

SE220 Social Justice and Urban Spaces

Lecturer: Dr. Cassandra Ellerbe

Course Times: Mondays 15:45 – 17:15 & 17:30- 19:00

Email: c.ellerbe@berlin.bard.edu

Office Hours: tba

Course Description:

“Justice denied anywhere diminishes justice everywhere”

- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Urban spaces have often served as the backdrop for social justice movements and politicized organizing. Racial and ethnic tensions, gender and socioeconomic inequality, forced or voluntary migration etc. are undoubtedly issues that have been at the forefront of many emancipatory movements. However, these issues also play a significant role in how urban space(s) are structured and experienced, and utilized in the struggle for socio-political justice and transformation.

In this course we will explore in depth the significance of social justice, politicized mobilization and how these issues have developed within urban space(s) across the globe.

We will interrogate these issues with a major focus on feminist based approaches to the struggle for social justice in various global contexts.

Utilizing an interdisciplinary theoretical perspective (social justice theory, human/social geography, post-colonial /postcolonial feminist theory and intersectional theory), we will analyze various historical as well as current contexts that are linked to social justice based movements of marginalized groups in various urban spaces across the globe.

This course aims not only to discuss the purpose and necessity for social justice and political activism, but also to assist students in the development of critical thinking and to develop a contextual understanding of a variety of urban-related social problems.

The course entails lectures, in class discussions and presentations, off-campus visits to various Berlin based organizations, and guest lectures by local experts & scholars.

Course Objectives:

This course will be interactive and of a hands-on nature, therefore class attendance and participation in class discussions is mandatory. Your presence and active participation in the class will not only increase your ability to reflect on the issue of social justice, but also to foster the development of critical thinking and a contextual understanding of a variety of urban-related social problems.

Further, there are several primary questions that will accompany this course:

1. What is social justice and why is necessary?
2. How does my social positioning inform my views and decisions?
3. How does identity formation and geographical space(s) intersect?

4. What can I as an individual contribute to the understanding of social justice theory and the necessity for such movements within my immediate sphere?
5. What role has postcolonial theory and postcolonial feminism played in the struggle for social justice?
6. How does this happen in various spaces across the globe?
7. What are “safe “space(s), why are they important and for whom?
8. How can I become a political ally and use my privilege to support marginalised groups/communities?

Course Structure:

The course entails lectures, in class discussions and presentations, off-campus visits to various Berlin based organisations, and guest lectures by local activists & scholars.

We will be looking in depth at the following cases studies & organisations:

- The Young Lords – 1968-1973
- Audre Lorde & Black Germany: The making of the film: *The Berlin Years 1984-1992*
- Theatre of the Oppressed – Social Justice in Brazil
- Black Lives Matter – 2013

Required Course Texts: These texts are available in the Bard College Berlin library

- **Social Justice & Diversity**
Adams, Maurianne: *Readings for Diversity and Social Justice*. Routledge: Chapman Hall 2013.
- **The Black German Movement:**
Oguntoye & Opitz: *Showing Our Colors: Afro-German Women Speak Out*. University of Massachusetts Press: Massachusetts 1992.

- *The Black Diaspora and Germany/ Deutschland und die Schwarze Diaspora*. Edition Assemblage: Muenster 2018.
- **The Young Lords:**
Enck-Wanzer, Darrel: *The Young Lords. A Reader*. New York University Press: New York 2010.
- **Theater of the Oppressed:** Boal, Augusto: *Theater of the Oppressed*. (engl. translation) Theatre Communications Group Inc. New York: 1979.
- **Postcolonial Feminisms**
Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi: *We Should All Be Feminists*: A Vintage Original EBook, 2012/2014.
⇒ Davis, Angela: *Women Culture and Politics*: First Vintage Book, edition 1990.

⇒ Moraga, Cherrie: *This Bridge Called My Back. Writings by Radical Women of Color*: Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press 1981/1983.

Additional required reading materials will be handed out as photocopies and/or will be available on-line.

Attendance:

Class attendance is mandatory. Please note that any unexcused absences will have a negative impact on your participation grade, and having more than two unexcused absences- in this case missing two full sessions (15:45- 19:00) - for the semester will automatically reduce your final cumulative mark by one full letter grade. In addition, students must be aware that the Bard College Berlin attendance policy specifically stipulates that missing more than 30% (in this case, eight) of the required class meetings means that you cannot receive credit for the course; missed classes in first week of the semester count double. You should review the full Bard College Berlin attendance policy stated in the Student Handbook, which also outlines what does and does not count as an excused absence. For more detailed information regarding Bard College Berlin policies; <http://www.berlin.bard.edu/for-students/student-handbook/academics/>

Assessment

Writing Assignments

This course has homework assignments consisting of two pages or max. **800 words**. It also has informal assignments, including giving one short oral presentation on a case study dealt within the course, and writing short responses to guest lectures and off-campus visits. This course requires active and informed participation. Student participation is a pertinent element of the course and will be graded.

