GGR 1110H: Issues in Geographic Thought and Practice
Thursdays at 10am-12 noon
Zoom and Quercus

Instructor: Sharlene Mollett
Associate Professor, Department of Geography and Planning
Distinguished Professor in Feminist Cultural Geography, Nature and Society
University of Toronto

Instructor Email: sharlene.mollett@utoronto.ca
Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description
How do geographers go about addressing the challenges and problems of the world? How does the wider context (social, institutional, environmental….geographical!) shape the kinds of issues geographers examine, how these issues are framed, and how they are addressed? How do broad intellectual currents influence the work that is done in geography (and vice versa), and how do we understand the relationships between the broad intellectual currents and the “world out there”? Consistent with current emphasis in critical geography, all geographers, whether explicit or not, are using both theory and so politics in their work, along with some implicit or explicit problem statement in framing what they look at and what are they trying to explain. Even the choice of phenomena to examine is a political choice. Thinking carefully about these issues helps to understand the relationship between scholarship (geographical or otherwise) and the “real world”, while at the same time facilitating reflexive and careful consideration of research topics and approaches. This is, in our view, preferable to relying uncritically on policy or academic discourses and their prevailing theories, debates, questions, and approaches.

Learning Outcomes
In this course students will
- become familiar with geographic subfields and current debates in human geography via readings, oral and written assignments, and informal/formal presentations;
- begin to define disciplinary frameworks in relation to research interests
- strengthen oral and written communication skills via a commentary essay, article presentations, and a final writing assignment;
- become aware of disciplinary practices regarding journal publishing, conference presentations, writing abstracts; editing one’s own work, grant writing
- begin to think through and build comprehensive reading lists

Course Organization
All readings (Except required text) will be accessible through Quercus, Library Course Reserves Tab and can also be located via google scholar while connected with your UTORID. We will meet on Zoom, each Thursday from 10am-12noon. Quercus will be used for regular communications and for assignment submission. However, for quick replies please write me directly at sharlene.mollett@utoronto.ca
Assignments and Evaluation

Assignment 1 – DISCUSSION LEAD

A. Discussion Lead (20%)

Each graduate student will lead class discussion on a single article twice (2x). Each presentation should fall between 15-20 minutes. The first presentation aims to focus on one article and can be informal. The second presentation must substantively link a primary article to two other readings (from previous weeks). This presentation is meant to be formal and presented with visuals (PowerPoint, Prezi etc). Students are free to design presentations but they should be informative, highlight overall themes and illustrate geographic perspectives. Presentations should aim to articulate the timeliness of the themes and scholarly debates covered by the readings i.e. news report, new policy announcement, new laws etc. Students will sign up for presentations the first week of class. A schedule will be posted on Quercus once complete. Further instructions are forthcoming.

Assignment 2–RESEARCH COMMENTARY

B. Research Commentary (20%)

Due: October 12th 2020

Activist scholarship and public scholarship is a growing arm in the discipline of geography. There are many ways to engage as a scholar-activist. One way is through participation in public debates around your area of expertise. Commentaries are a creative and efficient way to “test out” an argument and make a polemical statement based on research. For this course, students are responsible for writing a commentary of 1200 words.

The objective of this assignment is as follows:

- Commentaries require that we follow global current events and link our research expertise to the “real world”;
- This assignment requires that students begin to think about a research paper topic early in the course as commentary topics are aimed to get you started on defining and framing research papers/areas of interest;
- Activist scholarship requires clarity in writing and communication; skilled commentary writers aim for clarity and accessible language as a way to reach the broader field of human geography.
  All submissions are expected to be well-written.
- Papers must be single-spaced, 12 Font and may not exceed 1200 words. (Further instructions forthcoming)
Assignment 3-PARTICIPATION

C. Class Participation 20%

Participation grades are earned through active engagement in class discussions. Discussion will comprise a great deal of class time. It is expected that students will contribute by posing questions, raising issues for commentary, using the text to inform your commentary and analysis, listen closely to others, and respectively engage with their views. We will work together to become more fluent with the debates and insights embedded in the readings. It is a goal of this course to learn from one another. If you unable to meet, it is expected that grads write a 500 word comment that attends to at least two articles for that particular week. These comments are to be submitted into our Discussion forum in Quercus so that others may respond accordingly.

The discussion forum in Quercus is also a useful place to post relevant news articles and reports that are relevant to the course/program and can be a subject of discussion during our meetings.

Keeping up with readings

It is expected that grads will keep on track with the work. A good strategy for class readings discussions is to focus on the purpose and stated intent of the author. Did the author successfully address what they stated that they would? Are the supporting examples convincing? Why and why not? Why is the argument important?

