

Culture and Theory, Ph.D.

Keith Topper, Director

<https://www.humanities.uci.edu/cultureandtheory/>

The Ph.D. Program in Culture and Theory is dedicated to theory-driven research on race, gender, and sexuality. The Program is shared by the Departments of African American Studies and Asian American Studies, and works closely with faculty across the School of Humanities with expertise in critical theory. It is home to leading scholars of Africana and African American thought, postcolonial theories from all geopolitical regions, Marxist and psychoanalytic criticism, and continental philosophy in the critical tradition. At the same time, our expanded course of study offers students freedom to take full advantage of the combined expertise of the internationally renowned faculty at UCI whose work exemplifies the best in contemporary theory and criticism across the arts, humanities, and social sciences.

The Culture and Theory Program is designed for students to develop their own unique style of thinking as they assemble theoretical frameworks, objects of analysis, and social historical practices into transdisciplinary projects that seek to transform the modern political imagination. Students with interests in the legacies of racial slavery and (settler) colonialism; diasporic and postcolonial cultural production; and the politics of identity formation will receive wide interdisciplinary engagement to create new ideas, arguments, and methods in order to lead ongoing conversations about what it means to do critical theory today.

Applicants must have earned a bachelor's, master's, or equivalent degree in any discipline in the humanities, arts, or social sciences.

Applicants submit unofficial transcripts, statement of purpose, personal history, three letters of recommendation, and a sample of written work. Incoming students are admitted for fall quarter only.

A. CLT&THY 200A, CLT&THY 200B, CLT&THY 200C. Core sequence in critical and cultural theories.
B. Two sections of CLT&THY 280. In these independent study courses taken during their second year, students expand and develop a seminar paper into the master's paper, with the guidance of their faculty advisor.
C. Two sections of CLT&THY 298. In these directed study courses taken during their third year, students prepare their reading lists and the dissertation prospectus in preparation of their qualifying examination, with the guidance of their faculty advisor.
D. Ten elective courses (4 units each), upon approval by faculty advisor, to cover methodological, theoretical, and topical areas of study as necessary for developing the student's broader research interests. The electives may be CLT&THY courses, HUMAN 260C and HUMAN 270; courses from Culture and Theory's supporting interdisciplinary units; and courses offered by core and affiliate faculty across campus. Independent studies and directed readings may be taken as elective courses with approval by Graduate Division. Of the 10 courses:
1. Five courses must be focused on philosophical and theoretical approaches relevant to race, gender, and sexuality (e.g. Hegel, feminist theory, critical theory, Foucault, Derrida, queer theory, themes in philosophy, political theory, etc.)
2. Five courses must be focused on objects of analysis relevant to race, gender, and sexuality studies (e.g. global capital, immigrant experience, environmental justice, transatlantic slavery, photography, criminalization, diasporic literature, technologies of surveillance, etc.)

Master's Paper and M.A.: During their second year, students work with their faculty advisor on a master's paper. A master's paper expands a seminar paper to a version that is of near-publishable quality.

Qualifying Examination: Students work with their committee to draw up reading lists and head notes on four topics, as well as a dissertation prospectus. Three of these topics should relate to the major areas of study outlined in the 200A, B, C core course sequence, and one should relate to the student's area of disciplinary or focused study. The examination itself will be comprised of a written and oral exam. A student shall advance to candidacy upon successful passing of the Qualifying Exam.

Dissertation: The dissertation topic should be drawn from a focused area of study, chosen in consultation with the dissertation advisor and other committee members.

Time to Degree: The normative time for advancement to candidacy is four years. The normative time for completion of the Ph.D. is seven years, and the maximum time permitted is eight years.

Faculty

Jonathan Alexander, Ph.D. Louisiana State University, *Director of Humanities Core and Chancellor's Professor of English; Culture and Theory; Education; Gender and Sexuality Studies; Informatics* (gender and sexuality studies, language/writing/rhetoric, film/TV/new media, 20th- and 21st-century American, creative writing, literary journalism)

Bridget R. Cooks Cumbo, Ph.D. University of Rochester, *Chancellor's Fellow and Professor of African American Studies; Art History; Culture and Theory; Visual Studies* (African American art, museum studies, feminist and post-colonial theory)

Sora Han, Ph.D. University of California, Santa Cruz, *Professor of Criminology, Law and Society; African American Studies; Comparative Literature; Culture and Theory; School of Law* (law and popular culture, critical race theory, philosophies of punishment, feminism and psychoanalysis)

Sandra Harvey, Ph.D. University of California, Santa Cruz, *Assistant Professor of African American Studies; Comparative Literature; Culture and Theory* (black diasporas, sovereignty, indigeneity, visual art and culture, Enlightenment philosophy, feminist and queer theories)

Jerry Won Lee, Ph.D. University of Arizona, *Professor of English; Anthropology; Asian American Studies; Comparative Literature; Culture and Theory; East Asian Studies*