You are expected to have all assignments (i.e. readings,) completed for each class. Please make every effort to contact and communicate with me if you are facing a challenging situation that hinders your ability to complete an assignment on time.

In addition, a group analysis & action plan project will constitute part of the course's final grade. Students will form groups, analyze a social justice case/movement and create an action plan for positive change based upon one of the course's topics, or a topic that has been discussed with the instructor. Group action plan presentations will take place during the course's last three sessions. Groups and topics for the action plan will be determined by week 6 (4 March 2019).

The final 1500 word paper for the course is due 17 May 2018 and may be a standard essay or the analysis of a social justice related case study from the student's respective countries or based upon the student's group action plan. The paper should reference at least two or more of the readings and at least three of the theoretical approaches that we have discussed and examined during the course. Creative approaches and or interdisciplinary analysis are highly encouraged and welcomed.

Policy on Late Submission of Papers

All essays are to be submitted via the Bard College Berlin electronic collection system, and thus will receive a time stamp. Late essays that are up to **24 hours** late will be downgraded one full grade.

Essays that are more than 24 hours late will also be downgraded one full grade and cannot earn a grade higher than a C. Essays that are more than **72 hours** late will not be accepted.

Academic Integrity:

In this course, we aim to conduct ourselves as a community of scholars, recognizing that academic study is both an intellectual and ethical enterprise. You are encouraged to build on the ideas and texts of others; that is a vital part of academic life. However, you are also obligated to document every occasion when you use another’s ideas, language, or syntax. When you use another’s ideas or language—whether through direct quotation, summary, or paraphrase—you must formally acknowledge that debt by signaling it in the MLA parenthetical format (<http://www.mla.org/style>). Any incidents of academic dishonesty, be they, large or small, will not be tolerated and will be reported the Academic Administration and may result in failure for the entire course. The complete Bard College Berlin policy on academic integrity is detailed in the Student Handbook and can be read online: <http://www.berlin.bard.edu/for-students/student-handbook/>

Cellphones, Laptops & iPads: Cellphones should be switched off for the duration of class. Laptops & iPads are allowed only when necessary for class activities.

Please note that the following course outline is provisional. Changes to the assignment and seminar schedule will be communicated in class and via the Bard College Berlin email system. **It is your responsibility to remain up-to-date on course assignments and due dates!!**

Grade Breakdown

Class participation and attendance	40%
Short presentations	10%
Reading & homework assignments	10%
Final paper & group action plan	40%

Class Schedule: Tentative

Week 1

Mon. / 28 January

15:45 – 17:15

17:30-19:00

Introduction: Social justice theory & the significance of space

Lecture & discussion Pt. 1

Reading: selections from Maurianne Adams: *Readings for Diversity and Social Justice*.

Reading: Iris Marion Young: *Justice and the Politics of Difference*. - Chapters 1 -3 & 8

Week 2

Mon. 4 February

15:45 – 17:15

1. Lecture & discussion

Introduction to Human/Social geography:

Reading: David Delany: *The Space That Race Makes*.

Reading: Linda Peake & Audrey Kobayashi: *Policies and Practices for an Antiracist Geography at the Millennium*.

Reading: Chris Hedges: *Wages of Rebellion* - Chapter 3. *The Invisible Revolution*

Discussion questions:

- Race, gender and sexuality are categories of social life. How do these categories intersect with space/urban space?
- Can you list a few examples from your place of origin and elaborate on them?
- How can urban space(s) be organized so that forms of discrimination or marginalisation can be minimized or eradicated?

17:30-18:30

- Chris Hedges and Cornel West in Conversation - Wages of Rebellion | The New School

Film-Clip: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3g_zSvtSs-A

Week 3

Mon. 11 February

15:45-17:15

1st Case study – The Young Lords (1968-1972)

Reading: Darrel Enck-Wanzer: *The Young Lords. A Reader*. Chapter 1-3, 7 & 8

Reading: David Harvey: *Social Justice in the City*. - Chapter 4. P. 120- 152

Film & discussion: *¡Palante siempre Palante!*

17:30 - 19:00

Film- *The Young Lords and Latino Activism in the 1970s*

Week 4 No class!

Mon. 18 February – Dr. Ellerbe is not in Berlin.

This session will be made up during completion week.

Week 5 - Written response due!

Mon. / 25 February

15:45 – 17:15

Critical Race Theory in the US & German context

Short input & film clip about critical race theory

Reading: Nora Räthzel: *Creating Spaces of Fear and Spaces of Safety*. (2005)

Discussion questions:

How does critical race theory assist us in the critical examination of US and German society?

How does this theory enable us to understand spatial perspectives and social justice concerns?

Is this theoretical concept applicable in other contexts, if so, explain how so?

