

Department of Italian, Spanish, Portuguese & Latin American Studies, University of Toronto
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CONFERENCE CALL FOR PAPERS

Queer Kinship: Migrations, Diasporas, Communities

Queer Kinship: Migrazioni, Diaspore, Comunità

Queer Kinship: Migraciones, Diásporas, Comunidades

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University of Toronto, St. George Campus, 16-17 October 2026

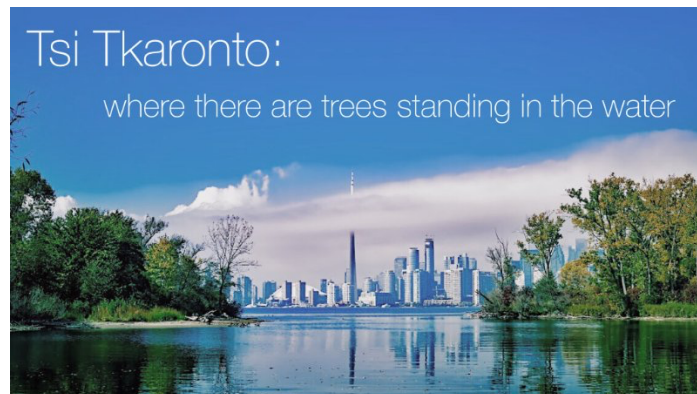


Image source: University of Toronto Libraries X, National Indigenous People's Day

Keynote Speakers



Dr. Joseph M. Pierce (ᑕᑎᑎᑦᑎ ᑎᑎᑎᑎ, Cherokee Nation Citizen) is Professor in the Department of Hispanic Languages and Literature and the Founding Director of the Native American and Indigenous Studies Initiative at Stony Brook University. Among many prestigious publications, he is the author of two books, *Argentine Intimacies: Queer Kinship in the Age of Splendor 1890-1910* (SUNY Press, 2019) and *Speculative Relations: Indigenous Worlding and Repair* (Duke University Press, 2025).



Liana Cusmano (Luca/BiCurious George), is a writer, poet, spoken word artist, filmmaker, and arts educator. They are a three-time Montreal Slam Champion and 2019 Canadian Individual Poetry Slam Championship runner-up. Liana has presented their work in English, French, and Italian in North America, Europe, and Asia. Their novel *Catch & Release* (2022) was published by Guernica Editions. They are also a two-time finalist for the QWF Spoken Word Prize and winner of the 2024 Society Pages Poetry Contest.

You are invited to submit a proposal for the third international conference organized by the [Queer Kinship Network Siena-Oxford-Toronto](#). The Network seeks to explore queer kinship: affective bonds, relationships, solidarities, and family forms that diverge from, innovate beyond, and challenge models of heteronormative families and communities. With a primary focus on the Italian and English-speaking worlds – though proactively not limited to these contexts – this project investigates culturally marginalised histories and new transformative queer kinship dynamics, across different cultural dimensions and time periods. As well as rendering forms of queer kinship more visible, the project seeks to inform current debates on social justice, wellbeing, and representation.

For the conference in Tsí Tkaròn:to/Toronto, we welcome proposals on any approach to queer kinship studies. However, priority will be given to interventions that focus on the connections among queer and trans kinship, migration, and/or transnationalism as categories that also intersect with colonialism, racialization, and ethnicity. Exploring queer and trans kinship, migration, and transnationalism in/from the context of Turtle Island-Abya Yala requires grounding this work in Indigenous histories and scholarships. Martin J. Cannon (Onyota'a:ka) highlights how colonial policies have subverted many Indigenous relational systems on this land by “institutionalizing a structure of power and kinship relations that [are] both patriarchal and heterosexist” through which “the sexuality of Native North Americans was quite simply racialized and engendered.”¹ Given this context, we take direction from the introduction to “*Cuir/Queer Américas: Translation, Decoloniality, and the Incommensurable*,” in which Joseph M. Pierce et al. note that a “critical appraisal of the relationship between queer studies and decolonial praxis remains a crucial site for investigation, as do regional, intra-, and interregional frameworks.”²

