-5PM in DTB B316 <u>and by appointment</u> if those times do not work for you. We will also use these times for planning your teaching segments (see below). |
| Brightspace site: | There is a Brightspace site for this course called GEOG 409 A01 . It is best to access it through your UVic page and SSO. <u>Please go to the site and check it often.</u> |

Communications:

- *Course information, tips, reminders, and all notices:* There is a **Brightspace** site for this course. Please go here first and please visit often. This is where I will put anything I think might help you. Please check your preferred email address is correct so you do not miss anything.
- *Emailing me:* tdawson@uvic.ca. Please put **<Geog 409: your name: brief subject>** in the heading. This allows me to sort at the end of each day to check for emails and respond.
- *Making an appointment:* I truly welcome you to come and discuss your geography ideas and questions at times other than office hours. However, I am often in meetings or teaching other courses, so I don't want to miss you. Please **email tdawson@uvic.ca minimally by 4:00pm the night before to make an appointment for the next day (more time is appreciated)**. Please also make sure you cancel the appointment if you are not coming to allow someone else to benefit from the slot.

Description

This course is specifically designed to allow you to explore how our collective disciplinary geographical interests in gender, sexuality and identity intersect with your own personal and unique spaces of reflection, action and interaction. It was developed at the request of past and present students in Geography who wanted to explore a variety of identity issues in a safe environment. For this reason, the course is designed to be somewhat co-created and student directed. I will bring content knowledge, introduce you to some geographers who are well-known (and definitely worth getting to know) in the field, help you sample the literature and key ideas, and generally support your learning in any way I can. I hope you will bring your own context and questions to explore.

Why does understanding geographies of gender, sexuality and identity matter so much? For me, the human geography project is about understanding, and taking action to reduce, suffering caused by social injustice. Since so many of the current social injustices we see across the globe are rooted in discrimination (or even outright hatred) against the “other,” and some of the strongest “othering” occurs as a result of these particular social constructs, it seems essential to critically interrogate them if we are to make a difference. Further, as Geographers have long pointed out, our identity is inextricably and intimately linked to matters of space, place and location (often on a very personal level), which makes it essential to always position our work in a geographical context.

Within the field, feminist geographers and geographies have contributed enormously to our knowledge and understanding of social constructions of gender, sexuality and identity since at least the 1970s. However, there are several other approaches that are also important including post-structural, anarchist and post-modern theorists. More recently they have been joined by scholars contributing 2SLGBTQ+ insights and critiques, as well as those informed by discussions of masculinities. Together these scholars have produced a rich and diverse field of vibrant and dynamic inquiry, as well as suggesting ways to grapple with how to apply our greater understanding to practical and relevant action in our lived experience of the workplace, the home, schools, recreational facilities, and other personal activity spaces.

While this course is designed to be co-constructed the following are some of the themes and sites of inquiry that I anticipate we will explore:

- Feminist, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Non-binary, Queer, Two-Spirit and Masculinist discourses as they relate to geographies of social justice
- Creation, loss, and (re)claiming of identities
- The body as a site of struggle
- Private, public (and intermediate) personal spaces at different scales
- Intersections with locations of home, work, volunteering and service, education, environment, leisure, and so on.
- Intersections with identities of kinship and family, (dis)ability, Indigeneity, class, ethnicity, race, religion, belief systems, age, nationality, ways of knowing, relationships to nature, and so on.

Note: A full schedule of readings, topics and activities will be posted as soon as we have agreed upon it.

