

**SYLLABUS**  
**SOC489H1F: New Topics in Sociology**  
**Sociology of Art: Social Processes of Erasure and Rediscovery in Art Worlds**  
**L5101/L6101**

Course Instructor : Marie-Lise Drapeau-Bisson

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Office Hours: By appointment

Class meets: Thursdays, 6-8

Location: BB collaborate

The following poem is by Lindsay Nixon from their poetry book *bawajigaywin* (visions) published in 2016. Lindsay Nixon is a Toronto-based Cree-Métis-Saulteaux and a very talented poet and scholar.

*I drive through the streets  
of downtown Regina  
in a car with my  
high school friends  
– White punks.*

*As we drive down Scarth,  
We pass our local haunt  
– O’hanlans.*

*Outside my broth wâkâyôš.  
Our glances catch each other  
as we drive by.  
I see a smirk on his face  
that I recognize so clearly.*

*A look that can only be described  
by something he said to me once,  
“You’re the whitest Indian I know”*

*Maybe that became true.  
When I cut off my hair and bleached the  
brown  
out of what was left,  
dyed it blue.*

*When I pierced my skin  
ornamented it, branded it,  
so it was less ethnic, ancient.  
More modern, white.*

*Like my white friends  
shielding me from the settler gaze,  
the Indian question, as they say.  
Absorbed into the body politic.  
Hiding in plain view.*

Why do I open the course with a poem by a punk, queer, indigenous writer? Why not use the standard land acknowledgement that states we live on the territory of the Huron-Wendat and Petun First Nations, the Seneca and, most recently, the Mississaugas of the Credit River? I do so because I wish to begin right now our reflection on the relationship between artistic creation, representation and collective memory, in particular how it impacts our daily lives here in Toronto/Tkaronto.

## **PREREQUISITES**

400-level courses are restricted to 4th year majors and specialists. Students need to have completed 1.0 FCE at the SOC300 level. Students without this requirement will be removed at any time discovered and without notice.

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES**

Why are there no great women artists? This rhetorical question, first posed by Linda Nochlin in 1971, highlights the power dynamics that shape what we think is good art, historically important figures and significant events. This course takes Nochlin's invitation and proposes to reflect on characteristics associated with greatness, such gender, whiteness and class, that shape our cultural and physical landscapes. Building on her work, we will ask in this course: Who gets inducted into the Rock and Roll hall of fame? Whose pieces of art get hung onto museum walls? Who gets statues and plaques? These questions are the springboard for our critical reflection on art worlds and collective memory. The course will also shed light on collective efforts at inclusion of marginalized artists and alternative histories.

In the first part of the course, we will explore the processes of evaluation, taste and consecration from the sociology of culture literature: Who decides what goes is "good" art, what goes onto museum walls, or deserves a statue? How are these choices justified? Who gets erased in the process of making those choices? In the second part of the course, we will look at the ways in which those choices are contested. This is where the work of scholars from social movements and feminist studies come in. Who challenges the notion of "classics"? How do they do so? Why does it matter?

This course borrows from a number of sociological subfields such as culture, social movements studies, memory studies and feminist studies. The idea is to use the theoretical tools these various subfields provide us to think critically about how works of art, artists, historical events and important figures are built as "classics", contested, erased and rediscovered. At the end of the course, you will be given the opportunity to contribute to ongoing discussions about these topics through a commemoration application (see Evaluation section of syllabus for more details).

## **ON THE STRUCTURE CULTURE OF THIS CLASS**

Saying that we currently experience "unprecedented times" has become an overused expression, and yet it is true that we must continue to adapt to the current context. The course will therefore be held online synchronously – this means that we will meet weekly through our computers to take part in a discussion on the week's readings. The small size of this course will allow us to build a community, albeit a virtual one, based on mutual respect and intellectual curiosity.

To that effect, I ask that you come to this online seminar like you would for an in-person one in a classroom: with a pen and notebook, cell phone off, prepared with ideas and questions about the readings and ready to engage with your peers. This means, as much as possible, to find a quiet space to work, perhaps with headphones to tune-out outside distractions, and to turn on your camera as you come in the online class room. This also means to listen attentively to your peers, ask them questions and contribute to a constructive discussion.

