

The Centre for Feminist Research, in collaboration with the Sexuality Studies Program and the Graduate Program in Gender, Feminist, and Women's Studies, presents:

## The 2017 Summer Institute in Sexuality Studies

# PERVERSION AT THE CROSSROADS OF CRITICAL RACE STUDIES, PSYCHOANALYSIS, AND QUEER THEORY

June 5-9, 2017—York University, Toronto  
Confirmed lecturers:



**DAVID ENG**  
UNIVERSITY OF  
PENNSYLVANIA



**AMBER JAMILLA MUSSER**  
WASHINGTON  
UNIVERSITY



**TRISH SALAH**  
QUEEN'S  
UNIVERSITY



**AMAR WAHAB**  
YORK  
UNIVERSITY

## Call for Participants

Perversion is a slippery signifier, prolific in meanings and genealogies. It is most often associated with any type of sex which deviates from an expected trajectory or desired outcome. In 1905, Freud notoriously spoke of a child's disposition as "polymorphously perverse." This assertion was considered scandalous in its unveiling of childhood sexuality, but also in the contention that all subjects begin from a place of perversion, and that these unsound origins are perhaps not so easily abandoned. Perverse thoughts, objects, and acts extend beyond assumed aims, lingering uncomfortably upon that which should be quickly bypassed. They are sticky, insurgent, and out of place. They get sidetracked and fail to arrive on time. And because of these multifarious digressions, they are considered strange, abject, and to be avoided. In this way, parallels can be found between the social construction of "perversion," and ideologies surrounding race and queerness. Queer and critical race theorists have written at length about similar divergences: being disoriented and "slanted" (Ahmed 2006), failing (Halberstam 2011), disidentifying (Muñoz 1999), growing sideways (Stockton 2009), aberrating from gendered and eroticized liberal economies (Ferguson 2004).

The **2017 Summer Institute in Sexuality Studies (SISS)** explores questions surrounding perversion from three key vantage points: critical race studies, psychoanalysis, and queer theory. Psychoanalysis and sexology have a conflicted relationship to the perverse, as both fields created taxonomies that pathologized certain sex acts and queer embodiments. These imperial taxonomies associated people of colour with excessive sexuality, taboo, fetishism, deviance, and moral

**"...racial fantasies facilitate our investment in sexual fantasies and vice versa. As such, they must be understood as mutually constitutive..."** David Eng (2001), *Racial Castration*, p. 2

depravity. The consequences of these destructive systems of classification still resonate today, yet have also been transformed and complicated through globalization, neoliberalism, the normalizations of LGBT people, interracial sexual relations, and visibility of sex. Some canonical queer theorists, including Michel Foucault, Lauren Berlant, and Leo Bersani, called for the recognition of queer, sadomasochistic, and public sex as subversive to heteronormative sexual politics. However, numerous queer of colour theorists (Eng, 2010; Muñoz, 2009; Musser, 2014; Reddy, 2011) point out that conceptualizing perversion as subversive overlooks the ways in which this concept has been employed as a tool in systems of racial oppression. Today, for example, the perverse psyche of “the other” is used to justify war on terrorism, torture of political prisoners, and exclusions of people of colour from citizenship in Europe and North America.

Given perversion’s complex history, its foundational ties to colonization, and continued relationship to systemic marginalization, how may we best make use of this concept today? SISS 2017 participants will pursue this question, exploring facets of perversion through brown jouissance; reconceptualizations of race; emotions, affects and the flesh; black aesthetics; trans racial intersections; BDSM and fetish; citizenship and homonationalisms; visual art, poetry, and more.

Over the course of five days, participants will engage in **lectures, master classes, roundtables and creative workshops** using a wide variety of approaches to consider the intersections of perversion, psychoanalysis, queer theory, and race. By bringing together internationally renowned lecturers and graduate students from a variety of disciplinary and geographical backgrounds, SISS provides an international and multidisciplinary platform for learning, sharing and developing research and theory in the area of sexuality studies. SISS 2017 has partnered with FAG Feminist Art Gallery to organize a cultural event related to the themes of the Institute led by their artist in residence. For more detailed information regarding lecturers and the schedule of classes and events, see our website or email with inquiries.

## Application Process

We invite applications from graduate students in a wide variety of disciplines, from gender studies and social sciences to law, political studies, and philosophy. We particularly encourage applications from students working in the areas of race and racism, colonization and postcolonial thought, whiteness studies, queer and trans\* studies, histories of sexology, critical psychology, BDSM and fetish communities, literature, poetry, visual arts, transnational sexualities, and citizenship studies. SISS aims to be an accessible event that encourages international dialogue. A limited number of subsidies are available for long-distance travel.

**To apply please submit a short bio, statement of interest, and abstract using the online form available at <http://siss.info.yorku.ca>**



The Summer Institute for Sexuality Studies will be held at York University, in Toronto, Ontario. On-site accommodation in student residences will be available for those who would like to stay on campus. Complementary lunches and dinners will be provided throughout the five-day Institute.

**Application deadline:**

**January 9th, 2017**

**Registration fee: \$300 CAN**