Learning Goals and Outcomes for this course

- Improve your understanding of how the social constructs of gender, sexuality and identity underlie many issues of social injustice
- Link theoretical perspectives to lived realities and community-engagement
- Be able to recognise, critique and challenge “othering” based on gender, sexuality and identity; transfer understanding to action in your lived experience and personal contexts
- Read and be inspired by some leading geographical thinkers in the field
- Apply concepts learned in the course to your own “personal space” project in a location of your choice; have a chance to explore, and advocate for, your unique interests.
- Increase your confidence in your geographical knowledge, analytical ability and educational facilitation skills
- Have a greater level of preparedness both for personal self-reflection and understanding and for local and global citizenship; increase your tolerance for multiple perspectives
- Demonstrate, and engage in, co-created learning in multiple formats

Building Community

The most important pre-requisites for this course are an open heart and an open mind, as well as a willingness to engage thoughtfully with challenging material. Each of us brings our unique passions, experiences and social justice issues with us to the class. We have no idea what others have struggled with, or overcome, to join us. For this reason, kindness to each other will be imperative if we are all to succeed. I have noticed that one of the most underappreciated (and least practiced) skills in academia is listening. By contrast, the ability to listen carefully will be deeply valued in this course. Please note that students who are *not* declared geography majors are also welcome in this course. Everything happens somewhere so I anticipate everyone will bring a locational context with them that they wish to explore. Diversity of knowledge and backgrounds can only enhance the learning for all of us.

How to prepare for class

Before each class:

- Go to the Brightspaces site for this course. Download the “agenda outline” for the next class and read it over. Make a note of the learning goals to see what you will be looking to learn in the next lecture and make a note of any additional learning goals or questions you have personally.
- Engage in the readings and pre-activities the teacher(s) has/have asked you to do. These are your colleagues. If they think something is worth reading, it probably is. Unless you support them, they cannot succeed as teachers and you cannot succeed as a learner. *“Teaching is community property” (Lee Shulman).*

The day of:

- Come to class with all aspects of your being (show up on video, mentally engage, think of questions to ask, answer the questions I ask you, help others). I really mean it. Fully showing up is the greatest predictor of success in class.
- Consider having a small snack/drink handy. I know you have a long day. I have no problem with people needing to eat/drink to stay engaged. Just be careful of any allergens in terms of class sensitivities.

REQUIRED COURSE TEXT, READINGS and RESOURCES:

Oberhauser, A.M., Fluri, J.L., Whitson, R. and Mollett, S. (2018). *Feminist Spaces: Gender and Geography in a Global Context*. London and New York: Routledge. This is our text. It should be available in the Bookstore or off course via other sellers. I was excited to see it when it originally came out because there has been nothing new for a long time and it includes a Canadian geographer among the authors. The work promised to embrace the new trends in feminist geography in the discipline (for example, going beyond conventional feminist critiques and moving towards non-binary discussions). Feedback from previous classes was positive.

Many of the other readings we will explore in this course will be from *Gender, Place and Culture: a journal of feminist geography*, which is available online from the library. ISSN 0966-369X (Print); ISSN 1360-0524 (Online). Call number is GF1.G44. Note: Please do not be put off by the subtitle of this journal. It does not just address feminist geography topics.

Other readings or resources will be posted each week in Brightspace, along with the class outlines as course interests emerge from participants.

COURSE COMPONENTS

The course is designed to achieve the learning goals and outcomes stated above. All aspects of the course may be assessed on exams. The requirements for each component will be further discussed in class.

Class Meetings and Participation—We will all meet together twice a week (Tues and Wed). Classes may include mini-lectures, guest speakers, activities, film clips, presentations, student lead segments and discussion of materials. I may bring visitors to class occasionally when their research work is relevant to our learning and I think you might enjoy meeting them. Your participation grade will reflect your willingness to engage in both your own questions and reflections in class, as well as those of your colleagues. **If you are not coming to class on a particular day (e.g. you are ill), please email me and or the teachers for that day ahead of time as a courtesy.**

Student facilitation segments—Starting part way through the term, each student (or pair of students) will pick one class where they will prepare and lead a teaching segment based on an article of their choosing. You will be asked to submit a very brief worksheet to propose what you will do (with your partner). This will be used to co-construct the teaching schedule and class syllabus. I will meet with the facilitator(s) ahead of the class to help them prepare a discussion outline, develop key questions for us all to think about, and communicate the reading(s) to everyone. The presenter(s) will identify and explain the main concepts from the reading, and then generate a teaching segment based on the questions identified. A template will be provided. Articles can be chosen from *Gender, Place and Culture* (accessed via the library) OR from another academic journal relevant to your interests (please check with me if unsure). When selecting a reading (or other resource), please treat others as you would wish to be treated yourself. Personally, I prefer a few short pages packed with interest, and whose concepts are accessible to me, over a high volume of pages packed with jargon that I am asked to skim through. Note: I promise there is no competition for the longest or hardest reading! Please also be conscious of triggering. We all have areas of extreme sensitivity. If you choose a reading that has potentially challenging content, please take a moment to warn the class ahead of time, so everyone is prepared and can make their own informed choices and decisions around personal safety.

