GSWS 826-5: Graduate Seminar on Queer/Trans Studies

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Office hours: TBA
Lecture: Mondays 9:30 – 14:20; RCB 8106

“If queer theory was born of the union of sexuality studies and feminism, transgender studies can be considered queer theory’s evil twin: it has the same parentage but willfully disrupts the privileged family narratives that favour sexual identity labels (like gay, lesbian, bisexual, and heterosexual) over the gender categories (like man and woman) that enable desire to take shape and find its aim.” ~ Susan Stryker (2004)

Course Description:
This seminar provides students with an overview of the formation, development, and current directions of the fields configured respectively, as “queer theory” and “trans theory.” We will examine the influence of feminism on the emergence of both fields, the formative questions that shape “queer” and “trans” as distinct analytical categories, the key terms of debate in each field, and the effect of the fields’ institutionalization. Throughout the course, we will explore critical challenges posed to queer and trans studies by a consideration of colonial histories, the politics of border, securitization and migration, the globalization of LGBTQ identities, transnational/local taxonomies, and practices of translation.

Educational Goals:
Students are expected to:
• acquire critical literacy in the intellectual foundation of queer and trans studies
• become conversant with contemporary debates on sexual and gender variance
• develop critical skills to conceptualize, develop, and present an original research project on a topic relevant to queer/trans studies

Course Texts and Courseware:
Articles will be available on-line through the SFU library or as PDFs.
We will read works by both established and emergent scholars who work in diverse disciplines, locations, and linguistic contexts, including: Alexandre Baril, Gloria Anzaldúa, Judith Butler, Tom Boellstorff, Eli Claire, A. Finn Enke, Lee Eldelman, Sokari Ekine, J. Neil Garcia, Gayatri Gopinath, Cressida Heys, Jack Halberstam, Peter Jackson, Eithne Luibhéid, Robert McRuer, José Muñoz, Hoang Tan Nguyen, Jay Prosser, Jasir Puar, Jason Ritchie, Gayle Rubin, Julia Serano, Susan Stryker, David Valentine, Mary Weismantel, Audrey Yue, and others.

Course Evaluation and Assignments:
Attendance & Participation 10%
Short Weekly Reading Response 10%
Class Presentation 20%
Research Presentation 20%
Research Paper (15 - 20 pages) 40%