Critical Psychologies FRAN 6200

FRAN 6200, 2012-2013
Critical Psychologies

Instructor: Professor Carla Rice
Address: College of Social and Applied Human Sciences
Office: Macdonald Institute, MINS 231B
Email: carlar@uoguelph.ca
Telephone: 519-824-4120, ext. 53921
Office Hours: Thursday 9:30 to 11:30 am, By appointment
Course Time: Thursday 11:30AM - 02:20PM
Course Location: MACS, Room
Mobile Fax: 1 (416) 628-1667

Course Overview
This is a graduate level course exploring principles and practices of critical and feminist psychologies, theories of difference and identity development, and poststructuralist and postcolonial accounts of subjectivity and self-other relations. Focus of seminars is on constructivist, post colonial, and feminist critiques of psychology and contributions to psychology. Topics related to the psychology of women, gender, and race across the life span will be highlighted. Application of relational, critical, post colonial, and narrative approaches to diverse problems and social groups is emphasized throughout course readings and requirements.

Course Themes and Topics
Topics examined in the course include: histories and methods of feminist and critical psychologies; theories of difference and self-other relations; difference attribution and identity development across the life span; theoretical approaches to emotion; theorizing selves from experiences of injury, adversity, and capacity; and genealogies of harmful practices and problems in families, institutions, communities, and nations. Throughout classroom discussions, we consider how social relations and symbolic systems constitute the subjectivities and identities of diverse people.

The course is organized into four parts:

Part 1: Histories and Methods
Short History of Otherness and Madness
Critical Race and Post/colonial Psychology
Feminist Theories of Therapy and Development
Constructivist and Narrative Psychologies

Part 2: Theories of identity and Difference
Difference and Identity I: Gender, Sex, and Sexuality
Difference and Identity II: Race, Class, and Disability
Part 3: Theorizing From Experiences of Trauma and Adversity
Feminist Approaches to Feeling: Stress, Sadness, Love, & Loss
The Experiences and Effects of Violence
Migration and Marginalisation

Part 4: Genealogies of Problems
Substance Use, Self-Injury, Suicidality, & Sanctuary
Body Projects / Body Politics

Course Objectives
This course has eight objectives:

1. For students to become familiar with a range of critical perspectives on pathologizing constructions of people and problems;
2. For students to engage with feminist relational, post-colonial, and constructivist theoretical approaches to understanding subjectivities, identities, and differences across the life span;
3. For students to examine important questions and concerns related to gender, race, disability, and other difference in contemporary psychology and therapy praxis;
4. For students to examine critical theories for understanding injury and adversity, and principles for facilitating agency, creativity, and community of diverse people and populations;
5. For students and instructor to contribute to a community of learners engaged in critical and respectful dialogue on issues of suffering, diagnosis, response and intervention, and mental difference;
6. For students and instructor to practice ethical commitment to privileging the perspectives and self-representations of marginalized individuals, groups, and communities in question;
7. For students and instructor to practice critical self-reflectivity in order to uncover some of the ways that issues of power, identity, and difference shape how they think, feel, act, and interact in their professional roles and daily lives; and
8. For students to develop critical reading, writing, communication, presentation, facilitation, and self-evaluation skills.

Required Texts
We will work with four texts and course readings. The following course readings will be available for purchase from the Bookstore and/or accessed through the library:


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st Reflection Due</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Oct 11 (in class)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Reflection Due</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Nov 15 (in class)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation (self evaluation)</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>As assigned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>As assigned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation Write-Up</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Nov 29 (in class)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Explanation of Assignments**

Students are expected to do assignments using interdisciplinary and intersectional approaches to critical and feminist scholarship in undertaking course work. These involve:

- Understanding of differences among people in their constitution of subjectivity and identity, in their experiences of and responses to adversity, as well as in their diagnoses, treatment, and positioning within systems. Ability to use variables such as gender, sex, class, race, ethnicity, age, place, culture, nation, ability, aboriginality, and sexuality in analyses of psychological problems.
- Emphasis on complexity in analyzing topics, demonstrating proficiency in applying varied theories and practices introduced in the course.
- Considering agency, capacity, and creativity of individuals and groups in responding to social privilege / suffering / exclusions and in constituting alternative accounts of themselves.