Activity space journaling—Choose one activity space you will be in regularly and commit to reflecting (free writing) on the application of concepts learned from class to that space for 15-20 minutes in your journal after each class. What application might concepts from class have in your activity space? What connections does thinking about these concepts help you make as you navigate your daily life? Does your learning change your behaviour or your experience in any way? Sometimes you might make profound connections; other times not. Don't worry, just keep writing and I anticipate you will be surprised at what emerges. You may create your journal in Word or similar OR hand write it in a real journal. Regardless, just keep in mind you will need to submit it in a way it can be easily read (e.g. if it is hand written, develop a way that it is easy for you to photograph the pages and send).

Creative Representation—Our identity(ies) and understanding of same is often hard to express in words. By the end of the course I will ask you to submit a creative piece that represents (re)claiming identity(ies). This need not be explicit. It can reveal as much or as little as you wish (that is safe for you). You also do not have to be a skilled artist. It could be a photo, a graphic, a craft application, a ceramic tile, as well as a drawing, sketch or painting, etc. The choice is yours. We will share and reflect on our creations in the last classes of the term.

Resources—I will put any supporting learning resources for the course (from me, or other colleagues) on the Brightspace.

Please kindly...

- Remember that all lecture notes, course materials, exams and templates are my intellectual property (and or the intellectual property of your colleagues in the class), and are for instructional purposes only. You should not share them with anyone else without my/their prior written permission.
- Do not record (audio or video), or take photos of, any aspects of the course such as lectures without first having written permission from me. It is important we respect the privacy and confidentiality of others in the course.

GRADE ALLOCATION AND KEY DATES

| | Marks | Important Dates/deadlines |
|-------------------------------|-------------|--|
| Authentic presence | 10% | Contributing each class and actively supporting colleagues (as applicable) |
| Teaching facilitation segment | 15% | Teaching Proposal worksheet due Feb 4 (choice joint with partner) Delivery date of segment as applicable in agreed class. |
| Journaling reflections | 20% | Journal check-in Jan 28th ; final journal due noon April 2nd |
| Midterm | 15% | Wednesday Feb 11th in class. |
| Creative representation | 10% | Presented in last classes. (April 1st) |
| Final Exam | 30% | TBD in University Exam Period (as scheduled by Registrar's Office). |
| TOTAL | 100% | |

Important notes regarding overall grades:

- All students are required to show an UVic ID before taking exams.
- **You must take both exams (midterm and the final) and submit all assignments minimally within 5 business days of the deadline (see below) to pass the course.** Even if you are too late to get a grade for an assignment, you must still submit it to pass. This is because the assignments build your leaning in the course.
Failure to complete one or more of these elements will result in a grade of "N" regardless of the cumulative percentage on other elements of the course. N is a failing grade and factors into GPA as a value of 0.
If you are considering a deferral, please understand that certain essential components of this course cannot be completed after the course ends despite the "N" grade. Always check with me first.
- **Even if you join the course late, you are still expected to catch up with the assignments and class materials.** Please send me a proposal plan for achieving this goal.
- If at any time for any reason you are not able to fulfill your obligations to our class in a timely manner you must email me to let me know immediately. Failure to do this can negatively impact the grades of other students and hence your own.

Rules regarding late assignments:

In order to be fair to students who meet the deadlines, if you submit an assignment late the penalty is 20% per day. All assignments must be submitted, but after 5 days you will receive no grade. Again, to be fair to everyone, exceptions will only be granted for medical and/or accommodation reasons.