Julia Hyoun Joo Lee, Ph.D. University of California, Los Angeles, *Department Chair and Professor of Asian American Studies; Culture and Theory; English* (Asian American literature and culture, African American literature and culture, ethnic literature, twentieth-century American literature)

James Kyung-Jin Lee (he/him), Ph.D. University of California, Los Angeles, *Professor of Asian American Studies; Culture and Theory; English; Religious Studies* (Asian American literature and culture, disability studies, medical/health humanities)

Horacio Legras, Ph.D. Duke University, *Department Chair and Professor of Spanish and Portuguese; Comparative Literature; Culture and Theory; European Languages and Studies* (Latin American literature and culture, Latin American film, visual arts in Latin America, psychoanalysis, and photography)

Annie McClanahan, Ph.D. University of California, Berkeley, *Associate Professor of English; Culture and Theory* (U.S. culture, the novel, political and economic theory)

Rudo Mudiwa, Ph.D. Indiana University, Bloomington, *Assistant Professor of Gender and Sexuality Studies; Culture and Theory* (anti-colonial studies, African feminisms, urban space, rhetoric)

John Murillo III, Ph.D. Brown University, *Department Chair and Associate Professor of African American Studies; Culture and Theory* (Afro-pessimism, theoretical physics, radical black feminism, literary theory, 20th/21st century black literature, black speculative fiction)

Kevin E. Olson, Ph.D. Northwestern University, *Professor of Political Science; Culture and Theory; European Languages and Studies* (political theory, history of political thought, legal theory, philosophy of the social sciences)

Rajagopalan Radhakrishnan, Ph.D. Binghamton University, State University of New York, *Distinguished Professor of English; African American Studies; Comparative Literature; Culture and Theory* (critical theory, postcoloniality, nationalisms and diasporas, poststructuralism, postmodernism, democracy and minority discourse, cultural studies, globalization and transnationalism)

Jared Sexton, Ph.D. University of California, Berkeley, *Professor Emeritus of African American Studies; Culture and Theory; Film and Media Studies* (race and sexuality, policing and imprisonment, contemporary U.S. cinema and political culture, multiracial coalition, critical theory)

John H. Smith, Ph.D. Princeton University, *Professor Emeritus of German; Comparative Literature; Culture and Theory; Religious Studies* (18th- and 19th-century literature and intellectual history, literary theory)

Rei Terada, Ph.D. Boston University, *Professor Emerita of Comparative Literature; Culture and Theory* (theory, poststructuralism, nineteenth- and twentieth-century poetry)

Keith Topper, Ph.D. University of California, Los Angeles, *Associate Professor of Political Science; Culture and Theory* (political theory, critical theory, poststructuralism, theories of power, language and politics, theory and politics of interpretation, politics of culture, philosophy of the social sciences)

Georges Y. Van Den Abbeele, Ph.D. Cornell University, *Professor of Comparative Literature; Culture and Theory; English; European Languages and Studies; French* (French and European philosophical literature, travel narrative and tourism/migration studies, critical theory and aesthetics, francophone literature, history of cartography, media history and theory)

Frank B. Wilderson III, Ph.D. University of California, Berkeley, *Chancellor's Professor of African American Studies; Culture and Theory* (Afropessimism, film theory, Marxism, narratology)

Tiffany Willoughby-Herard, Ph.D. University of California, Santa Barbara, *Associate Professor of Global and International Studies; Comparative Literature; Culture and Theory; Political Science*

Judy Tzu-Chun Wu, Ph.D. Stanford University, *Director of the Humanities Center, Director of the Center for Liberation, Anti-Racism, and Belonging and Associate Dean of Research, Faculty Development, and Public Engagement and Professor of Asian American Studies; Culture and Theory; History* (Asian American history; comparative racialization and immigration; empire and decolonization; gender and sexuality)

Affiliate Faculty

Srimayee Basu, Ph.D. University of Florida, *Assistant Professor of English; Culture and Theory* (early and 19th-century American literature, African American literature, critical theory)

Catherine Benamou, Ph.D. New York University, *Professor of Film and Media Studies; Culture and Theory* (Latin American, Latinx, and postcolonial Francophone and Lusophone cinema and television, transnational flows and diasporic audiences, authorial itineraries (Orson Welles), documentary, media ethnography and historiography, media and social justice)

Victoria Bernal, Ph.D. Northwestern University, *Professor of Anthropology; Culture and Theory; Gender and Sexuality Studies; Religious Studies* (gender, war, cyberspace, Islam, transnationalism, Africa)

Vinayak Chaturvedi, Ph.D. University of Cambridge, *Professor of History; Culture and Theory; European Languages and Studies; Religious Studies* (modern South Asia, social and intellectual history)

Dorothy B. Fujita-Rony, Ph.D. Yale University, *Professor of Asian American Studies; Culture and Theory; History* (U.S. history, Asian American studies)

Christopher Harris, Ph.D. The New School of Social Research, *Assistant Professor of Global and International Studies; Culture and Theory*

