

Syllabus: GEOG 409-A01

Personal Space: Exploring Geographies of Gender, Sexuality and Identity

Instructor: Natasha Fox (she/they)

Email: nfox@uvic.ca

Office Hours: By appointment

Class times: M, Tu, Th, Fr 10:00am-12:15pm*

*This course will be a mixture of synchronous and asynchronous following the schedule below:

Course Meeting Schedule

Synchronous using zoom	Asynchronous with pre-recorded lectures
Meeting ID: 819 3020 3689 /PW: 54321	
Thursday June 3	Monday June 7
Friday June 4	Friday June 11
Tuesday June 8	Thursday June 17
Thursday June 10	Friday June 18
Monday June 14	Friday June 25
Tuesday June 15	Friday June 25
Monday June 21	
Tuesday June 22	
Thursday June 24	

***Situating this course:** UVic's Campus is located on the traditional territory of the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ peoples who for millennia have passed on in their culture, history, and traditions from one generation to the next on this site. As a guest currently living on the unceded territory of Coast Salish people (including that of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations), I am grateful to be able to live, work, and raise my family here.*

Welcome!

This class involves *you* working both independently and collaboratively with other students to explore our collective disciplinary geographical interests in gender, sexuality and identity and how these 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 geography 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 that I can. I hope you will bring your own curiosity, energy, context, background and questions to explore. Why does understanding geographies of gender, sexuality and identity matter so much? For me, human geography as a field is about

understanding my place in relation to the rest of the human and natural world, and taking action to reduce suffering caused by injustice. In many cases, human suffering is rooted in discrimination against, and dehumanization of, the “other,” based on particular sets of social constructs which we will critically interrogate in this course. What I love about geography is that it allows us to figure in how injustices connect to space, place and location at multiple scales, and how these are inextricably and intimately linked to *identity*. As such, the themes of identity, gender and sexuality will be deeply imbricated in our course discussion and readings, and we will always strive to position our work on these topics within a geographical context.

In this field, feminist geographers have contributed enormously to our knowledge and understanding of social constructions of gender, sexuality and identity since at least the 1970s. But early feminist geographers sometimes reproduced their own “blind spots” in regards to inequalities around race, ability, gender identity and other axes of difference. The past decade of intersectional feminist queer scholarship has put forth a rich body of work that aims to approach gender, identity, and sexuality from perspectives far beyond essentialized understandings of “women’s” experiences of marginalization. These scholars have produced a lively and diverse field of vibrant and dynamic inquiry, as well as offered exciting new ways to grapple with lived experiences of various spaces. One of the challenges of this course will be to interrogate how the context of the COVID-19 crisis has lent this work a new sense of urgency, while “stretching” the scales of inquiry to encompass both high-level global networks, international borders and institutions, and the real-world connections to the intimate and even microbial level each of our human bodies.

While this course is designed to be co-constructed by you, 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 geography
- Creation, loss, and (re)claiming of identities
- The body as a site of struggle
- Private, public (and intermediate) personal spaces at different scales, including virtual spaces
- 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.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you should be able to make use of the following skill set:

- 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”

- Improve your understanding of how the social constructs of gender, sexuality and identity underlie many issues of social injustice
- 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
- Demonstrate, and engage in, co-created learning with your peers

Course Expectations

Be forewarned: the pace of this course will be extremely fast. There is one reading assigned per day except on Wednesdays, and you need to actually engage with each of them. There is very little room for procrastination in a course this compressed. But the trade-off for your intense focus and commitment over this next 3 weeks will be to accomplish the learning outcomes listed above in a very short time period and be able to move on with your summer. You must be prepared to think about and observe how the course topics and themes manifest around you, and in your intersections with the world and people in it every day. This can be exciting, eye opening, and intense. It is not easy, and you will likely hit many bumps along the way, including possibly encountering some painful truths. Indeed, research that deals with social injustices and inequities can bring about discomfort, sadness, anger, frustration and a range of other unpleasant feelings and reactions.

Do not be discouraged.

Your course mates and I are here to help you and each of us navigate this process. By thinking of this class more as a source of strength and support in our shared pursuit of change (of ourselves and how we relate to the world around us), my hope is that we can steadily work through these experiences and come out on the other side more prepared to grow as human beings. It's an ambitious goal, but we can get there! We will spend the first day of the course coming up with a course agreement to help us accomplish this.

