

Winter 2020

## **GEOG 5003/CDNS 5002: Critical Approaches to Qualitative Inquiry**

Instructor: Sophie Tamas  
Office: Loeb 331A,  
Phone: 613 520 2600 ext 3578  
Email: [Sophie.tamas@carleton.ca](mailto:Sophie.tamas@carleton.ca)  
Office hours: By appointment

### **I. Course Description:**

#### *Content*

This course will focus on the theoretical claims that frame the way we approach the production of knowledge and change. Rather than a common-sense route to authoritative truths, the standard set of assumptions about who we are as knowers, what knowledge is, and how it works represent a historically and culturally-specific (white, western, positivist) mode of inquiry. While these tools may be useful and habitual, their association with colonial, capitalist, and androcentric intellectual traditions calls us to apply them with care, and to consider alternatives. What if research is a peculiar form of storytelling? Do our feelings contaminate our data? Are places and things actually inert? Is time a line that we slide along, with the past receding behind us? Where does the self end, and the other begin? What makes research good – to whom? In order to explore these (and other) questions, this course considers creative, critical, emotional, embodied, Indigenous, Eastern, poststructural, new materialist, psychoanalytic, and feminist approaches to qualitative inquiry.

#### *Learning Objectives*

This course has two primary goals:

- to expose students to ideas and examples that might help make their own inquiries more engaging, ethical, and useful; and
- to focus on writing as the foundational academic method of knowledge production, in order to help students become more confident and skilled as writers.

### **II. Prerequisites:**

Open to all graduate students.

### **III. Texts:**

Course readings will consist of three required articles and/or chapters per week. Unless otherwise noted, the readings can be downloaded from the library or the course page on CULearn. Assigned readings are subject to change until the start of term; an up-to-date course outline will be posted on CU Learn. Students are expected to read and take notes on all the assigned readings BEFORE the class in which they are being discussed. Success in this course depends on meeting this requirement.

### **IV. Course calendar:**

This course consists of one three-hour seminar, Mondays 11:35-2:25, in A220 Loeb.

*6 January*

#### **Week 1: Opening**

*13 January*

#### **Week 2: Creative Research**

1. Margaret Somerville, *Textual genres and the question of representation*. In Sara Delamont and Angela Jones, (Eds). *Handbook of Qualitative Research in Education*. Edward Elgar, Cheltenham, UK, 2012, 533-541.

2. Emilie Cameron, New geographies of story and storytelling. *Progress in Human Geography* 36(5), 573-592.
3. Madge, Clare. On the creative (re)turn to geography: poetry, politics and passion. *Area* 46 (2), 2016, 178-185.

Optional: Ivan Brady, In defence of the sensual: Meaning construction in ethnography and poetics. *Qualitative Inquiry* 10 (4), 2004, 622-644.

20 January

**Week 3: Critical Research**

1. Ashley Barnwell, Creative Paranoia: Affect and social method. *Emotion, Space and Society* 20 (2016), 10-17.
2. Sarah Wright, Critique as delight, theory as praxis, mucking in. *Geographical Research* 55 (3), August 2017, 338-343.
3. Ronald Pelias, The critical life. *Communication Education* 49 (3), 2000, 220-228.

Optional: Foley, Douglas. Critical Ethnography: The reflexive turn. *Qualitative Studies in Education* 15 (5), 2002, 490-496.

27 January

**Week 4: Emotional Research**

1. Mei-Po Kwan, Affecting Geospatial Technologies: Toward a feminist politics of emotion. *The Professional Geographer* 59 (1), 2007, 22-34.
2. Nichola Wood and Susan Smith, Instrumental routes to emotional geographies. *Social and Cultural Geography* 5 (4), December 2004, 533-548.
3. Sara Smith, Intimacy and angst in the field. *Gender, Place and Culture* 23 (1), 2016, 134-146.

Optional: Labanyi, J. (2010). Doing things: Emotion, Affect, and Materiality. *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies*, 11(3-4), 223-233.

3 February

**Week 5: Embodied Research**

1. Vachelli, Elena. Embodiment in qualitative research: Collage making with migrant, refugee and asylum seeking women. *Qualitative Research* 18 (2), 2018, 171-190.
2. Wanda Pillow, Exposed methodology – the body as deconstructive practice. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 10 (3), 1997, 349-363. (199)
3. Heidi Kaspar and Sara Landolt, Flirting in the field: Shifting positionalities and power relations in innocuous sexualisations of research encounters. *Gender, Place and Culture*, 23 (1), 2016, 107-119.

Optional: Kim England, Getting personal: Reflexivity, positionality, and feminist research. *Professional Geographer* 46 (1), 1994, 80-89.

10 February

**Week 6: Indigenous Research**

1. Margaret Kovach, Emerging from the margins: Indigenous methodologies. In Leslie Brown and Susan Strega, Eds. *Research as resistance: Critical, Indigenous, and Anti-Oppressive approaches*. Canadian Scholars Press, Toronto, 2005.19-36.
2. Sarah Hunt, Ontologies of Indigeneity: The politics of embodying a concept. *Cultural Geographies*, 2 (1), 2014, 27-32.
3. Zohl de Ishtar, Striving for a common language: A white feminist parallel to Indigenous ways of knowing and researching. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 28, 2005, 357-368.

