

University of Victoria  
Department of Geography  
**Personal Space: Exploring Geographies of Gender, Sexuality and Identity**  
Geography 391, **Spring 2017**  
**Course Syllabus**

<b>Instructor</b>	Prof. Teresa Dawson, tdawson@uvic.ca, David Turpin Building (DTB) B316	
<b>Class time</b>	Tuesdays and Thursdays: 2:30 AM – 4:00 PM	COR A125
<b>Office Hours</b>	Mon & Thurs 1:00 PM – 2:00 PM; Fri 12 noon to 1:00PM <u>and by appointment</u> All in my office (DTB B316).	

**Communications:**

- *Course information, tips, reminders, and all notices:* There is a **CourseSpaces** site for this course called **201701 GEOG 391 A01 (21733)**—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 391: your name: brief subject**> in the heading. This allows me to sort at the end of each day to check for emails and not miss anything.
- *Making an appointment:* I 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 5:00pm 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 LGBT 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, 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.

### **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

- Go to the CourseSpaces site for this course **201701 GEOG 391 A01 (21733)**. Download the “session 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 class and make a note of any additional learning goals or questions you have personally.
- Read the pages I have assigned and/or other assigned resources and activities. Write down on the session outline your answers to the questions I have written to help guide your reading/preparation.
- Consider packing a small snack/drink (that you can eat in a small space). The class is late afternoon. I know you have a long day. I have no problem with people needing to eat/drink to stay engaged. But, no nuts please (classmates might have allergies).

*NOTE: Please kindly do not record (audio or video) any aspects of the course without first having written permission from me. Privacy laws require we must ask our colleagues first.*

## REQUIRED COURSE READINGS and RESOURCES:

Many of the 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 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 (Tuesdays and Thursdays).

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 and hearing about the kinds of geography they do. 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.

**Student facilitation segments**—Starting in week 2, each student (or pair of students) will pick one class where they will prepare and lead a 30 minute discussion on an article of their choosing. 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 to everyone. The presenter(s) will identify and explain the main concepts from the reading, and then generate a discussion based on the questions identified. Articles should be chosen from *Gender, Place and Culture* (accessed via the library) OR from another journal relevant to your interests (please check with me first if choosing something from another journal). 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 very challenging content, in whatever way, 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 journalling**—Choose one activity space you will be in at least once per week (home, school, workplace, gym, volunteer site, etc.) and commit to reflecting (free writing) on the application of concepts learned from class to that space for 10 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.

**Advocacy/Application Project**—Explore the importance of the concepts of gender, sexuality and identity (one, two, or all three) in a particular geographical context that is important and meaningful to you. Generate a concrete outcome that advocates for change. For example, suppose you want to become an elementary school teacher, you could design one lesson plan for a module taught in the current BC curriculum that would change your students' learning in positive and age appropriate ways around gender identity. OR, for example, suppose you volunteered in a refugee welcome centre, you could help design a resource brochure for that refugee community that took account of gender relations for that community. There are many different possibilities. Please be creative. Pick something that really interests you, connects to your activity spaces, and where you would like to make a difference.

**Creative Representation**—Our identity(ies) and understanding of same is often hard to express in words. By the end of the course I would ask you to submit 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 class of the term.

**Resources**—I will put any supporting learning resources for the course (from me or other colleagues in the course) on the CourseSpaces site.

## GRADE ALLOCATION

	<b>Marks</b>	<b>Important Dates/deadlines</b>
Participation	5%	As applicable (each class)
Facilitation segment	10%	As applicable (select your choice)
Journaling reflections	15%	Journal check-ins Feb 5 and March 9
Midterm	15%	In-class Feb 9
Advocacy/application project	15%	Brief proposal due January 31 (template provided); final submission due March 28
Creative representation	10%	Presented April 4 (last class)
Final Exam	30%	University Exam Period—will be posted later

### **Please note:**

- All students are required to bring their UVic Photo ID with them and place it on the desk in front of them when taking an exam.
- You must take both exams (midterm and final) and submit all assignments to pass the course

### **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 stating the reason for your inability to attend class a maximum of one week later).

### Making sure you retain your academic integrity in this course

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](http://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.

### Undergraduate Grading Standards

<i>Passing Grades</i>	<i>Description</i>
A+ A A-	<b>Exceptional, outstanding and excellent</b> 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-	<b>Very good, good and solid</b> 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	<b>Satisfactory, or minimally satisfactory.</b> These grades indicate a satisfactory performance and knowledge of the subject matter.
D	<b>Marginal</b> Performance. A student receiving this grade demonstrated a superficial grasp of the subject matter.
COM	<b>Complete</b> (pass). Used only for 0-unit courses and those credit courses designated by the Senate. Such courses are identified in the course listings.

A+	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	D	F
90-100%	85-89%	80-84%	77-79%	73-76%	70-72%	65-69%	60-64%	50-59%	49% or Less

### 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. 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/>

**Centre for Academic Communication (formerly the Writing Centre)**

<http://ltc.uvic.ca/servicesprograms/twc.php>

**Coop and Career Services**

<http://www.uvic.ca/coopandcareer/>

**Counselling Services**

<http://www.uvic.ca/services/counselling/>

**Geography Department**

Department web site: <http://geography.uvic.ca/>

GEOGPLAN planning guide: <http://www.geog.uvic.ca/moodle/> [*Login as a guest*]

Undergraduate Advisor: Dr. Phil Wakefield ([philw@geog.uvic.ca](mailto:philw@geog.uvic.ca))

**MacPherson Library**

General: <http://www.uvic.ca/library/>

Research tips: <http://www.uvic.ca/library/research/tips/index.php>

Referencing your sources of information in an appropriate academic style (citation guide)

<http://www.uvic.ca/library/research/citation/index.php>

**Resource Centre for Students with a Disability (RCSD)**

*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 Resource Centre for Students with a Disability (RCSD) as soon as possible. The RCSD staff are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations <http://rcsd.uvic.ca/>. The sooner you let us know your needs the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.*