## HOW TO DO WELL

Students who don't come to class and don't read the assigned readings rarely do well. So, come to class, read the readings, and take notes on the readings. As this is a fourth-year seminar, doing well also means to develop (and practice!) your critical thinking skills. While related to the word "critique", critical thinking does not mean to criticize everything. Instead, critical thinking is an invitation to challenge the taken-for-grantedness of the everyday, to question *how* we know what we know, and to be aware of our emotions and standpoint in the process of learning and doing sociology.

## COURSE SCHEDULE AND READINGS

All readings (except for one book) are available online through the library website. The only book you will need to purchase for this class is *Seven Fallen Feathers* by Tanya Talaga. I encourage you to order it directly from the House of Anansi Press bookstore online: <https://houseofanansi.com/products/seven-fallen-feathers>).

### Part I: Constructing the Canon

\*\*\* First Class Cancelled for the Scholar Strike Canada\*\*\*

#### Week 1, September 10<sup>th</sup> – What is “the canon” and why should we care?

Watch: Hannah Gadsby's *Nakedy Nudes*, Episode 1, on CBC Gem online: <https://gem.cbc.ca/season/hannah-gadsbys-nakedy-nudes/season-1/83b270e0-dc31-4d9f-8e32-62ee2297955c>

Read: James Baldwin's *Letter to My Nephew on the One Hundredth Anniversary of the Emancipation*, available online: <https://progressive.org/magazine/letter-nephew/>

Consult: Scholar Strike Canada's Schedule, available online: <https://scholarstrikecanada.ca/schedule/>

#### Week 2, September 17<sup>th</sup> – Art Worlds and the Field of Cultural Production

Read:  
Becker, Howard. 2008. "Aesthetics, Aestheticians and Critics" Chapter 5 in *Art Worlds*, Berkeley: University of California Press, pages 131-164.

Bourdieu, Chapter 1: "The Field of Cultural Production, or The Economic World Reversed" only pages 29 to 40 (until *The Struggle for the Dominant Principle of Hierarchizing*) in *The Field of Cultural Production*.

#### Week 3, September 24<sup>th</sup> – The Role of Critics

Read:

Maguire Smith, Jennifer. 2014. "Bourdieu on Cultural Intermediaries" in *The Cultural Intermediaries Reader*, pages 15-24

<http://sk.sagepub.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/books/the-cultural-intermediaries-reader/i140.xml>

DeVault, Marjorie L. 1990. "Novel Readings: The Social Organization of Interpretation." *American Journal of Sociology* 95 (4):887-921.

Consult:

Méndez Berry, Elizabeth and Chi-hui Yang, July 5<sup>th</sup> 2019, "The Dominance of the White Male Critic" in *The New York Times*, available online:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/05/opinion/we-need-more-critics-of-color.html>

### **Week 4, October 1<sup>st</sup> – Exclusions in Art Worlds**

Read:

Linda Nochlin (1971) "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?" (online)

[http://www.writing.upenn.edu/library/Nochlin-Linda\\_Why-Have-There-Been-No-Great-Women-Artists.pdf](http://www.writing.upenn.edu/library/Nochlin-Linda_Why-Have-There-Been-No-Great-Women-Artists.pdf)

Peterson, Karin Elizabeth. 2003. "Discourse and Display: The Modern Eye, Entrepreneurship, and the Cultural Transformation of the Patchwork Quilt." *Sociological Perspectives* 46 (4):30.

Watch:

Guerilla Girls – "You have to Question What you See" *Tate Shots*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8uKg7hb2yoo>

## **Part II: Contesting and De-constructing the Canon**

### **Week 5, October 8<sup>th</sup> – A Toronto Case-study**

Read:

<https://www.thestar.com/entertainment/stage/2020/02/10/critics-who-arent-indigenous-black-or-people-of-colour-arent-invited-to-bug-yolanda-bonnell-explains-why.html>

<https://www.cbc.ca/arts/why-it-matters-who-reviews-indigenous-theatre-1.5467785>

Listen to:

<https://www.cbc.ca/radio/q/monday-feb-10-2020-yolanda-bonnell-oscars-panel-and-more-1.5455921> (at 36:55)

Visit: <https://www.yolandabonnell.com/>

\*\*\* Commemoration Analysis Due October 14<sup>th</sup> \*\*\*

## **Week 6, October 15<sup>th</sup> – Reputations**

Becker, Howard. 2008. “Reputations” in *Art Worlds*, Berkeley: University of California Press, pages 351-372.

