

# **AALAC Workshop Proposal: Queer/Trans\* of Color Critique in a Liberal Arts Context**

## **Rationale**

Faculty will collaborate to pursue four related goals:

- Incubating and supporting faculty publication in the field of Queer and Trans of Color Critique
- Supporting pedagogical and curricular development at the intersections of gender, race, sexuality, state power, and capital
- Establishing multi-institutional networks between junior faculty at liberal arts colleges doing work at the intersections of gender, race, sexuality, state power, and capital
- Innovating models for professional development, mentorship, and collaboration

## **Co-Conveners**

- Ren-yo Hwang, Assistant Professor of Gender Studies and Critical Social Thought, Mount Holyoke College
- Kyla Wazana Tompkins, Associate Professor of English and Gender and Women's Studies, Pomona College
- Jih-Fei Cheng, Assistant Professor in Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, Scripps College
- Jennifer DeClue, Assistant Professor of the Study of Women and Gender, Smith College
- Treva Ellison, Assistant Professor of Geography and Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies, Dartmouth College (External Guest Co-Convener)

## **Description (500 word limit):**

Queer and Trans\* of color critique[1] is an interdisciplinary field that has become increasingly urgent and visible both in a liberal arts context and in framing coalitional politics of student organizing and multi-issue social justice activism at large. Queer and trans\* of color critique is not simply about identifying or locating racial, gender and sexual minorities, but rather, it has necessitated an invaluable exchange between the interdisciplinary fields of Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies, Queer Studies and Critical Race and Ethnic Studies, and likewise LGBTQ activism and racial justice social movements. As the current political climate has attempted to define queer, transgender

and racial justice via representational identitarian politics and rights-based discourses, the question persists as to what the margins of margins might tell us about the dangers of being overdefined by the political mainstream. As liberal arts colleges historically have had to re-imagine their relationship to the growing number of LGBTQI students and students of color, from curricular innovation to student support, as faculty who research such fields, we contend that such practices of inclusion require a constant intellectual rigor, both in pedagogy and praxis, at the shifting intersections of race, ethnicity, gender, sex, sexuality, class and ability.

Queer of color critique interrogates the very relationship of knowledge production to fields of power (discursive, institutional, material, historical) that too often reproduce epistemological erasures around the complex and socio-spatial fault lines of race, ethnicity, gender, sex, sexuality, ability and class.[2] In our daily lives, these erasures often materialize as lived social scenes of normalized violence, abuse, negligence and conflict.[3] To further understand the contours of such violence, experiential knowledge from the margins must be taken seriously beyond the liminal space of the ‘anecdotal.’[4] How has such marginalized knowledge offered a critical challenge to traditional Western notions of “objective” knowledge production and pedagogy? How have such vital interventions like queer of color critique, particularly within a liberal arts context, relied heavily on the institutionalization of fields like Ethnic Studies, Black, Indigenous and Women of Color Feminism and Queer Studies-- all of which founded through the insurgent labor of student and community organizing?

This workshop would gather faculty from likely ten of the Mellon 23 institutions who focus on emerging questions within queer/trans\* of color critique, building a sustainable scholarly research network among primarily junior faculty. An emphasis will be placed on curricular and research innovation beyond the aforementioned interdisciplinary fields-- that is, more broadly within other disciplinary fields of the social sciences and humanities. We plan to gather a cohort of sixteen majority junior faculty, particularly those who identify as queer/trans\* of color, for a three-day workshop and retreat at Mount Holyoke College in Summer 2019. Invited faculty will be asked to provide a short rationale as to their interest in the workshop, particularly in terms of potential impacts this gathering would have on home departments, programs and neighboring liberal arts institutions.

## Impact

- Each working discussion focuses on critical assessments and new directions in Queer and Trans\* of Color Critique. These conversations will be audio recorded, transcribed and co-edited, with the goal of publication in a venue like *Scholar and Feminist Online*, *Feminist Formations*, or *Gender, Place and Culture*
- The keynote talks and transcribed audio conversations will be archived online. Funding from Dartmouth College will support archiving. Keynote talks will also be advertised via social media and live-streamed.
- Participants will be placed in clusters based on their research interests in order to further future scholarly and teaching collaborations. Syllabi and curricular ideas will be shared and workshopped.
- Conveners will create an evaluation for participants and also debrief on best practices learned from the gathering. Conveners will circulate lessons learned in an online venue geared towards professional development, such as *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.
- We will track the articles and papers that were workshopped at the conference to demonstrate how the workshop helped to incubate junior faculty publication.