Joseph Jonghyun Jeon, Ph.D. University of California, Berkeley, *Professor of English; Asian American Studies; Culture and Theory; Film and Media Studies* (Asian-American literature, film modernism)

Victoria E. Johnson, Ph.D. University of Southern California, *Professor of Film and Media Studies; African American Studies; Culture and Theory* (U.S. television, history and theory, sports media and media industry studies, critical race theory, cultural geography, media law and policy)

Mahalia Little, Ph.D. The Ohio State University, *Assistant Professor of Gender and Sexuality Studies; Culture and Theory* (black feminist theory, literary and cultural criticism, black sexuality studies, black feminist aesthetics, contemporary African American literature, trauma narratives)

Theodore Martin, Ph.D. University of California, Berkeley, *Associate Professor of English; Culture and Theory* (Contemporary literature, genre fiction, literary history, crime, and the novel)

Mary McThomas, Ph.D. University of California, Los Angeles, *Associate Professor of Political Science; Culture and Theory* (immigration, theories of citizenship, feminist political theory, gender and politics)

Jessica Millward, Ph.D. University of California, Los Angeles, *Associate Professor of History; African American Studies; Culture and Theory* (U.S., slavery, African diaspora, African American gender and women)

Cole Morgan, Ph.D. Brown University, *Assistant Professor of English; Culture and Theory* (African American literature and culture, narrative theory, visual culture, critical race theory)

Davin Phoenix, Ph.D. University of Michigan, *Associate Professor of Political Science; Culture and Theory* (racial attitudes, affect and behavior, public opinion, political communication, urban politics, mobilization of marginalized groups)

Isabela Seong Leong Quintana, Ph.D. University of Michigan, *Assistant Professor of Asian American Studies; Culture and Theory* (comparative and relational ethnic studies; Asian American history; Chicana/Latina history; race and gender; borderlands, diasporas, and empire)

Gabriele M. Schwab, Ph.D. University of Konstanz, *Distinguished Professor Emerita of Comparative Literature; Anthropology; Culture and Theory; European Languages and Studies; German* (modern literature, critical theory, psychoanalysis, comparative literature)

Damien Sojoyner, Ph.D. University of Texas at Austin, *Associate Professor of Anthropology; Culture and Theory* (prisons; public education; urban anthropology; race; African diaspora theory; public policy and law; gender; United States)

Roxanne Varzi, Ph.D. Columbia University, *Professor of Anthropology; Culture and Theory; Film and Media Studies; Religious Studies* (Iran, media, war, visual anthropology, film studies, ethnographic and fiction writing)

Courses

CLT&THY 200A. Political Economy: Methods and Critique. 4 Units.

Introduction to canonical texts in Marxism coupled with an examination of the questions of race, gender, ethnicity, and sexuality that distend the calculus of the canon's assumptive logic. May be taken after CLT&THY 200B.

Same as CRITISM 200A.

Restriction: Graduate students only.

CLT&THY 200B. Libidinal Economy: Methods and Critique. 4 Units.

Introduction to canonical texts in psychoanalysis coupled with an examination of the questions of race, gender, ethnicity, and sexuality that distend the calculus of the canon's assumptive logic. May be taken before CLT&THY 200A.

Restriction: Graduate students only.

CLT&THY 200C. Theory from Below. 4 Units.

Introduction to systems of thought understudied or undervalued in academic canons; for instance, systems constituted in communities' practices or theories that do not seek permanence or generality.

Restriction: Graduate students only.

CLT&THY 241. Ethics, Erotics, and Will: Gendered Black Politics, Sexualized Racisms, and the Humanities. 4 Units.

Introduces doctoral students to an interdisciplinary conversation about black queer sexuality and black heteropatriarchy. Uses disciplinary formations as a tool for understanding knowledge formations about the shifting relations that constitute sexuality, gender, and racial blackness.

Restriction: Graduate students only.

CLT&THY 242. Afro-Pessimism and the Status of the Subject. 4 Units.

Afro-Pessimism theorizes the Black as a being against which all other beings become legible as human subjects. Focuses on either the subject of psychoanalysis or the subject of capital accumulation in their explorations of the antagonism between Blackness.

Restriction: Graduate students only.

CLT&THY 280. Independent Study. 4 Units.

Limited to students who have not yet received the M.A. degree.

Repeatability: May be repeated for credit unlimited times.

CLT&THY 289. Topics in Culture and Theory. 4 Units.

Seminars on various topics in Culture and Theory.

Repeatability: Unlimited as topics vary.

CLT&THY 298. Directed Reading. 4-12 Units.

Directed readings on a specific topic agreed upon by students and their instructors. Limited to students who have completed their M.A. degree and are preparing for their qualifying exam.

Prerequisite: Completion of the M.A. degree.

Repeatability: May be repeated for credit unlimited times.

CLT&THY 299. Dissertation Research. 1-12 Units.

Dissertation research in Culture and Theory.

Grading Option: Satisfactory/unsatisfactory only.

Repeatability: May be repeated for credit unlimited times.