

Confronting Violence: Anticolonial Feminist and Queer Approaches

Wednesday 3 June 2026 09:00 (1h 30m)

Many urgent transnational political projects –struggles against sexual violence, movements combating economic exploitation, political exclusion and ongoing coloniality, challenges to epistemicide and epistemic injustice –remain organised around the successive imperatives of naming violence, identifying experiences of violence, devising idioms and frameworks for their intelligibility, and displacing the conditions of their production. Critical scholarship is thus often an exercise in archiving and recounting violence –a practice necessarily confronted by a range of ethical, material and epistemic challenges and questions. Feminist scholars engaged in re-presenting violence have identified the risk of miming the violences they archive (Hartman 2008); erasing female agency and reinscribing racial, imperial, sexual and class hierarchies (Kapur 2002); and buttressing rather than dismantling the conditions of (re)production of violence (Phipps 2020). Pertinent questions have also been raised around who writes about violence and what their location (in its social, ethical and political registers) allows them to witness and recount (Lugones 2003). This panel is an effort to collectively navigate some such challenges that have persistently haunted the indispensable but by no means uncomplicated imperative to research violence.

Against the backdrop of heightened global violence through growing authoritarianism, fascism, ethno-nationalism, imperialism, anti-feminist and anti-gender mobilisations, this panel takes up unresolved questions around how to study violence, seeking to reckon with the ethical, methodological and epistemic difficulties researchers encounter in the process of witnessing, coming to terms with, researching and writing about violence. For us this project remains (and must remain) guided by anti-colonial feminist thinking that has long foregrounded issues of power, location and violence to shake up the worlds we inhabit and envision the worlds that are possible. In emphasising de and postcolonial approaches, we hope to bring into conversation (and occasionally hold in tension) two distinct but closely aligned epistemic and political traditions that have offered the tools to bring to the centre and interrogate power within the process of research, especially taking seriously power in processes of re-presentation (Spivak 1999). De and postcolonial frameworks have also pushed scholars to think more capacious about the question of violence itself, recognising violence across registers (political, structural, epistemic, representational) while remaining alive to how deeply political and contentious the process of naming, recognising, and recording violence remains.

Panelists respond to the following themes and questions:

- What structures of power are instituted/challenged/reinscribed in the act or process of researching and writing on violence? How can research on violence remain attentive and responsive to these?
- What do scholars reveal and conceal when we recognise certain acts as violent and not others? Who do we produce as violent and whom as available for violence? What sort of politics of response does this invite?
- How do (and should) practices of care, reciprocity, and mutuality feature in researching violence? What impacts do they have on both the researcher and the 'researched'?
- How can researchers ethically assemble, protect, and engage with archives of violence as it is unfolding?
- How do we address issues of violence in the classroom, ensuring that we remain attentive and responsive to the (often violent) institutional context within which pedagogy transpires?

Track Classification: Colonial, Postcolonial and Decolonial Working Group