Optional: Onowa McIvor, I am my subject: Blending Indigenous research methodology and autoethnography through integrity-based, spirit-based research. *Canadian Journal of Native Education* 33 (1), 2010, 137-151.

24 February

**Week 7: Eastern Research**

1. Eugene Taylor, *The Zen doctrine of 'no method.'* *The Humanistic Psychologist*, 37, 2009, 295-306.
2. Avital Ronell, Koan Practice or Taking down the test, *Parallax*, 10 (1), 2004, 69-84.
3. Aislinn O'Donnell, Contemplative Pedagogy and Mindfulness. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 49 (2), 2015.

Optional: Eva Bojner Horwitz, Cecilia Stenfors, and Walter Osika. Contemplative Inquiry in Movement: Managing writer's block in academic writing. *International Journal of Transpersonal Studies* 32 (1), 2013, 16-26.

2 March

**Week 8: Poststructural Research**

1. John Law and John Urry, Enacting the social. *Economy and Society* 33 (3), August 2004, 390-410.
2. Elizabeth St. Pierre, Writing post qualitative inquiry. *Qualitative Inquiry* 24 (9), 2018, 603-608.
3. John Wylie – Poststructural theories, critical methods and experimentation. In Stuart Aiken and Gill Valentine, Eds., *Approaches to Human Geography*. London: Sage, 2009, 98-106.

Optional: Pam Alldred and Val Gillies, "Eliciting Research Accounts: Re/Producing Modern Subjects?" in *Ethics in Qualitative Research*, eds. Melanie Mauthner, Maxine Birch, Julie Jessop and Tina Miller. London: Sage, 2002, 146-165.

9 March

**Week 9: New Materialist Research**

1. Ben Anderson and Paul Harrison, The promise of non-representational theories. *Taking Place: Non-representational theories and geography*. Ashgate, 2010, p 1-34.
2. Maggie Maclure, The New Materialisms: A thorn in the flesh of critical qualitative inquiry. In *Critical Qualitative Inquiry: Foundations and Futures*, Eds Gaile S. Cannella, Michelle Salazar Perez and Penny A. Pasque. Left Coast Press, 2015. 93-112.
3. Kate McCoy. Toward a methodology of encounters: Opening to complexity in qualitative research. *Qualitative Inquiry* 18 (9), 2012, 762-772.

Optional: Rachel Colls, Feminism, bodily difference and non-representational geographies. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 37, 2012, 430-445.

16 March

**Week 10: Psychoanalytic Research**

1. Liz Bondi, Empathy and identification: Conceptual resources for feminist fieldwork. *ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies*, 2 (1), 2003.
2. Joyce Davidson and Hester Parr. *Geographies of Psychic Life*. In Paul Kingsbury and Steve Pile, Eds., *Psychoanalytic Geographies*. Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2014, 119-134.
3. Katy Bennett, Allan Cochrane, Giles Mohan, and Sarah Neal. Listening. *Emotion, Space and Society* 17, 2015, p 7-14.

Optional: Mary Thomas, The Implications of Psychoanalysis for Qualitative Methodology: The Case of Interviews and Narrative Data Analysis. *The Professional Geographer*, 59 (4), 2007, 537-546.

23 March

**Week 11: Feminist Research**

1. Carolyn Pedwell and Anne Whitehead, "Affecting Feminism: Questions of Feeling in Feminist Theory" (2012) *13 Feminist Theory* 115.
2. Mark Carey et al, Glaciers, gender and science: A feminist glaciology framework. *Progress in Human Geography* 2016, 1-24.
3. AnaLouise Keating, Speculative realism, visionary pragmatism, and poet-shamanic aesthetics in Gloria Anzaldua – and beyond. *WSQ: Women's Studies Quarterly*, 40 (3 & 4), Fall/Winter 2012, 51-69.

Optional: Tiffany Page, Vulnerable writing as a feminist methodological practice. *Feminist Review* 115, 2017, 13-29.

30 March

**Week 12: Loose ends**

Readings TBD

6 March

**Week 13: Closing**

**V. Evaluation**

*Grading Scheme*

Grading will be based on a mix of self-assessment, peer evaluation, and the instructors' assessment. Please note that the weighting of each item may vary, based on enrollment.

Participation – 25%

The success of small graduate seminars depends on consistent, attentive student engagement. In order to earn to earn full marks, students are expected to show up, mentally and physically; to share their perspectives and questions; to listen respectfully and respond frankly; to support the creation of a positive, safe learning environment; to participate in class activities; and to initiate problem-solving with the instructor and/or their peers if something is limiting their engagement. **In-class activities that have been missed cannot be made up, so attendance is mandatory.** Participation will be evaluated by both the instructor and by (private, written) peer assessment.

-Reading summaries – 15%

One student will be matched with each of the assigned readings. They will be asked to provide a 5-minute summary of the content and significance of that reading (what it says, and so what?) as a preface for in-class group discussion. The number of times each student does so will depend on class enrollment. If you are unable to attend on a day when you've signed up to summarize a reading, it is your responsibility to arrange a replacement (ie, to switch readings with one of your peers). Unless there are truly exceptional circumstances, no-shows will forfeit that part of their grade.

