What are the foundational objects, questions, and debates within queer of color critique? How do queer of color critique, performance, and activism interface? This course offers an in-depth exploration of the emerging field of queer of color critique, emphasizing close, critical reading of scholarly and artistic texts—especially novels, performance art, music, and films. We will trace the development of the term “queer of color critique” and the history of queer of color theory, foregrounding its emergence within and indebtedness to foundational black feminist texts theorizing interlocking oppressions, intersectionality, and the racialized sexual regulation of black social formations. For example, we will read essays, manifestos, and poems by The Combahee River Collective, Barbara Smith, and Audre Lorde. We will then read canonical essays by a variety of queer of color theorists, among them José Esteban Muñoz, Roderick Ferguson, Fatima El-Tayeb, and Jasbir Puar and use these essays as frameworks for analyzing several artistic works, including Drag Performances by Vaginal Creme Davis, Toni Morrison’s Sula, Stand-up Comedy by Margaret Cho, Dee Rees’ Pariah, and Performance Art by Nicki Minaj. Ultimately, the course considers how queer of color performance and critique interface with and interanimate one another, challenging canonical discourses of race, class, gender, and sexuality in the process.

Joshua Chambers-Letson

MW 11am-12:20pm
AMS Krause Studio