**Class Presentation (Self Evaluation)**

**Topics assigned in week 2**

This assignment is mandatory. As part of the assignment, you will be asked to submit a one-page written self-evaluation of your presentation along with a letter grade. Choose a topic that engages you. Develop and facilitate a workshop that includes your reflections on the topic, and selected readings for the week. Your facilitation should include a brief introduction to the topic, an outline of feminist/critical/post colonial critiques of conventional approaches and of alternative approaches to the topic, and a discussion starter. You can use visual aids short films or film clips, ice breakers, small group exercises, experiential approaches, and/or questions to engage the class.

Presentations should be well researched and well organized. The assignment is intended for you to enter into generative conversations and get valuable feedback about key theoretical issues and practice dilemmas in your area of interest.
Self Evaluation: Please submit your one-page written self-evaluation of your presentation along with a letter grade one week after your presentation. Along with this, submit a copy of the visuals, discussion questions, ice breakers, or experiential exercises you use, and copies of handouts given to the class.

**Reflection Papers**
Write two polished reflection papers of 6 to 8 pages each on the readings you completed during the previous section of the course. Choose themes that interest, engage, move, challenge, puzzle, or bother you or some association and connection a reading has triggered for you. Reflections will be graded on writing quality, originality, synthesis skills, and sensitivity of analyses. I strongly advise that you draft responses when you are immersed in the readings and then edit your reflections before submission. Demonstration of reading comprehension, writing clarity, and consistency of effort is critical to success in this assignment.

**Presentation Write Up**
In this assignment, you are required to write a 6 to 8 page report on your presentation that brings at least one of the theoretical frameworks introduced in the course together with your topic. Your write up should summarize and synthesize the content of your presentation (properly cited); outline the critical questions you have about your topic; consider what student and instructor responses have taught you about your subject area; and identify gaps and spaces you may now see in your own thinking and possible directions for further development of this work. In addition to writing quality, originality, synthesis skills, and sensitivity of analyses, you will be graded on your self-reflectivity—your recognition how your position might shape your interest in, and approach to, your topic, and inform your scope of knowledge and areas of not knowing and uncertainty in relation to it.

**Participation**
Regular attendance is required and students must demonstrate they have done the reading.

**Commitment to Class Discussions and Course Materials**
The course is structured as a weekly 3-hour seminar, which works best when students are prepared to participate fully in discussions. Course assignments emphasize student engagement with course material.

**Note on Difficulty of Course Content**
In this class, we explore the difficult emotional and social terrain of child and woman abuse, structural and symbolic violence, experiences of marginalisation and exclusion, effects of histories of colonisation and forced assimilation, institutional abuse, as well as emotions of sadness and shame, and coping strategies of substance use, self-injury, and suicidality. Some of the films we watch over the semester can evoke strong emotions.
and responses in audiences. You are in the best position to decide whether this is right
course at this time. If you have any questions or concerns, please talk to me before
deciding on this class.

**Course Policies on Late Submission of Work**
Assignments are accepted before or on the due date. Extensions are provided only if
you contact me ahead of time or provide documentation of a medical or life emergency.
Otherwise, there is a 2% penalty per day for late assignments.

**Academic Misconduct**
All members of the University of Guelph community are required to be familiar of what
constitutes academic misconduct. Students are encouraged to become familiar with
academic integrity issues and to consult the University of Guelph’s policy regarding
academic misconduct, which is available in the University Graduate Calendar at:
www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/sec_d0e1340.shtml
Pursuant to University policy, suspected cases of academic misconduct will be
forwarded to the Department Chair.

**Email Contacts**
Every student is expected to have a Guelph email address and to check it regularly. If a
class has to be cancelled, or if there is any other matter that you should know about
prior to class, you will be sent an email on your Guelph account. It is your responsibility
to attend class and if you have missed a class, seek out one of your classmates to inquire
about missed course material. Email can be used to set up appointments with me, or to
ask practical questions that require brief answers. You are welcome to ask questions
requiring detailed responses during class or office hours.

**Feminist- and Social Justice-Informed Classroom Interactions**
This is a feminist and social justice oriented classroom, where we aim to engage with
each other in respectful and thoughtful conversations about the relationship between
social relations and injustices and social differences/identities including sex, class, race,
age, culture, disability, aboriginality, and sexuality, and sense of self. Attendance is
mandatory. Because a significant part of the course will be classroom discussion, a
major assignment is keeping up with readings, participating in dialogue an informed
way, and providing ethical feedback to other students. You should come to class not
only having done the assigned reading, but also having thought about it and having
prepared some points/questions for discussion. Your responses to other students
should not be negative. As an engaged learner, your job is to enter into conversations
about what was read/heard, and your responses to the ideas presented. You are asked
to structure your responses along the following:

- Identifying the ideas that engage you
As you read texts or listen to the lectures, presentations, and discussions which ideas caught your attention or captured your imagination? Which ones stuck a chord for you?