-Exercises – 20%

Students will be given a list of exercises that they may pursue in order to deepen their reflection on issues or readings that they find particularly pertinent to their own projects. These exercises will be self-directed, small in scope, and varied in content, with students welcome to propose their own ideas. Over the course of the semester students will be expected to complete two small or one larger exercise for evaluation.

-Reading Journal and Synthesis – 40%

Students are expected to keep a reading journal throughout the term, in which they

- a) summarize and/or paraphrase the main points from the reading
- b) capture any direct quotations that they might find useful in future writing
- c) record their comments, questions, feelings, concerns, or other responses to the reading
- d) capture their thoughts from in-class discussions

Students are welcome (but not required) to use a database (such as Bookends or Endnote) to organize this content.

At the end of the semester, based on their reading journals, students will be asked to write a synthesis that identifies and organizes the ideas they have collected that are most useful for their own inquiries and reflects on the development of their own thinking or research in light of this material. Students will be given time during the last class to work on their syntheses, but it can be handed in later, as a take-home exam. If students are engaged in their own ongoing research projects, they are welcome to propose an alternate form of final synthesis assignment that advances their own work. Reading journals must be attached as an appendix.

#### *Communication of Grades*

Grades will be posted on CULearn as they become available. However, standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

#### *Academic Conduct*

Students are expected to be punctual, as a courtesy to their classmates and teacher, and to conduct themselves in a way that fosters the open exchange of ideas and perspectives. Mutual respect is required in all face-to-face and written interactions. If something is inhibiting your participation or making you uncomfortable in class, it is your responsibility to promptly bring this issue to the attention of the Instructor. Creating an inclusive, welcoming learning environment takes a team effort; I rely on feedback from students to make this the best experience possible.

The quality and usefulness of this course depends on students being present, prepared, and attentive. Web-browsing, texting, chatting, tweeting, facebooking, gaming, online shopping, or otherwise causing a distraction is not permitted in class, because it harms your classmates' ability to learn. **Student who will not or cannot set their gadgets aside will be asked to leave.** If personal circumstances (such as a sick child) require you to be accessible to others during class time, please discuss this with the instructor before class.

#### *Academic Integrity*

Ideas and the words that express them are the currency of the academic world. Good scholarship locates itself within its field by showing, through proper use of citations and bibliographies, whose ideas it has borrowed and built upon. Scholarship that fails to do so steals intellectual property and cannot contribute to the advancement of knowledge.

Plagiarism is defined by the Carleton University Senate as "presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas, or work of others as one's own." This can include:

- Reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else's published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting it as your own, without proper citation or reference to the original source;
- Submitting work written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- Using ideas, direct quotations, or paraphrased material without appropriate acknowledgement in any academic assignment;
- Using another's data or research findings without attribution;
- Using direct quotations without quotation marks;
- Handing in substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission from the instructor.

Plagiarism is a serious offence that cannot be resolved directly with the instructor. All suspected cases are sent to the Associate Dean, who conducts a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student. Penalties are not trivial and can include failing the course.

It is the students' obligation to ensure that they are familiar with the rules for proper citation and attribution of sources. I urge you to be extremely careful in this regard, particularly if you are using on-line or other non-standard sources. The library website offers a wide range of style guides and other citation tips as well as subject area specialists who would be happy to assist you.

## **VII: Requests for academic accommodations**

### *Academic Accommodation*

Some students need special arrangements to meet their academic obligations during the term. All students who are struggling with their studies or circumstances are encouraged to speak to their Instructor, and/or to get in touch with the friendly folks here:

The Student Academic Success Centre - Drop-in academic support - 302 Tory

The Writing Tutorial Service - 4th floor Library

International Student Services - 128 University Centre

Office of Student Affairs - 430 Tory, [www.carleton.ca/studentaffairs](http://www.carleton.ca/studentaffairs)

Health and Counselling Services - 2600 Carleton Tech and Training Centre

[www.carleton.ca/health](http://www.carleton.ca/health)

**Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or [pmc@carleton.ca](mailto:pmc@carleton.ca) for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your *Letter of Accommodation* at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (*if applicable*). Requests made within two weeks will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website ([www.carleton.ca/pmc](http://www.carleton.ca/pmc)) for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (*if applicable*).

Pregnant students requiring academic accommodations are encouraged to contact an Equity Advisor in Equity Services to complete a letter of accommodation. You should then make an appointment to speak with me about your needs at least two weeks prior to the first academic event requiring accommodation.

Students requiring accommodations for religious observances should write me a formal, written request for alternate dates or means of satisfying academic requirements. Such requests should be made in the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible, and no later than two weeks before the compulsory academic event. We will work out accommodations directly and individually in a way that does not disadvantage the student. Those with questions about the eligibility of religious events or practices for academic accommodations may refer to the Equity Services website for a list of holy days and Carleton's accommodation policies, or contact an Equity Services advisor for assistance.