Thinking about diasporas through the lenses of colonialism and supremacy, we also aim to take up David Eng’s question on “what might be gained politically by reconceptualizing diaspora not in conventional terms of ethnic dispersion, filiation, and biological traceability, but rather in terms of queerness, affiliation, and social contingency.”³ Through this work, we strive to contribute to the “unruly body of scholarship,” as Eithne Luibhéid names it, that lies at the intersection of queer and migration studies. Luibhéid highlights that this intersection has “enhanced scholarship about the emergence of multiple, hybrid sexual cultures, identities, identifications, practices, and politics” and that “these are marked by power, contestation, and creative adaptation.”⁴ One such “emergence” has taken place in Italian-Canadian communities, where queer and trans experiences have recently surfaced as influential categories of belonging, solidarity-building, activism, and reckoning. In this latter cultural space, Liana Cusmano’s writing exemplifies Eng’s queer reconceptualization of diaspora by conjugating mutual recognition with acknowledgement of loss; in one of their poems, Cusmano writes: “We all carry with us / in our skin and bones / a ghost language / that we can see in one another / and name / but not speak.”⁵ Many powerful intersections of queerness, migration, and cultural identity exist on this territory and elsewhere; the aim of our conference is indeed to create a space for intercultural sharing and listening, interdisciplinary learning, debate, solidarity, political growth, and joy.

¹ “The Regulation of First Nations Sexuality,” *Canadian Journal of Native Studies* XVIII, 1 (1998), pp. 7-8.

² Joseph M. Pierce, María Amelia Viteri, Diego Falconí Trávez, Salvador Vidal-Ortiz, and Lourdes Martínez-Echazábal, *GLQ* 27.3 (2021), p. 323

³ “Transnational Adoption and Queer Diasporas,” *Social Text* 21.3 (2003), p. 4.

⁴ “Queer/Migration: An Unruly Body of Scholarship” *GLQ* 14.2-3 (2008), p. 173.

⁵ “Safe Spaces/Spazi sicuri: Unveiling the Queer Italian-Canadian Experience” Exhibit (University of Toronto, Sept. 2025) by Liana Cusmano (poems) and Vincenzo Pietropaolo (photographs); as cited in Clarke, George Elliott, “On Seeing Queer Italian-Canadians: Up Close and Personal,” *Accenti Magazine* 5 Nov. 2025.

Themes for discussion include but are not limited to:

- Two Spirit, Indigiqueer, and Indigenous queer kinships
- Queerness and colonialism / Decolonizing queerness
- Queer(ing) diasporas
- Queer(ing) migration
- Queer(ing) multiculturalism
- Intercultural and interlinguistic queer and trans kinship
- Non-normative/Anti-normative communities in migratory and transnational contexts
- Intersections of race, class, ability, gender, and sexuality and their impact on queer kinship
- Cultural production that explores queer/trans identity and migration
- Pinkwashing/Rainbow-washing and homonationalism
- Queer and trans diasporic collectivities and activism
- Interactions between different modes of cultural and theoretical production on queer and trans kinship

Scholars, activists, artists, and community leaders are invited to submit: 1. Individual proposals for 15-minute presentations; 2. Complete panels composed of three or four 15-minute presentations; 3. Complete roundtable proposals with up to eight speakers.

For 1 (individual proposals) and 2 (complete panels), please submit a 200-word abstract and 50-word bio (per speaker). For 3 (roundtables), please submit one 300-word abstract for the whole roundtable and a 50-word bio for each speaker. Please, include 50-word bios for chairs/organizers, where applicable. Individual proposals (1) are accepted in English only; complete panels (2) and roundtables (3) are accepted in English, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, and French.

Submissions are to be sent in one PDF file to qkntoronto@gmail.com by 20 June 2026.

Submissions will be reviewed and acceptance notices will be sent in early July.

There will be no fee for participating in or attending this conference.

Our two conference days will offer moments of relaxation and socialization, including guided meditation sessions by [Dr. Christina Vani](#).

Questions and accessibility requests should be sent to paolo.frasca@utoronto.ca

We look forward to receiving your proposals and to meeting many of you at the University of Toronto!

Paolo Frascà, Silvia Antosa, Charlotte Ross
Co-Directors, Queer Kinship Network Siena-Oxford-Toronto