- Describing the intentions of the writers or speakers
  What values and principles regarding people, their identities and selves, and the world more generally do these ideas evoke? What do the ideas suggest to you about the writers’ or speakers’ purposes and commitments?

- Situating your responses
  What is it about your own life experiences or interests that account for why these ideas caught your attention? Do you have a sense of which aspects of your own experiences resonated with these ideas?

- Identifying gaps and spaces
  What are some gaps and spaces that you notice in each reading? What areas do you think need further exploration in this topic area? What remains confusing, unclear, or underdeveloped? What suggestions in the form of other authors and ideas can you offer to help the analysis along?

- Recognising your movement
  How have you been moved on account of engaging with these ideas? Where have these ideas taken you? How have you shifted as a result of listening to and participating in the development of these ideas?

Critical Psychologies
Schedule of Topics and Readings Fall 2012

Part 1: Histories and Methods

Sept 6: Introductory class
Review of course syllabus, grading system, and major assignments for course;
Assignment of texts and topics for student presentations

September 13: Short History of Otherness and Madness
Feminist and anti-oppression critiques of mainstream medical models, conventional
diagnostic categories, and mental health systems

Vancouver: Ronsdale Press. [BOOK]

[COURSEPACK]


Optional Film Resources
An Angel at my Table, Part 2 (Dir. Jane Campion, New Line Features, 1989), 50 mins.
The Lobotomist (Dir. Barak Goodman, PBS and Ark Media, 2008), 60 mins.

September 20: Critical Race and Post/colonial Psychology
Practices and possibilities of critical and post-colonial psychologies; Critical
consciousness for self-recovery, community, and social change

6. Hooks, b. (2005). *Sisters of the yam: Black women and self-recovery.* Cambridge, MA: South End Press. Interview with bell hooks (xi-xx); Preface: Reflections of light (xxiii-xxxv); Introduction: Healing darkness (1-9); Chapter 1: Seeking after truth (11-20);
Chapter 10: Sweet communion (113-124). [BOOK]


Optional Film Resources

Qallunaat: Why white people are funny (Dir. Mark Sandiford, National Film Board of Canada and Beachwalker Films, 2006), 50 mins.

Black Skin, White Mask (Dir. Isaac Julien, Mark Nash for the Arts Council of England, 1996), 52 mins

Rabbit-Proof Fence (Dir. Phillip Noyce, Alliance Atlantis, 2004), 40 mins.

September 27: Feminist Theories of Therapy and Development

The role of relationships and social context in women’s and men’s identity development


Optional Film Resources

October 4: Constructivist and Narrative Psychologies
Social construction of selves through language, image, culture, and story


Adelaide, Australia: Dulwich Centre Publications. Part 1: Companions on a journey (pp. 1-15); Part 4: Power to our journeys (pp. 203-210) by Brigitte, Sue, Mem, & Veronica. [COURSEPACK]

Optional Film Resources
Tree of Life: A narrative approach to working with vulnerable children (Developed by Ncazelto Ncube & David Denborough, Dulwich Centre Institute of Community Practice), 60 mins.
Dialogues with madwomen (Dir. Allie Light, New York: Women Make Movies, 1993), 90 mins.

Part 2: Theories of Identity and Difference

October 11: Difference and Identity I: Gender, Sex, and Sexuality [FIRST WEEKLY REFLECTIONS DUE]
Creating diverse gender, sex, and sexual identities within dualistic systems; Analyzing discourses of normalcy, ethnicity, nationality, heteronormativity, and compulsory heterosexuality that shape and constrain sexuality.


* Excerpts from the American Psychiatric Association’s DSM IV are included to give you a sense of conventional categories used in western psychiatry and psychology for distinguishing mental health from illness. They are meant for reference and discussion purposes only.

