Course description: Affect theory is a heterogeneous body of poststructuralist theoretical works that strives to understand social construction as a process that is continuously enacted in embodied ways which precede and participate in the formation of what is called the individual, the person, the self, the subject. As part of this endeavor, affect theory is a theoretical domain that often relies on some sense of the organic, the live, and the biological. In other words, affect theory aims to show the prepersonal and intersubjective resonances of sensation or feeling as absolutely necessary for the thought of political subjectivity and agency as their condition of possibility (and never simply as their property). It draws on the philosophically somewhat aligned or overlapping, as well as combatively conflicted schools of thought that developed out of the appreciation/development of and the frustration with psychoanalysis. We can distinguish two legacies in affect theory: a Deleuzean line stressing the philosophical legacies of Spinoza and Bergson, and a Silvan Tomkins line in which Tomkins is read by a diverse range of texts in feminist and queer theory. The course will briefly introduce some of the founding gestures in psychoanalysis which are relevant for feminist and queer theory as well as affect theory followed by texts representing both of these legacies. This will be followed by a selection of examples relevant for current questions, of feminist and queer theory. We will conclude the course with some of the critiques of affect theory from within the same poststructuralist cultural thought it stems from.

Learning outcomes: At the end of the course, students will be familiar with the most important founding arguments of psychoanalysis relevant for feminist and queer theory. Students will also understand the main theoretical genealogies in affect theories and will have an understanding of how these relate to each other. After the course, students will be able to independently read theoretical texts working with the idea of affect and contextualize these theoretically. They will also be able to use affect theory in their own analytic projects.

Requirements:
Class participation, and there will be one written assignment in the form of a 2500-3000 word paper.

Class participation:
You are required to attend class consistently. Please come to class having read, and bringing with you, the hard copy of the assigned texts. Your active participation (listening as well as speaking) will be expected. Generally, the more active class participation is in a class, the more intellectually stimulating it becomes, so I hope that you will always share your thoughts during discussion. You may miss one class without formal documentation of illness or any other case of vis major. Please let me know in advance if you know you won’t come to class.

Facilitating discussion:
The organization of this component will depend on class size and we will design it together.

**Paper proposal**
You will submit a paper proposal of max. 600 words describing the general question and the tentative argument of the paper and why you consider it relevant for scholarly engagement. Then you will have to identify the materials you will use both in terms of the scholarly texts and the object if the analysis if you want to write about affect and a film or a novel or an empirical phenomenon. Papers only dealing with theoretical questions covered in class and working with the texts on the syllabus are also welcome. You may revise the proposal if your first version is graded lower than an A-.

**Paper**
You will have to write a 2500-3000 word paper. The paper will develop a scholarly argument engaging with some of the theoretical questions covered during the course and referring to at least 2 texts from the syllabus. The argument will be designed by you independently. You may discuss outside material, for instance a literary text, a film, performance, etc., or empirical material you are interested in and you may refer to scholarly texts not on the syllabus. The paper will be due on the Monday after classes end.

**Grading:**

- Paper 40%
- Paper proposal (with the possibility of one revision) 30%
- Attendance and participation 10%
- Facilitating discussion 20%

**Note on extensions:** If you need an extension, email me at least two days prior to the deadline (I will most likely grant an extension). I may not honor requests that come in last minute.

**Note on plagiarism:** It is your responsibility to make sure that your written work does not include any plagiarism (make sure you clearly mark your notes including quotations for yourself in order to avoid accidentally pasting them in your text). Any assignment found containing plagiarism will receive an F with no guaranteed possibility of rewriting and you’ll receive an email notification of the problem.

**Schedule**

**week 1:**


**week 2:**

Recommended:


**week 3:**


Recommended:

**week 4:**


**week 5:**


week 6:


week 7:


Recommended:

*Paper proposal due on the course's e-learning site.*

week 8:

week 9:


week 10:


*Revised proposal due.*

week 11:

**week 12:**


This syllabus is subject to change.