Due to the nature of the course, therefore, learning depends on the active participation of every student in all class activities including those that are synchronous and asynchronous. As a result, I expect each of you to actively listen to each other. This means putting other devices away and staying mentally present in our meetings. I know it can be a challenge to stay focused in the zoom environment, and we all are facing a range of distractions and difficult circumstances at this time. However, I ask that each of us (myself included!) commit to doing our best to support one another's learning process through our class communication and engagement for the time that we share in this online space.

Weekly Meeting Structure

The course days are: Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. They will entail a mix of synchronous mini-lectures by you and me, followed by an *active discussion* where we will work together to tease out important points from the material. Everyone must contribute to the discussion.

Course Materials

A list of readings will be provided on the course Brightspace page and you can also access them at the UVic library website. This will allow you to access the electronic version of the reading for free. There are no textbooks for this course and I will not assign anything that you need to pay for.

In order to participate in class, you must do the assigned readings prior to class.

Reading the material is also critical to your midweek reflections, and student facilitation which together constitute 50% of your mark for this class (see **Evaluation and Assessment**)

Evaluation and Assessment

Below is a list of the assignments for which you will be marked. I will provide a detailed explanation for each of the items below and we will go over expectations together on the first day of the course, with more opportunity for asking questions as the course gets underway.

30% Midweek reflections

3x reflections of around 500-1000 words. These are worth 10 points each and are due online to me every Wednesday by 11:59pm. I will provide a question or prompt related to our readings and discussion to help you focus your thoughts.

Due every Wednesday (June 9, 16, 23) 11:59 pm to my email or Brightspace

20% Facilitation

Each of you will lead the class in a 20 min lecture with a partner followed by a 20 min facilitated discussion on one of the readings. More detail on this and an opportunity to compose the facilitation schedule will be provided on our first class day.

20% Synchronous meetings attendance and participation in discussion

Show up. Engage. Be present. Contribute.

10% Create a meme related to one of the course themes

For this assignment you will be asked to create a meme (i.e. an image, video, or piece of text) that connects somehow to one of the course themes. More detail will be provided. Bonus if it's actually funny or clever!

Due June 14 Monday 9:59 am to my email or Brightspace

20% Final reflection assignment

This final reflection will entail a critical discussion of how one of your spaces (in whichever of the various ways we understand "space" in this class) interacts with a theme from this course. Roughly 2000 words. More detail will be provided.

Exact due date TBA (soon after our final class date of June 25)

Rules Regarding Late Assignments

In order to be fair to students who meet the deadlines, if you submit an assignment late you will lose marks in the following way. The late 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 reasons (requiring a written report from a medical practitioner a maximum of one week later stating the reason for your inability to meet the requirement).

Academic Integrity

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. Therefore, 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 you are not sure what all this means for you there is more information and lots of help at the Library. If in doubt please always ask!

Course Experience Survey (CES)

I value your feedback on this course. At the end of term, as in all other courses at UVic, you will have the opportunity to 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, and it will be one of our in-class activities, but please be thinking about this important activity during the course. I will also make attempts to continuously seek input from you throughout the course. My goal is to make this course work for you as best I can.

Undergraduate Grading Standards (per the Academic Calendar)

Grade	Grade point value	Grade scale	Description
A+ A A-	9 8 7	90-100% 85-89% 80-84%	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.
B+ B B-	6 5 4	77-79% 73-76% 70-72%	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.
C+ C	3 2	65-69% 60-64%	Satisfactory, or minimally satisfactory. These grades indicate a satisfactory performance and knowledge of the subject matter.
D	1	50-59%	Marginal Performance. A student receiving this grade demonstrated a superficial grasp of the subject matter.
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.

Accessibility

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. If you have a consideration related to health or abilities that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me (only if you are comfortable doing so) or the Centre for Accessible Learning. The staff in these offices are available by appointment online and over the phone to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations. The sooner you let us know your needs the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.

Important Note for Students not Currently Living in Canada

During this pandemic, the shift to online learning has greatly altered teaching and studying at UVic, including changes to health and safety considerations. Keep in mind that some UVic courses like this one might cover topics that are censored or considered illegal by non-Canadian governments. This may include, but is not limited to, human rights, representative government, defamation, obscenity, gender or sexuality, and historical or current geopolitical controversies. If you are a student living abroad, you will be subject to the laws of your local jurisdiction, and your local authorities might limit your access to course material or take punitive action against you. UVic is strongly committed to academic freedom, but has no control over foreign authorities. Thus, we recognize that students will have legitimate reason to exercise caution in studying certain subjects. If you have concerns regarding your personal situation, consider postponing taking a course with manifest risks, until you are back on campus or reach out to your academic advisor to find substitute courses.