Undergraduate Grading Standards (per the Academic Calendar)

| Grade | Grade point value | Grade scale | Description |
|-----------|-------------------|-------------|--|
| A+ | 9 | 90-100% | Exceptional, outstanding and excellent performance. Normally achieved by a minority of students. These grades indicate a student who is self-initiating, exceeds expectation and has an insightful grasp of the subject matter. |
| A | 8 | 85-89% | |
| A- | 7 | 80-84% | |
| B+ | 6 | 77-79% | Very good, good and solid performance. Normally achieved by the largest number of students. These grades indicate a good grasp of the subject matter or excellent grasp in one area balanced with satisfactory grasp in the other area. |
| B | 5 | 73-76% | |
| B- | 4 | 70-72% | |
| C+ | 3 | 65-69% | Satisfactory, or minimally satisfactory. These grades indicate a satisfactory performance and knowledge of the subject matter. |
| C | 2 | 60-64% | |
| D | 1 | 50-59% | Marginal Performance. A student receiving this grade demonstrated a superficial grasp of the subject matter. |

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| F | 0 | 0-49% | Unsatisfactory performance. Wrote final examination and completed course requirements; no supplemental. |
| N | 0 | 0-49% | Did not write examination or complete course requirements by the end of term or session; no supplemental. |

Acknowledging our presence on the land

UVic’s Territory Acknowledgement reads as the following. “We acknowledge with respect the Lekwungen peoples on whose traditional territory the University of Victoria stands, and the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.” I hope each of us with colonial histories (whether from here or in lands far away), will think about how we can make real meaning from this statement in our own contexts and lives. This is a theme we will return to often in this course.

A note about triggering and self care

Each of us brings our unique passions, experiences and histories with us to the class. We have no idea what others have struggled with, or overcome, to join us. For this reason, kindness to each other will be imperative if we are all to succeed. Diversity of knowledge and backgrounds can only enhance the learning for all of us. However, each of us can inadvertently be triggered by a topic, a phrase, a reference, an image, an association, and so on. While I do everything I can to prevent us from experiencing any kind of trauma in this class, and would never intentionally cause anyone harm, I acknowledge that triggers are many and varied and often unpredictable for each and every one of us, particularly at present. For this reason, please have a plan to cope should something arise for you, by for example stepping away, having a cup of tea, or going for a walk. As always, do not hesitate to contact me if I can help or support you in any way, and as the need arises. If you would like me to be aware of something you are struggling with in the course material or approach, please don’t hesitate to tell me.

Accessibility

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) as soon as possible. The sooner you let us know your needs the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course. Please do not worry. I am fully able to implement their recommendations regarding accommodations, as long as we plan together in good time.

Masking and health

We do not know peoples’ personal situations or individual needs, as well as who may be living with vulnerable individuals, so we will respect everyone’s choices to wear or not wear a mask in class. If you feel seriously unwell, obviously you should stay home and not attend class. Any questions don’t hesitate to ask me.

Making sure you retain your academic integrity in this course

It is every student’s responsibility to be aware of the university’s policies on academic integrity, including policies on **cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized use of an editor, multiple submission, and aiding others to cheat.** According to the University of Victoria’s Calendar “Academic integrity requires commitment to the values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. It is expected that students, faculty members and staff at the University of Victoria, as members of an intellectual community, will adhere to these ethical values in all activities related to learning, teaching, research and service. Thus, any action that you take that contravenes this standard, including misrepresentation, falsification or deception, undermines the intention and worth of your scholarly work and violates the fundamental academic rights of members of our community.” In plain language, usually problems arise if you try to submit work that you did not create, if you copy someone else’s answers or if you use someone else’s words without using quotation marks and giving proper credit to the person who wrote them. If in doubt please always ask! **Policy on Academic Integrity:** web.uvic.ca/calendar/undergrad/info/regulations/academic-integrity.html. There is also a new module in Brightspace called “**Integrity Matters**” <https://bright.uvic.ca/d2l/home/132610> (under the “Discover” tab) which might be useful.