Hearsum, Paula. 2016. “27 Forever: Kristen Pfaff and the Coverage of Death as the Re-Presentation of a Gendered Musical Life” in *‘Rock On’: Women, Ageing and Popular Music*, ed. Ros Jennings and Abigail Gardner, pages 103-122. Available as e-book: <https://books-scholarsportal-info.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/en/read?id=/ebooks/ebooks4/taylorandfrancis4/2018-06-07/10/9781317189107#page=117>

## **Week 7, October 22<sup>th</sup> – Erasure and Rediscovery**

Read:

Drapeau-Bisson, Marie-Lise (forthcoming) *From Gendered Readings to Gendered Exclusions*.

Pearce, Susan C. 2011. “Delete, Restart, or Rewind? Post-1989 Public Memory Work in East-Central Europe”, *Sociological Compass*, 5(4): 256-272.

Gray, Robin. 2018. “Repatriation and Decolonization: Thoughts on Ownership, Access, and Control” in *The Oxford Handbook of Musical Repatriation*, ed. Frank Gunderson, Rob Lancefield and Bret Woods, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

## **Week 8, October 29<sup>th</sup> – Mourning as commemoration**

Aguilar, Paloma. 2020. “From Mourning Severed to Mourning Recovered: Tribute and Remembrance Strategies for families of the Victims of Francoist Repression”, *Memory Studies*, 13(3): 277-294.

Cvetkovich, Ann. 2003. “Legacies of Trauma, Legacies of Activism : Mourning and Militancy Revisited” (Chapter 6) in *An Archive of Feelings*, Durham: Duke University Press.

Consult:

In the memory of George Floyd, report on memorial :

<https://www.npr.org/2020/06/04/869952346/minnesota-holds-a-memorial-service-to-commemorate-george-floyd>

In the memory of George Floyd, Report on Toronto Protests :

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5FGBpxxzcEs>

\*\*\* Commemoration Application Outline due November 4<sup>th</sup> \*\*\*

## **Week 9, November 5<sup>th</sup> – Movements’ memory work**

Read:

Kubal, Timothy and Rene Becerra. 2014. "Social Movements and Collective Memory", *Sociology Compass*.

Armstrong, Elizabeth A. and Suzanna M. Crago. 2006. "Movements And Memory: The Making of the Stonewall Myth", *American Sociological Review*, 71: p.724.

Seven Fallen Feathers, Chapter TBD

\*\*\* Fall Drop Date – November 9<sup>th</sup> 2020 \*\*\*

\*\*\* Reading week – No class November 12<sup>th</sup> \*\*\*

**Week 10, November 19<sup>th</sup> – Invited Speaker**

Invited speaker and workshop: UofT Librarian  
Topic: How to use primary sources?

**Week 11, November 20<sup>th</sup> – Presentations**

Presentations of commemorative applications and peer feedback

**Week 12, December 3<sup>rd</sup> – Presentations**

Presentations of commemorative application and peer feedback

\*\*\* Commemorative Applications due December 11<sup>th</sup> \*\*\*

## EVALUATION

<b>Evaluation Format</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Weight</b>
Ticket out the door	Weekly	10% (1.25 /week)
Participation	Weekly	10%
Discussion leadership	TBD	10%
Commemoration Analysis	October 14 <sup>th</sup>	25%
Commemoration Application Outline	November 4 <sup>th</sup>	5%
Feedback on Commemoration Application	TBD	10%
Commemoration Application	December 11 <sup>th</sup>	30%

### **Ticket out the door (10%)**

The ticket out the door is a short feedback memo you will provide at the end of every class with assigned readings or invited speaker. The idea is to share what you take away from this class: what got from the discussion, something you remain puzzled by, a question you haven't yet received an answer to, an idea you had based on the readings for your final paper, etc! It is a participation grade, so you will receive 1.25 pt for every ticket out the door you fill out (you need 8 to get the full 10%). It will be made available to you for 10 minutes as a Quercus Survey at the end of the class. **There are no make-ups for the ticket out the door.**

### **Participation (10%)**

The participation grade will consist of your participation in the sharing of first impressions at the beginning of every class and your participation to the discussion following the discussion leader's presentation.

Effective participation requires regular attendance. If you regularly miss class, your attendance record will likely result in a low participation mark. **There are no make-up participation exercises.**

**Discussion Leadership (10%):** You and one or two colleagues (depending on enrolment) will co-lead one of our class discussions on the readings for the week.

