

**GRADUATE PROGRAMME IN SOCIAL AND POLITICAL THOUGHT**  
**York University**  
**2021**

**Race, Psyche and Sexuality in Psychoanalytic Perspective**  
**GS/SPTH 6402M**  
**Professor Sheila L. Cavanagh**

Office Hours by Appointment  
E-mail: Sheila@yorku.ca  
Virtual Seminars: 11:30-2:30, Tuesdays

**Course Description**

This course will introduce students to the critical study of race, psyche and sexuality in psychoanalytic perspective. The primary theoretical lens will be shaped by psychosocial studies. Psychosocial studies is a field that developed in the United Kingdom (UK) in the early 1990s and is defined by the Association for Psychosocial Studies as predicated on the interrelationship between psychical experience, sexuality and society. In this course, we expand the canonical definition to include a feminist, queer and postcolonial focus on race and racialization. It will appeal to students interested in how psychoanalysis gives rise to racist and colonial thinking and how it can be used to critique and better understand racist social and political formations. The course thus spans two main fields in Social and Political Thought: “Black Studies and Theories of Race and Racism” and “The History of Social and Political Thought.”

What distinguishes psychoanalysis from other theoretical frameworks is the focus on unconscious sexuality. As such, the psychosocial approach adopted in this course underscores the centrality of desire, Eros, hate, perversion, aggression, castration, loss, difference, narcissism, displacement, identification, incorporation and otherness in the psychic life of race, racism and racialization. Attention will be devoted to (a) Sigmund Freud’s original writings on psychosexual development, totem and taboo, “primitive” instincts, civilization and so forth, (b) postcolonial uses and critiques of psychoanalysis, (c) Lacanian-inspired readings of race, desire and psyche (Kalpana Seshadri-Crooks (2000) and Sheldon George (2016)); and (d) Julia Kristeva’s writing on the stranger, the foreigner, the outsider, etc., as it pertains to what Kelly Oliver (2004) calls the colonization of psychic space.

**Evaluation:**

Presentation: 25%  
Participation: 25%  
Essay: 50%

**Required Texts:**

Freud, Sigmund. "Three essays on the theory of sexuality (1905)." *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud, volume VII (1901-1905): A case of hysteria, three essays on sexuality and other works*. 1953. 123-246.

Said, Edward W. "Freud and the Non-European. With an introduction by Christopher Bollas and a response by Jacqueline Rose." *London and New York: Verso 23* (2003).

Lacan, Jacques. "The seminar XX, encore: On feminine sexuality, the limits of love and knowledge." (1998).

Kristeva, Julia. *Strangers to ourselves*. Columbia University Press, 1991.

### **Recommended Texts**

Lane, Christopher, ed. *The psychoanalysis of race*. Columbia University Press, 1998.

McClintock, Anne. *Imperial leather: Race, gender, and sexuality in the colonial contest*.

Oliver, Kelly. *The colonization of psychic space: A psychoanalytic social theory of oppression*.

U of Minnesota Press, 2004.

Gilman, Sander L., and Sander Lawrence Gilman. *Difference and pathology: Stereotypes of sexuality, race, and madness*. Cornell University Press, 1985.

Gherovici, Patricia. *The Puerto Rican Syndrome*. Other Press, LLC, 2003.

Freud, Sigmund. *Civilization and its discontents*. Broadview Press, 2015.

### **CLASS SCHEDULE**

#### **Introduction to Race, Psyche and Sexuality Course**

Jan. 12

*\*No Readings Assigned*

Presentation Sign-Up and Administration.

WATCH:

Psychoanalysis in the Barrio

#### SIGMUND FREUD

#### **Sigmund Freud: An Introduction**

Jan. 19

Required Readings:

Freud, Sigmund. *Three essays on the theory of sexuality: The 1905 edition*. Verso Books, 2017.

Recommended Readings:

Ahad, Badia Sahar. *Freud upside down: African American literature and psychoanalytic culture*. University of Illinois Press, 2010.

Garcia, Jay. *Psychology comes to Harlem: rethinking the race question in twentieth-century America*. JHU Press, 2012.

#### **Freud and the Non-European**

Jan. 26

Required Readings:

Said, Edward W. "Freud and the Non-European. With an introduction by Christopher Bollas and a response by Jacqueline Rose." *London and New York: Verso 23* (2003).

Derrida, Jacques, and Donald Nicholson-Smith. "Geopsychoanalysis: "... and the rest of the world"." *American Imago* 48.2 (1991): 199-231.

Recommended Readings:

Freud, Sigmund. *Civilization and its discontents*. Broadview Press, 2015.

Freud, Sigmund. "Totem and taboo." *New York* (1938).

**Race, Colonialism and Fetishization**

Feb. 2

Required Readings:

Freud, Sigmund. "Fetishism." *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XXI (1927-1931): The Future of an Illusion, Civilization and its Discontents, and Other Works*. 1961. 147-158.

Cheng, Anne Anlin. "Skin deep: Josephine Baker and the colonial fetish." *Camera Obscura: Feminism, Culture, and Media Studies* 23.3 (69) (2008): 35-79.