You may also critically analyze the literature. However, please keep in mind it is not enough to say the writing is poor and “I don’t understand the author’s argument”. You have to explain what you did understand and what makes the author’s argument less compelling to you. A good way to evaluate the readings is to discuss the way the readings help you understand or explain a topic/event/concept that you are interested in pursuing in your own work/research/general interest etc. Critique is important and I am open to student critique of the readings, however, I urge students to work hard to understand the author’s positioning first, before you embrace and/or dismiss the readings. We cannot critically analyze the literature if we do not understand the argument.

In addition, to develop critical reading skills often requires reading articles more than once. I suggest reading an article and taking notes at the same time. Then re-read either the entire article again, or the introduction and conclusion. Ask, what is the author’s main argument, what is the author’s lens (framework) and strategy to illustrate the arguments, and what are the main lines of evidence? For books, try to do a close reading the first time (with note taking) but read the introduction and conclusions twice.
Assignment 4 – FINAL PAPER

D. Final Paper—Due December 28th (40%)

My philosophy for this assignment is that students write on a topic and format that is not only of interest, but that can serve to bolster intellectual development in the program. For this course, grads may choose between writing a literature review and research paper. If you want to suggest another format, feel free.

Final Papers will aim to be roughly 7000 words—detailed instructions will be forthcoming.

ALL FORMATS MUST BE APPROVED BY SHARLENE MOLLETT

Late Penalties
There is a 2.5% late penalty for late submissions. Extension requests should be avoided. However, extensions may be granted without penalty for reasons of accommodation, illness or emergencies when appropriate documentation is submitted to the instructor. Reweighting of assignments/grades is not permitted.

Required Text
Maynard, R. 2017. Policing Black lives: State violence in Canada from slavery to the present. Fernwood Publishing. (Library course reserves and available for purchase at Amazon.ca/Fernwood Publishing)

Course Schedule
Week 1 – September 10th

Welcome and Introductions

Week 2 – September 17th

Political Geographies


Indigenous Geographies


**Optional**


**Week 3 – September 24th**

**Economic Geographies**


**Optional**


**Week 4 – October 1st**

**Historical and Cultural Geographies**


Optional


**Week 5 – October 8th**

Feminist Geographies


Optional


**Week 6 – October 15th**
Political ecologies I: Land and Water Frontiers


Feminist political ecologies


Optional

Mollett and Faria, Messing with Gender in Feminist Political Ecology. *Geoforum, (45): 116-125*

Week 7 – October 22nd

Urban Geographies


Urban political ecologies


Optional


**Week 8 – October 29th**

Black Geographies


*Optional*


**Week 9 – November 5th—NO CLASS**

**Week 10 – November 12th**

Political Ecologies II: Conservation


Optional


**Week 11 – November 19th**

Transport Geographies


**Week 12 – November 26th**

Queer geographies


Optional


Week 13 – December 3rd

Geographies of power in Canada: “This land is ‘our’ land”

Graduate Course Policies

Important Dates

Graduate courses are normally a minimum of 2-3 hours/week for 12 weeks. Reading week is optional for graduate courses. If observed, the instructor will inform the class and provide a make-up date for the missed class.

Fall 2020

- July 30, 2020: Course enrolment opens
- September 8, 2020: F (fall) and Y (fall-winter) session graduate courses and seminars begin
- September 11, 2020: Final registration deadline
- September 21, 2020: Deadline to add F (fall) and Y (fall-winter) session courses
- October 26, 2020: Deadline to drop Fall courses
- October-November 2020: Undergraduate reading week*

Winter 2020

- January 4, 2021: S (winter) session graduate courses and seminars begin
- January 13, 2021: Grades for F (fall) courses available for viewing on ACORN
- January 18, 2021: Deadline to add S (winter) session courses
- February 22, 2021: Deadline to drop S (winter) and Y (fall-winter) session courses
- April 16, 2021: Grade deadline for students graduating in June 2021

Summer 2021

- May 3, 2021: Summer F (May-June) and Y (May-August) session graduate courses and seminars begin
- May 19, 2021: Grades for S (winter) and Y (fall-winter) courses available for viewing on ACORN
- May 28, 2021: Final date to drop F (May-June) session courses without academic penalty
- June 7, 2021: Summer S (July-August) session graduate courses and seminars begin
- July 14, 2021: Grades for F (May-June) courses available for viewing on ACORN

* Reading week applies to undergraduate programs, and is optional for graduate courses, at the discretion of the instructor. If observed, the instructor will inform the class and provide a make-up date for the missed class. This may include an extra class at the end of term. Fall reading week dates: UTSC – October 10-16; UTM – October 13-16; UTSG – November 9-13. Winter reading week dates: UTSC – February 13-19; UTM – February 16-19; UTSG – February 16-19.