You can divide the work among yourselves however you choose: you might each discuss a reading separately, or talk about different themes across the readings. You should expect that each of you will speak for approximately 15 minutes.

Your presentation should involve: a summary of the readings' main arguments, an explanation of how they contribute to the course, and points of theoretical tension between them. As a fourth year student, you are expected to draw on your training to identify sociological interpretations of the readings' themes, as well as alternative or additional considerations. You should conclude the presentation by posing 2-3 questions to the class that we will consider for discussion.

**Commemoration Analysis (25%):** For this assignment, you will analyse a commemorative site of your choice. It can be a piece of art in an exhibit room (virtual or not), an event, a plaque, monument, statue of your neighbourhood, city or country. You are asked to identify the object of commemoration and the vehicle, describe them and analyse the method of reading. You are required to use at least three readings from the first half of the class to guide your analysis. The length is 5 single-spaced pages, not including references. I will provide detailed guidelines for this midterm assignment in class. Commemoration analysis is due October 14<sup>th</sup> by 11:59pm, to be submitted via Quercus.

**Commemoration Application (30%) and Outline (5%):** You will submit an outline (1-2 single-spaced pages, not including references) as well as a commemoration application (10-12 single-spaced pages, not including references) to put in practice the analytical tools developed about art worlds and collective memory. You will have the choice to suggest a modification, rediscovery or erasure project for a person, work of art, event or location. You will have to choose a vehicle of commemoration, use primary sources to explain your object of commemoration and secondary sources to provide your own method of reading for this object and vehicle of commemoration.

I will provide detailed guidelines for drafting commemoration applications and discuss these items in class. Outlines are due on November 4<sup>th</sup> by 11:59 pm, to be submitted via Quercus.

All Final Research Proposals are due on December 11<sup>th</sup> by 11:59pm, to be submitted via Quercus.

NB: Your outline will be made available to the discussant for your presentation, to help them provide constructive feedback on your project.

**Feedback on Commemoration Presentation (10%):**

You will be asked to provide feedback to a peer on their commemoration application. You will receive their outline to prepare some notes and will be asked to pay close attention to their presentation so that you can provide feedback on changes or advances they have made on their projects.

**SUBMITTING ASSIGNMENTS:**

All assignments (except for discussion leadership and participation exercises) should be uploaded to Quercus. Assignments submitted by email will not be accepted.

Assignments submitted to Quercus will automatically be screened for originality through Turnitin.com **unless a student provides, along with their assignment**, sufficient secondary material (i.e.: reading notes, outlines of the paper, rough drafts, etc.) to establish that the paper they submit is truly their own.

**LATE ASSIGNMENTS :**

Make-ups for participation and discussion leadership will not be offered for absences. If you know in advance you will not be able to attend your discussion leadership session, please get in touch

with me ahead of time (at least 2 days), so that we can find some alternative arrangements. Assignments submitted after the deadline will be subject to a 5% penalty per day. Late assignments will not be accepted more than 7 days after the deadline.

Given the current Covid context, you do not need to hand in the usual documentation (medical notes or the verification of illness form) for a late assignment due to medical reasons. Instead, you need to email me and to declare your absence on ACORN.

If a personal or family situation prevents you from meeting a deadline, you must contact your college registrar and have them email me about the situation.

## **PLAGIARISM**

Plagiarism is an academic offence that consists of representing someone else's ideas or words as your own. Instructors are required to report suspected plagiarism to the University.

You must familiarize yourself with the University's policies on academic integrity before submitting written assignments for this course. If you still have questions about what constitutes plagiarism and how you can avoid it, please visit UofT's Academic Integrity website: <https://www.academicintegrity.utoronto.ca/perils-and-pitfalls/>

If you need further clarification, feel free to get in touch with me.

## **ACCESSIBILITY**

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. If you have a disability or health consideration that may require accommodation, please feel free to approach me and/or AccessAbility Services (room SW302, [ability@utsc.utoronto.ca](mailto:ability@utsc.utoronto.ca), [www.utsc.utoronto.ca/ability](http://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/ability)).

## **GETTING IN TOUCH WITH ME**

I will respond to emails within 2 business days. Please note that I do not check emails after 5 pm, so emails sent in the evening will be considered received the following morning. Please use the course code (SOC489) in the subject line and use your utoronto email address for all email correspondence.