Eng, David L. Introduction. In *Racial castration: managing masculinity in Asian America*. Duke University Press, 2001.

JACQUES LACAN

**Jacques Lacan**

Feb. 9

Required Readings:

Lacan, Jacques. *Feminine Sexuality: Jacques Lacan and the école freudienne*. WW Norton & Company, 1985. (1-77)

Recommended Readings:

Lacan, Jacques, and James B. Swenson. "Kant with Sade." *October* 51 (1989): 55-75.

Barnard, Suzanne, and Bruce Fink, eds. *Reading Seminar XX: Lacan's major work on love, knowledge, and feminine sexuality*. SUNY Press, 2012.

**READING WEEK**

Feb. 16

(No Classes or Readings)

**Lacan and Race**

Feb. 23

Required Readings:

Khan, Azeen. "Lacan and Race." 148-164

Rivera, Miguel. "'[D]ifferent even from our 'own' differences': Racial Signification and the Legacy of Lacanian Sexuation." *Word and Text, A Journal of Literary Studies and Linguistics* 7.01 (2017): 168-184.

Lacan, Jacques. "Guiding remarks for a convention on female sexuality." *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English* (2006): 610-20.

**WATCH:**

Formulas of Sexuation <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Km-JQnebWt0>

## **Desiring Whiteness**

March 2

### Required Readings:

Seshadri-Crooks, Kalpana. "The Object of Whiteness" In *Desiring whiteness: A Lacanian analysis of race*. Psychology Press, 2000.

Seshadri-Crooks, Kalpana. "Introduction: On looking" In *Desiring whiteness: A Lacanian analysis of race*. Psychology Press, 2000.

## **Race and Jouissance**

March 9

### Required Readings:

George, Sheldon. "Conserving Race, Conserving Trauma: The Legacy of W.E.B. Du Bois" In *Trauma and race: A Lacanian study of African American racial identity*. Baylor University Press, 2016.

Hook, Derek. "Racism and jouissance: Evaluating the "racism as (the theft of) enjoyment" hypothesis." *Psychoanalysis, Culture & Society* 23.3 (2018): 244-266.

Zizek, Slavoj. "Love thy neighbor? No, thanks!." *The psychoanalysis of race* 1.1 (1998): 155-175.

WATCH:

Jouissance (1 of 7): Enjoying the margins

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mCs\\_WJ3YA5k](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mCs_WJ3YA5k)

On the 'Pleasure of Hating': An introduction to the idea of racism as 'enjoyment'

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OUQAGANcX\\_o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OUQAGANcX_o)

## **The Lacanian Mirror**

March 16

### Required Readings:

Lacan, Jacques. "The mirror stage as formative of the function of the I as revealed in psychoanalytic experience." *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture. A Reader* (1949): 287-292.

Boswell, Maia. "'Ladies,' 'Gentlemen,' and 'Colored': The Agency of (Lacan's Black) Letter" in the Outhouse." *Cultural Critique* 41 (1999): 108-138.

Winnubst, Shannon. "Is the mirror racist? Interrogating the space of whiteness." *Philosophy & social criticism* 30.1 (2004): 25-50.

WATCH:

Lacan's Mirror Stage (1 of 4) – Challenges of 'Prematuration'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kyhXvX-T7HY>

Colonial Trauma and Literature

Recommended Reading:

Cavanagh, Sheila L. "Gender, sexuality, and race in the lacanian mirror: Urinary segregation and the bodily ego." *Psychoanalytic Geographies* (2016).

March 23

Required Readings:

Dean, Tim. "The Germs of Empire: Heart of Darkness, Colonial Trauma, and the Historiography of AIDS." *The Psychoanalysis of Race* (1998): 305-329.

George, Sheldon. "Approaching the "Thing" of Slavery: A Lacanian Analysis of Toni Morrison's *Beloved*." *African American Review* 45.1/2 (2012): 115-130.

Eng, David L. "Heterosexuality in the Face of Whiteness: Divided Belief in M. Butterfly" In *Racial castration: managing masculinity in Asian America*. Duke University Press, 2001.

JULIA KRISTEVA

**Julia Kristeva and the Stranger**

March 30

Required Readings:

Kristeva, Julia. *Strangers to ourselves*. Columbia University Press, 1991.

Recommended Reading:

Kristeva, Julia. *Powers of horror*. Vol. 98. University Presses of California, Columbia and Princeton, 1982.

**Julia Kristeva, the Subaltern and Postcolonial Criticism**

April 6

Required Reading:

Oliver, Kelly. *The colonization of psychic space: A psychoanalytic social theory of oppression*. U of Minnesota Press, 2004. (Part 11: 47-86).

Penney, James. "Uncanny foreigners: does the subaltern speak through Julia Kristeva." *The psychoanalysis of race* (1998): 120-138.

Rai, Amit S. "'Thus Spake the Subaltern...': Postcolonial Criticism and." *The Psychoanalysis of Race* (1998).

