Culture and Theory, Ph.D.

Sandra Harvey, 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. The Program is home to leading scholars of Africana 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 renown faculty at UCI whose work exemplifies the best in contemporary theory and criticism across the arts, humanities, and social sciences.

The 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.


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, Chancellor's Professor of English; Culture and Theory; Education; Gender and Sexuality Studies; Informatics (writing studies, sexuality studies, queer theory, new media studies)

Bridget R. Cooks Cumbo, Ph.D. University of Rochester, Associate 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, Department Chair and Director of the Graduate Program in Culture and Theory and Associate Professor of Criminology, Law and Society; African American Studies; 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)

Rodrigo Lazo, Ph.D. University of Maryland, College Park, Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and Associate Professor of English; Culture and Theory (hemispheric American studies, nineteenth century, Latino studies and the Americas, Cuba, immigrant literature)

James K. Lee, Ph.D. University of California, Los Angeles, Associate Professor of Asian American Studies; Culture and Theory; English; Religious Studies (Asian American literature and culture, contemporary U.S. literature, race and ethnic studies, urban studies, religious studies)

Jerry Won Lee, Ph.D. University of Arizona, Associate 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 Associate 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.)

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)

Rajagopal 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 Charles Sexton, Ph.D. University of California, Berkeley, Professor of African American Studies; Culture and Theory; Film and Media Studies; Visual 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, Department Chair and Professor 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, Director of Critical Theory and Professor 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)

Frank B. Wilderson III, Ph.D. University of California, Berkeley, Professor of African American Studies; Culture and Theory (Afro-Pessimism, film theory, Marxism, narratology)

Tiffany Willoughby-Herard, Ph.D. University of California, Santa Barbara, Associate Professor of African American Studies; Comparative Literature; Culture and Theory; Political Science (South Africa, poor whites, race in foreign policy, diaspora, comparative racial politics, third world feminisms, feminist pedagogy, black political thought)

Judy Tzu-Chun Wu, Ph.D. Stanford University, Director of Humanities Center and Chancellor's Professor of Asian American Studies; Culture and Theory (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, Associate Professor of Film and Media Studies; Culture and Theory; Visual Studies (Hispanophone and Lusophone cinema and television, U.S. Latino media, Orson Welles and maverick cinema, transnational flows, spectatorship, cinematic memory and cultures of preservation)

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, Associate 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, Associate 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
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. 4-12 Units.
Dissertation research in Culture and Theory.

Grading Option: Satisfactory/unsatisfactory only.

Repeatability: May be repeated for credit unlimited times.