Course Syllabi

A final course syllabus, which includes all assignments, deadlines and weighting of methods of evaluation, must be made available to all students enrolled in the course as early as possible, no later than the deadline for enrolling in classes. Changes to the methods of evaluation or their relative weights cannot be made after this date without the consent of a simple majority of students in the class, provided a vote is announced at the previous class meeting.

Late Assignments

Instructors are not obligated to accept late work, except where there are legitimate, documented reasons beyond a student’s control. In such cases a late penalty is not normally applied. In all other circumstances, if an instructor intends to accept and apply penalties to late assignments this will be clearly set out in the syllabus.
Attendance and Participation

Although attendance makes up no more than 20% of the final course grade, regular and consistent attendance in graduate courses is expected. Most graduate courses are seminar style classes, which involve collaborative work and in-class discussions with other students and instructors. Students who are unable to attend class each week must inform the instructor as early as possible.

Accessibility and Accommodations

The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations because you are disabled, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or course materials, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible.

Where there is an accommodation recommended by Accessibility Services, the department and/or instructors will be provided with an accommodation letter.

Academic Integrity

Academic misconduct by graduate students is taken very seriously. The University’s policy on academic misconduct is found in the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (the Code). Students in graduate studies are expected to commit to the highest standards of integrity and to understand the importance of protecting and acknowledging intellectual property. For example, it is assumed that they bring to their graduate studies a clear understanding of how to cite references appropriately, thereby avoiding plagiarism.

Regarding plagiarism, the Code includes the following statements:

B.i.1. It shall be an offence for a student knowingly:

(d) to represent as one’s own idea or expression of an idea or work of another in any academic examination or term test or in connection with any other form of academic work, i.e., to commit plagiarism.

Wherever in the Code an offence is described as depending on "knowing," the offence shall likewise be deemed to have been committed if the person ought reasonably to have known.

Other academic offences include the possession and/or use of unauthorized aids in examinations, submitting the same paper for different courses, forgery (whether of academic records or other documents), concocting facts or references to sources, personating someone, and other forms of cheating and academic dishonesty. Please refer to sections B.i.1. and B.i.3. in the Code for detailed descriptions of offences applicable to students.

The SGS Academic Integrity Resources webpage outlines the policy on academic misconduct and the process for handling an allegation of academic misconduct.

Coursework Extensions

The authority to grant an extension to submit coursework beyond the sessional grade deadline is with the department and not the instructor of the course. To request a formal extension, students must submit a Coursework Extension Form, completed by both the student and course instructor, to the relevant graduate department prior to the final grade deadline.

In order to ensure fairness in granting extensions, the department must be reasonably certain that:
• The reasons for delay are serious and substantiated.
• The student is not granted unfair advantage over other students in the course.
• The student has a reasonable chance of completing the outstanding work within the time allotted.
• The normal and satisfactory completion of any new coursework is not in jeopardy.

Extension requests for medical reasons (e.g. short-term illness) must be accompanied by a medical note. Extension requests for students with accommodations due to disability must be supported by documentation from Accessibility Services. Extension requests for other reasons must be detailed in the form or a note to the department.

**Religious Accommodations**

Students must alert instructors in a timely fashion to any upcoming religious observances and anticipated absences. Instructors will make every reasonable effort to avoid scheduling tests, exams or other compulsory activities at these times. In the case of an unavoidable conflict with a compulsory activity, every reasonable effort is made to give students the opportunity to make up missed work.

**Course Enrolment and Quercus**

Acorn is the only indicator of official course enrolment; Quercus is not. Students enrolled in Acorn will be automatically populated to a course’s Quercus site within 24 hours of enrolling. In some cases, if a student is on a course wait list or there is another delay in processing registration an instructor may give a student access to Quercus as a guest. This will not constitute official enrolment and students are responsible for making sure the course is added correctly using Acorn.

**Auditing**

Students who wish to audit a course must obtain permission directly from the course instructor within the first week of class. Permission is subject to available space and can only be granted by the course instructor.

Only registered students at the University of Toronto may audit courses. Auditing entitles a student to attend lectures only. Students may not submit any written work, attend labs/tutorials or write tests/exams. The student will not be enrolled in the course and the course will not appear on their transcript. The department does not provide certificates of attendance.

**Reading Courses**

Reading courses allow students to complete coursework in topics not covered by current course offerings in Geography or Planning. The [Reading Course Form](#) must be accompanied by a brief course outline.

**Copyright in Instructional Settings**

If a student wishes to record (tape, video, photograph, etc.) any lecture presentations or other similar materials provided by the instructor; the instructor’s written consent must be obtained beforehand. Otherwise, all such reproduction is infringement of copyright and prohibited. In the case of private use by students with disabilities, the instructor’s consent shall not be unreasonably withheld.