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[1] Cohen, Cathy J. "Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics?" *GLQ* 3 (1997): 437-465. Muñoz, José Esteban. 1999. *Disidentifications: queers of color and the performance of politics*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. Green, Kai M. "Troubling the waters: Mobilizing a trans\* analytic." *No tea, no shade: New writings in Black queer studies* (2016): 65-82.

[2] Hong, Grace Kyungwon, Roderick A. Ferguson ed. *Strange Affinities : the Gender and Sexual Politics of Comparative Racialization*. Durham [N.C.] :Duke University Press, 2011.  
ed. Gossett, Reina, Eric A. Stanley, and Johanna Burton. *Trap Door: Trans Cultural Production and the Politics of Visibility*. MIT Press, 2017.

[3] Ferguson, Roderick A. *Aberrations in black: Toward a queer of color critique*. U Minnesota Press, 2004, Cacho, Lisa Marie. *Social death: Racialized rightlessness and the criminalization of the unprotected*. NYU, 2012. Tompkins, Kyla Wazana. ""You Make Me Feel Right Quare" Promiscuous Reading, Minoritarian Critique, and White Sovereign Entrepreneurial Terror." *Social Text* 35, no. 4 (2017): 53-86.

[4] Snorton, C. Riley. *Black on Both Sides: A Racial History of Trans Identity*. University of Minnesota Press, 2017, Spillers, Hortense J. "Mama's baby, papa's maybe: An American grammar book." *diacritics* 17, no. 2 (1987): 65-81. Moraga, Cherrie, Gloria Anzaldúa ed.; foreword, Toni Cade Bambara. *This Bridge Called My Back : Writings by Radical Women of Color*. Watertown, Mass. :Persephone Press, 1981.

# Schedule of Events

**PRE-SUMMER MEETINGS:** Five monthly zoom video conferences between January 2019 and May 2019 for participants to:

- Discuss research, writing and curricular innovation goals
- Further outline collective agenda for summer 2019 workshop
- Curate readings for workshop- locating central questions and lacunae in the field

**SUMMER WORKSHOP:** Three Day Workshop in South Hadley, MA at Mount Holyoke College, potentially also site visits to Smith College and Amherst College

## Summer Workshop 2019 Schedule

### Day 1: Discussion of Field, Research, Praxis and Pedagogy

- 9am-11am: Welcomes, Morning Collective Free Write and Small Group Discussion on Curriculum and Pedagogy
- 11:00 - 2pm: Lunch I and Roundtable Discussion on Pedagogy and Praxis
- 2pm-4pm: Break-out Small Work Group Session on Themed Curriculum
- 4:30pm – 6pm: Community Keynote I (live streamed, or online)
- 7pm – 9pm: Dinner I, End of Day Assessment Conversation

### Day 2: Collectivizing the Process of Writing and Research

- 7am - 9am: Early Morning Writing Session (coffee, tea)
- 9am- 10am: Breakfast I
- 10am – 12pm: Group A- Paper Workshop Session I
  - Scholars offer feedback to 5 workshop participants' pre-circulated writing
- Lunch- 12-1pm
- 1pm - 3pm: Group B- Paper Workshop Session II
  - Scholars offer feedback to 5 workshop participants' pre-circulated writing
- 3:30-5:30pm: Group C- Paper Workshop Session III
  - Scholars offer feedback to 5 workshop participants' pre-circulated writing
- 5:30pm - 7pm: Scholarly Keynote II (live streamed, or online)
- 7pm-9pm: Dinner II and Conversation: Collective Reflection (audio-recorded)

### **Day 3: The Future of Queer/Trans\* of Color Critique at Liberal Arts Colleges**

- 6am- 8am: Early Morning Meditation and Walk (optional)
- 8am – 12pm: Breakfast, Collective Writing Exchange, Session II
- 1pm-4pm: Lunch and Final Collective Working Discussion II on Future Planning and Collaboration, Closeout\*
- 6pm-8pm: Departure

\*Culminating lunch event will offer a final conversation to be audio-recorded and later transcribed and edited with participant permission in order to seed a collective publication.