Shaka McGlotten defines intimacy as "a feeling of connection or a sense of belonging; embodied and carnal sensuality, that is, sex; and that which is most inward and inmost to one's personhood," thus highlighting the affective dimensions of intimacy as it shapes our personhood and sense of connection to others and to the world. Yet McGlotten simultaneously contends that, "intimacy is also a vast assemblage of ideologies, institutional sites, and diverse sets of material and semiotic practices that exert normative pressures on large and small bodies, lives, and worlds." In this course, we will be examining the complexities highlighted by McGlotten's paradoxical understanding of intimacy as both the experience of desire, kinship, and belonging and as ideological, as the site of governmental, biopolitical, and neoliberal pressures. Indeed, in the study of gender, we have long known that intimacy is seldom the neutral act of loving. The distinction between public and private spheres has been a central concern for feminist thought, and in this course we will consider the public dimensions of the private sphere and of intimate lives. Importantly, intimacy also abounds in colonial spaces, from anxieties over miscegenation to the horrifying intimacies between slaveholders and house-slaves and between the colonized and the colonizer, as Ann Stoler and Anne McClintock describe. By examining a genealogy of how intimacy has been approached in queer, gender, and critical race theory, we will consider both its productive world-building dimensions and its implications in systems of power. Readings in this course will include texts from Lauren Berlant, Jaspir Puar, Audre Lorde, and Hortense Spillers, among others.