Providing feedback via the Course Experience Survey (CES)

I value your feedback on this course. At the end of term, you can complete an anonymous survey regarding your learning experience in this course (CES). The survey is vital to providing feedback to me regarding the course and my teaching, as well as to help the Department of Geography improve the overall program for students in the future. The survey is accessed via ces.uvic.ca and can be done on your laptop, tablet, or mobile device. I will remind you and provide you with more detailed information nearer the time, but please be thinking about this important activity during the course.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO SUPPORT YOUR SUCCESS

The University of Victoria is committed to promoting, providing and protecting a positive and safe learning and working environment for all its members. Remember to take care of yourself. Do your best to maintain a healthy lifestyle by eating well, exercising, getting enough sleep and taking some time to relax. This will help you achieve your goals and cope with stress. All of us benefit from support during times of struggle. You are not alone. There are many resources available to support your success, so make sure you know where to go when you need help. The following are some examples:

Academic Advising <http://www.uvic.ca/services/advising/>

Academic Calendar (including key dates such as add and drop deadlines) <https://www.uvic.ca/calendar/dates/>

Centre for Academic Communication (the Writing Centre) <https://www.uvic.ca/learningandteaching/cac/>

Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL)

The CAL staff are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations <https://www.uvic.ca/services/cal/>. Please note I am able to implement their recommendations regarding accommodations such as differences in length of timed exams using the online system.

Coop and Career Services <https://www.uvic.ca/coopandcareer/>

Counselling Services offer free professional, confidential, inclusive support to currently registered UVic students <https://www.uvic.ca/services/counselling/>

Elders' Voices The Office of Indigenous Academic & Community Engagement (IACE) has the privilege of assembling a group of Elders from local communities to guide students, staff, faculty and administration in Indigenous ways of knowing and being uvic.ca/services/indigenous/students/programming/elders/index.php

Geography Department <https://www.uvic.ca/socialsciences/geography/>

- Undergraduate advising and registration geogadvising@uvic.ca.
- <https://www.uvic.ca/socialsciences/geography/undergraduate/advising/index.php>

Health Services - University Health Services (UHS) provides a full service primary health clinic for students, and coordinates healthy student and campus initiatives. <https://www.uvic.ca/services/health/>

International Commons and UVic Global Community

- <https://www.uvic.ca/international/home/international-commons/index.php>
- <https://www.uvic.ca/international/home/global-community/index.php>

MacPherson Library <http://www.uvic.ca/library/>

Math and Stats Assistance Centre

<https://www.uvic.ca/science/math-statistics/current-students/undergraduate/msac/index.php>

Plagiarism Guide (how not to...) from the Library online <https://www.uvic.ca/library/help/citation/plagiarism/>

Positivity and Safety and Professional Code of Conduct for Students

The University of Victoria is committed to promoting, providing and protecting a positive and safe learning and working environment for all its members. The January 2021 *Tri-faculty code of conduct for students* can be found here and is useful to review. <https://www.uvic.ca/services/advising/assets/docs/tri-fac-student-code-of-conduct.pdf>

Sexualized violence resource office, EQHR; Sedgewick C119, <https://uvic.ca/svp>

UVic takes sexualized violence seriously, and has raised the bar for what is considered acceptable behaviour. We encourage students to learn more about how the university defines sexualized violence and its overall approach by visiting uvic.ca/svp. If you or someone you know has been impacted by sexualized violence and needs information, advice, and/or support please contact the sexualized violence resource office in Equity and Human Rights (EQHR). Whether or not you have been directly impacted, if you want to take part in the important prevention work taking place on campus, contact: 250.721.8021, svpcoordinator@uvic.ca

Undergraduate Calendar (includes policies and regulations such as: **academic integrity** at Section 7, **academic concessions** at Sections 10 and 11) <https://www.uvic.ca/calendar/undergrad/index.php#/content/62daf5e88b7d47001d0fc385>

University Health Services (UHS) provides a full service primary health clinic for students, and coordinates healthy student and campus initiatives. <http://uvic.ca/services/health/>