

**WESTERN UNIVERSITY**  
**DEPARTMENT OF GENDER, SEXUALITY, AND WOMEN'S STUDIES**  
**GSWS 2412G: Black Geographies**

**Winter 2025**

Instructor: Cornel Grey  
Class Time: Wednesdays, 10:30 am-1:30 pm  
Location:  
Office:  
Phone:  
Email:  
Office Hours:

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course provides an introduction to the interdisciplinary field of black geographies. Drawing on scholarship from black studies, geography, history, literature and criminology, this seminar will examine how the (re)production of race creates different worlds for people marked as 'black.' We will think consciously about how black life troubles our understanding of, and relationship to, terms such as land, property, nature, home, citizen, and borders. At the same time, we will take note of the various ways black folks assert what Katherine McKittrick describes as a 'black sense of place.'<sup>1</sup> Possible topics include migration, environmental racism, incarceration, gentrification, black gathering.

**ASSESSMENTS**

Journal Entries 20%  
Photo Essay 20%  
Map Making Assignment 25%  
Participation 10%  
Essay 25%

**DRAFT READING LIST**

**Week 1, Introductions (January 8)**

Hawthorne, Camilla. 2019. "Black Matters Are Spatial Matters: Black Geographies for the Twenty-first Century." *Geography Compass* 13 (11): e12468.  
McKittrick, Katherine. 2002. "'Their Blood Is There, and They Can't Throw It Out: Honoring Black Canadian Geographies.'" *Topia: Canadian Journal of Cultural Studies* 7: 27–37.

**Week 2, Theories and Methods (January 15)**

Aboii, Sheyda M., and Ashanté M. Reese. 2023. 'Fieldwork with the Dead and Other Considerations: An Interview with Ashanté M. Reese'. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, June, maq.12780.  
Bledsoe, Adam. 2021. 'Methodological Reflections on Geographies of Blackness'. *Progress in Human Geography* 45 (5): 1003–21.

**Week 3, Local Histories (January 22)**

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<sup>1</sup> See Katherine McKittrick: (2011) "On Plantations, Prisons, and a Black Sense of Place." *Social & Cultural Geography* 12 (8): 947–63. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14649365.2011.624280>.

Crooks, Julie. 2022. "Free Black North: Photography and Transnational Identities in Nineteenth-Century Southern Ontario." In *Harriet's Legacies: Race, Historical Memory, and Futures in Canada.*, edited by Ronald Cummings and Natalee Caple, 141–50. Carleton Library Ser. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Henry, Natasha. 2022. "We Were Here: Reclaiming African Canadian History Through Heritage Plaques". In *Harriet's Legacies: Race, Historical Memory, and Futures in Canada.*, edited by Ronald Cummings and Natalee Caple, 1st ed., 245–55. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.

#### **Week 4, Gendered Geographies (January 29)**

Latty, Stephanie, Sefanit Habtom, and Eve Tuck. 2019. "Practice Extending Across the Atlas: Black Girls' Geographies in Settler Colonial Societies." In *Celebrating Twenty Years of Black Girlhood: The Lauryn Hill Reader*, edited by M. Billye Sankofa Waters, Venus E. Evans-Winters, and Bettina L. Love, 305–14. New York: Peter Lang.

#### **Week 5, Journeys I (February 5)**

Philip, Marlene NourbeSe. 1988. *Harriet's Daughter*. Heinemann.

#### **Week 6, Journeys II (February 12)**

*Photo Essay Week*

READING WEEK (February 19)

#### **Week 7, Queer Geographies (February 26)**

Attai, Nikoli A. 2023. "Rumshops, Nightlife, and the Radical Praxis of Internal Exile." In *Defiant Bodies: Making Queer Community in the Anglophone Caribbean*, 135–63. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Bain, Beverly. 2017. "Fire, Passion, and Politics: The Creation of Blockorama as Black Queer Diasporic Space in the Toronto Pride Festivities." In *We Still Demand!: Redefining Resistance in Sex and Gender Struggles*, edited by Patrizia Gentile, Gary Kinsman, and L. Pauline Rankin, 81–97. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.

#### **Week 8, Surveilling Black Life (March 5)**

Cole, Desmond. 2015. "The Skin I'm In: I've Been Interrogated by Police More than 50 Times—All Because I'm Black". *Toronto Life*. 21 April 2015.

Browne, Simone. 2015. "What Did TSA Find in Solange's Fro?": Security Theater at the Airport." In *Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness*, 131–59. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

#### **Week 9, Black Gathering (March 12)**

Jordan-Miller Kenyatta, Matthew. 2023. "Need Black Joy?": Mapping an Afrotechtonics of Gathering in Los Angeles." In *The Black Geographic: Praxis, Resistance, Futurity*, edited by Camilla Hawthorne and Jovan Scott Lewis, 213–45. Durham: Duke University Press.

Joseph, Chante. 2020. "What Black Joy Means – And Why It's More Important Than Ever." *British Vogue*, July 29, 2020.

Martis, Eternity. 2016. "The Politics Of Being Black And Loud." *The FADER*, June 28, 2016.

#### **Week 10, Food (March 19)**

Reese, Ashanté M., and Dara Cooper. 2023. "Making Spaces Something Like Freedom: Black Feminist Praxis in the Re/Imagining of a Just Food System." In *Beyond the Kitchen Table*:

*Black Women and Global Food Systems*, edited by Priscilla McCutcheon, Latrica E. Best, and Theresa Ann Rajack-Talley, 92–105. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press.

Reese, Ashanté M., and Joshua Sbicca. 2022. 'Food and Carcerality: From Confinement to Abolition'. *Food and Foodways* 30 (1–2): 1–15.

### **Week 11, Political Organizing (March 26)**

Austin, David. 2007. "All Roads Led to Montreal: Black Power, the Caribbean, and the Black Radical Tradition in Canada." *The Journal of African American History* 92 (4): 516–39.

Douglas, Debbie. 2017. "That Collective House on Dewson Street." In *Any Other Way: How Toronto Got Queer*, edited by Stephanie Chambers, Jane Farrow, and Maureen FitzGerald. Toronto: Coach House Books.

### **Week 12, Environment (April 2)**

Daniel, Ian, and Elliot Page. 2019. *There's Something in the Water*. Documentary. 2 Weeks Notice.

Waldron, Ingrid. 2018. "Not In My Backyard: The Politics of Race, Place, and Waste in Nova Scotia." In *There's Something in the Water: Environmental Racism in Indigenous and Black Communities*, 66–88. Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing.

Wentzell, Stephen. 2022. 'There's Still Something in the Water'. *Rabble*. 7 December 2022.