Optional Film Resources

Ma Vie En Rose (My Life in Pink) (Dir. Alain Berliner, Haut et Court, 1997)
533 Statements: A Road Trip Documentary About Queer Canadian Women (Dir. Tori Foster, 2006), 70 min
Fish Can’t Fly: Conversations about God and Struggling to be Gay (Dir. Tom Murray, T. Joe Murray Productions, 2005), 83 mins.
I Exist: Voices from the Lesbian and Gay Middle Eastern Community in the US (Dir. Peter Barbosa, Arab Film Distribution and Eye Bite, 2004), 90 mins.
5 Girls (Dir. Maria Finitzo, Kartemquin Films, 2001), 120 mins.
Western Eyes. (Dir. Anne Shin, Montreal: National Film Board of Canada, 2000), 40 mins.
Transgeneration, Episodes 7 & 8 (Dir. Jeremy Simmons, A World of Wonder Productions, 2006), Episode 7: 25 min; Episode 8: 50 mins
No Cinderella Story: Stories of Sex, Relationships and Sex Image (Brooklyn, New York: Reel Works, 2005), 39 mins.

October 18: Difference and Identity II: Race, Class, and Disability
Theorizing differences and identities within and across bodies, subjectivities, communities, cultures, and nations


Optional Film Resources
Mohawk Girls (Dir. Tracey Deer, Rezolution Pictures International and National Film Board of Canada, 2005), 53 mins.
Between: Living in the Hyphen (Dir. Anne Marie Nakagawa, National Film board of Canada, 2006), 42 mins.
Shameless: The ART of Disability (Directed by Bonnie Sherr Klein, Montreal: National Film Board of Canada, 2006), 70 mins.

Part 3: Theorizing From Experiences of Trauma and Adversity
October 25: Feminist Approaches to Feeling: Stress, Sadness, Love, & Loss
Situating emotions in cultural contexts and social relations; Considering the historical genealogies and cultural meanings of love and loss; Pathologization and paradoxes of pain


Optional Film Resources
The Medicated Child, (PBS and Rainmedia, 2008) 60 mins.
Wit (Dir. Mike Nichols, HBO Films and Avenue Pictures Production, 2001), 99 minutes
Refrigerator Mothers (Dir. David Simpson, Kartemquin Educational Films, 2002), [History of Mother Blaming in Psychiatry]

November 1: Experiences and Effects of Violence
Contexts, experiences, and consequences of violence, especially against especially girls and women


36. Doe, J. (2004). The story of Jane Doe. Toronto: Vintage Canada. Background (xv-xvii); Preliminary note from Jane Doe and civil trial journal (2-4, 7-8); Safe at home in bed (9-16); How to survive a rape trial (62-80); How I became Jane Doe (90-94); The ultimate rape victim (118-128). [COURSEPACK]


Optional Film Resources:
Let’s Talk About It (Dir. Deepa Mehta, Filmblanc Production and Rogers OMNI Television, 2005), 40 mins.
Cruel and Unusual (Dir. Janet Baus, Dan Hunt and Reid Williams, Alluvial Filmworks, 2006), 60 mins.
Journey to Healing (Indigenous People’s Programs, 1992), 44 mins
Muffins for Granny (Dir. Nadia McLaren, Mongrel Media, 2007), 88 mins.

November 8: Migration and Marginalisation
On social suffering shaped by colonial histories and structural violence


Optional Film Resources
Not Yet Diagnosed. (Dir. Barri Cohen, Montreal: National Film Board of Canada, 1997), 47 minutes.
My American Dream: Stories of Immigration (Brooklyn, New York: Reel Works, 2005), 41 mins.
Part 4: Genealogies of Problems

November 15: Substance Use, Suicidality, & Sanctuary [FINAL WEEKLY REFLECTIONS DUE]
Context and consequences of problems with addictions, self-injury, and suicidal thoughts and attempts; Search for sanctuary and communion.


Optional Film Resource
The New Asylums (PBS, 2005), 60 mins.

November 22: Body Projects / Body Politics


**Optional Film Resources:**

*Body Beautiful*, (Directed by Ngozi Onwurah, Women Make Movies, 1991), 23 min

*Thin: Death By Eating Disorder* (Excerpts from Directed by Lauren Greenfield, HBO Documentary Films, 2004), 103 min.

*A Girl Like Me* (Directed by Kiri Davis, Reel Works Filmmaking, 2005), 10 mins.

*This is My Body: A Film by High School Girls*, (Directed by Andrea Levy, National Film Board of Canada and TRUE Power Media, 2006), 34 mins.

**November 29: Wrap Up [FINAL WRITE UP DUE]**