

**Queer Theor(ies), Queer Perspectives: Displacing the Canon****Responsible****Faculty****Instructor:**

Dr. Prerna Subramanian [[prerna.subramanian@jgu.edu.in](mailto:prerna.subramanian@jgu.edu.in)]

Assistant Professor, Jindal Global Law School

**Credits:**

4

**Credit****Type:**

Elective

**Cross-registration:** Yes

**Pre-requisites:** None/ Gender, Caste, Society Core for JGLS students?

**COURSE DESCRIPTION (COURSE VISION)**

This course introduces queer theory as **plural, contested, and situated queer theor(ies)** rather than a fixed canon. It foregrounds Global South, South Asian, abolitionist, and queer of color scholarship to interrogate the intersections of queerness with caste, capitalism, colonialism, law, culture and governance. Rather than beginning with Euro-American “founders,” the course treats canonical texts as **objects of critique and displacement**, encountered through later interventions and re-writings. Students will query what counts as “theory,” analyse queer politics across India and the world, and experiment with writing as praxis.

**TEACHING METHODOLOGY**

- **Paired Readings:** Canonical or widely circulated texts will be placed in dialogue with contemporary or Global South interventions. This method destabilizes singular authority and highlights the multiplicity of queer theor(ies).
- **Keyword Discussions:** Students will track the evolution of specific concepts across readings, developing a collective keyword lexicon throughout the semester.
- **Observation and Praxis:** Assignments encourage students to theorize from lived experience, embodied observation, and campus space, translating ideas into situated praxis.
- **Queer Praxis Workshops:** Group workshops will experiment with creating policy memos, toolkits, or abolitionist imaginaries, emphasizing theory as practice.

**Assessment Plan**

- **Internal Examination 1 (35%) – Theory-in-the-Flesh Observation Essay**

Students will submit a 1500-word essay applying *theory-in-the-flesh* to a campus space (e.g., hostels, classrooms, libraries, cafeterias). The essay should combine embodied observation with theoretical insights from Modules 1–3.

- **Internal Examination 2 (35%) – Policy Memo or Toolkit for Inclusive Campuses**

Students will prepare a 1500–2000 word policy memo or toolkit addressing inclusivity, safety, and queer/trans access on university campuses. This will draw from Modules 4–6 and encourage translation of theory into praxis.

- **End-Term Examination (30%)**

A cumulative exam, as per JGLS regulations, consisting of short notes and one long essay question, testing conceptual grasp and critical engagement with the course.

## INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Interrogate “theory” and “queer” from feminist, queer, and decolonial perspectives.
2. Understand queer politics in India through caste, neoliberalism, and homopopulism.
3. Explore queer intersections with law, capitalism, colonialism, and abolitionist thought.
4. Critically engage canonical queer texts only through their displacements, re-readings, and critiques.
5. Develop advanced skills in critical writing, observation, and praxis-oriented argumentation.

## READING LIST (Select 10 Readings)

1. Pumla Dineo Gqola, Marc Epprecht, Kopano Ratele, and Sara Ahmed, “Queer Perspectives” (2020)
2. Nishant Upadhyay & Sandeep Bakshi, “Translating Queer: Reading Caste, Decolonizing Praxis” (2020)
3. Svati P. Shah, “Caste Capitalism and Queer Theory: Beyond Identity Politics in India” (2024)
4. Tavia Nyong’o, “Fabulous, Formless: Queer Theory’s Dark Precursor” (2019)
5. Dipika Jain & Oishik Sircar, *Desire and Its Discontents* (2024, excerpt)
6. Rajorshi Das, “Queer Acts and Caste Hegemony” (2025)
7. Cael M. Keegan, “Getting Disciplined: What’s Trans\* About Queer Studies Now?” (*Transgender Studies Reader Remix*, 2022).
8. Eng, D. L., Halberstam, H., & Munoz, J. E. (2005). Introduction: What’s queer about queer studies now? *Social Text*, 23(3–4), 2–18. doi:10.1215/01642472-23-3-4\_84-85-1
9. Niharika Banerjea, “Homopopulism: A New Layer of LGBTQ Politics in India” (2023)

10. Roderick Ferguson, "Introduction," *Aberrations in Black: Toward a Queer of Color Critique* (2004)

WEEKLY READING PLAN (WEEKLY OUTLINE):

A weekly plan is provided below:

MODULES	WEEK(S)	DESCRIPTION
Modules	Week(s)	Module Description
<b>Module 1: What is Queer and What is Theory</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>bell hooks, <i>Theory as Liberatory Practice</i></li> <li>Lou Rich, "Queer Theory: A Brief History and Its Contemporary Influences around the World" (2023)</li> <li>Herrie Moraga, <i>Theory-in-the-Flesh</i></li> <li>Pumla Dineo Gqola, Marc Epprecht, Kopano Ratele, and Sara Ahmed, "Queer Perspectives" (2020)</li> <li>Liang Ge, J. Daniel Luther, and Eva Cheuk-yi Lee, "Editorial Introduction: Queer Asia as Method" (2020)</li> <li>Kent L. Brintnall, "Once Upon a Queer Theory" (2021)</li> </ol>	Weeks 1–3	Introduces "theory" and "queer" as contested terms. Positions theory as liberatory, embodied, and situated. Builds a shared keyword lexicon through paired readings and discussions.
<b>Module 2: Queerness in India</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nishant Shahani, "What Can Queer Theory Learn from Feminism in India?" (2011)</li> <li>Nishant Upadhyay &amp; Sandeep Bakshi, "Translating Queer: Reading Caste, Decolonizing Praxis" (2020)</li> <li>Niharika Banerjea, "Homopopulism: A New Layer of LGBTQ Politics in India" (2023)</li> <li>Srila Roy <i>Changing the Subject: Feminist and Queer Politics in Neoliberal India</i> (excerpt)</li> </ol>	Weeks 4–5	Examines queer theorization within Indian feminist, caste, and neoliberal contexts. Focus on caste, homopopulism, and decolonizing praxis.
<b>Module 3: Queerness and Carceral Capitalism</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Svati P. Shah, "Caste Capitalism and Queer Theory: Beyond Identity Politics in India" (2024)</li> <li>Alexandre Martins &amp; Caia Maria Coelho, "Notes on the (im)possibilities of an Anti-Colonial Queer Abolition of the (Carceral)</li> </ol>	Weeks 6–7	Focuses on the intersections of capitalism, caste, and carcerality. Students explore abolitionist queer politics and critique neoliberal governance.

<p>World” (2022)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Cathy Cohen, “Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics” (1997)</li> <li>4. Roderick Ferguson, “Introduction,” <i>Aberrations in Black: Toward a Queer of Color Critique</i> (2004)</li> </ol>		
<p><b>Module 4: Queer Theory and Decolonial Thought</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sophia Zisakou, Samuel Ballin, &amp; Irene Manganini, “You Cannot Pinkwash Genocide” (2025)</li> <li>2. Ani Dutta, <i>Globalizing Through the Vernacular: Kothis, Hijras, and the Making of Queer and Trans Identities in India</i> (excerpt)</li> <li>3. Qwo-Li Driskill et al., “Introduction,” <i>Queer Indigenous Studies</i> (2011)</li> <li>4. Tavia Nyong’o, “Fabulous, Formless: Queer Theory’s Dark Precursor” (2019)</li> </ol>	Weeks 8–9	Connects queer theory to decolonial and Indigenous scholarship. Emphasis on pinkwashing, vernacular queer formations, and Afro-fabulations.
<p><b>Module 5: Queerness and Representations in Law and Culture</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Senthorun Raj, <i>Feeling Queer Jurisprudence</i> (Introduction) (2020)</li> <li>2. Sohini Chatterjee, “The ‘Good Indian Queer Woman’ and the Family” (2021)</li> <li>3. Sarah Lambale, “Queer Theory and Socio-Legal Studies” (2021)</li> <li>4. Brenda Cossman &amp; Joe Fischel, <i>Enticements: Queer Legal Imaginaries</i> (2024, excerpt)</li> <li>5. Dipika Jain &amp; Oishik Sircar, <i>Desire and Its Discontents</i> (2024, excerpt)</li> <li>6. Rajorshi Das, “Queer Acts and Caste Hegemony” (2025)</li> </ol>	Weeks 10–11	Explores how law, culture, and family shape queer lives and imaginaries. Students connect socio-legal structures with cultural narratives.
<p><b>Module 6: (Dis)placing the Canon</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Cael M. Keegan, “Getting Disciplined: What’s Trans* About Queer Studies Now?” (<i>Transgender Studies Reader Remix</i>, 2022). Paired with Eng, D. L., Halberstam, H., &amp; Munoz, J. E. (2005). Introduction: What’s queer about queer studies now? <i>Social Text</i>, 23(3–4), 2–18. doi:10.1215/01642472-23-3-4_84-85-1</li> <li>2. Butler, Judith. “Selection From Gender Trouble: Feminism and</li> </ol>	Weeks 12–13	Revisits canonical queer texts by Butler and Rubin alongside Keegan, Eng/Halberstam/Muñoz, and Roach. Emphasis on how contemporary trans, queer of color, and Black feminist critiques displace, revise, and re-situate the canon.

the Subversion of Identity." In <i>The Transgender Studies Reader Remix</i> , pp. 191-201. Routledge, 2022 with Inside the Black (W) hole: A Queer Black Feminist Retrospective." <i>differences</i> 35, no. 2 (2024): 1-11.		
--	--	--