17:30- 19:00

Film & class discussion- Racial profiling in Germany: *ID – Without Colors*

- 1.Are there differences and similarities between the US & German context?
- 2.How does the notion of safe space(s) figure within the issue of racial profiling?
- 3.Describe the forms of resistance that you noticed within the film.
- 4.Does this occur in your country of origin or socialization?

Week 6

Mon. / 4 March

15:45 -17:15

Student presentations and discussion: Group 1

Students will be required to make short max. 10 min. individual presentations/responses based on the first case study and or one of the lecture topics from the class:

17:30-19:00 – Group 2

Week 7

15:45- 17:15

Mon. /11 March

Intersectional theory

Introduction to intersectional theory

Lecture & discussion

Reading: Kimberlé Crenshaw: *Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics and Violence against Women of Color*.

17:30 – 19:00

Film-Clip: *The Urgency of Intersectionality*

Discussion & exercise: Postcolonial space, gender, power and privilege.

Week 8

Mon. /18 March

15:45- 17:15

2nd Case Study – “Audre Lorde- The Berlin Years 1984-1992 “- Gender and Diaspora

Reading: Oguntoye et.al *Showing our Colors: Black German Women Speak Out* (1992)

Reading: Ellerbe-Dueck, Cassandra & Wekker, Gloria: *Naming Ourselves as Black Women in Europe* in *Audre Lorde’s Transnational Legacies* (2015)

Reading: Ellerbe-Dueck, Cassandra: *Networks and Safe Spaces of Black European Women in Europe* (2011).

Reading: Ellerbe, Cassandra: *Black German Women, the Matrilineal Diaspora and Audre Lorde* (2018)

We will watch the film- “Audre Lorde: The Berlin Years” by Dagmar Schulz

17:30- 19:00

Guest lecture & discussion with Judy Gummich/ADEFRA Roots – tbc.

Week 9 – Written response due !

Mon. 25 March – Revolution and Womankind

15:45- 17:15

Assata Shakur and The Black Liberation Army: Documentary film: “Eyes of The Rainbow”

Reading: Angela Davis, *Women Culture and Politics*, p.16-34 (Facing Our Common Foe: Women and the Struggle Against Racism) & p.155-167

Reading: Angela Davis, *Women Culture and Politics*, p.155-167 (Revolution and Womankind: On Clara Zetkin’s Selected Writings)

Reading: Chimananda Ngozi Adichie, *We Should All Be Feminists* – **Available in the Bard College Berlin library!**

17:30 -19:00

We will view the following clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OBZdDq0gq-w>

Week 10

Mon. 1 April - Class excursion – Centre for Intersectional Justice- CIJ, Berlin

Week 11 – Written response from the CIJ excursion due!

Mon. 8 April

15:45 – 17:15

3rd Case Study: Theatre of the Oppressed:

The Theatre of the Oppressed is a worldwide non-violent aesthetic movement, which seeks peace, not passivity. Theater is emphasized not as a spectacle but rather as a language accessible to all. More specifically, it is a rehearsal theater designed for people who want to learn ways of fighting back against oppression in their daily lives.

Reading: Selected Readings from Augusto Boal's, *Theatre of the Oppressed*

Discussion questions:

1. What exactly is Theatre of the Oppressed and how does it relate to issues of social justice?
2. Is it a rehearsal for a revolution?
3. How does this technique deal with the subject of space and its intersection with gender, race/racialization, age, and sexuality?
4. How has this work/technique been adapted within various contexts across the globe??

17:30 – 19:00

Feminist power & Social Justice: Creating Spaces of Empathy and Solidarity

Justice for Marielle Franco & the Afro-Brazilian Diaspora in Berlin:

Reading: 3 Articles in class folder

1. *Echoing Marielle Franco, Brazil's black women speak out against violence.* www.theconversation.com
2. *Sexism, racism drive more black women to run for office in both Brazil and US.* www.theconversation.com
3. *Assassination in Brazil unmasks the deadly racism of a country that would rather ignore it.* www.theconversation.com

Reading: Angela Davis, *Women Culture and Politics*: p. 35-52 (We Do Not Consent: Violence Against Women in Society- [Available in the Bard College Berlin library!](#))

We will view the following clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=72-QbwDnUQI>

Week 12

Mon./ 15 April - Spring Break – no class!

Week 13

Mon. 22 April – Spring Break – no class!

Week 14 – Written response due!

Mon. / 29 April: Gender, Sexuality, Racialisation and Space

15:45- 17:15

Reading: Jin Haritaworn: *Queer Lovers and Hateful Others* (excerpts- Introduction & Chapter 1 p.36-53.

Reading: Paola Bacchetta, Fatima El-Tayeb & Jin Haritaworn: *Queer of Color Formations and Translocal Spaces in Europe*, *Society and Space* 2015 Vol. 33(5) 769-778.

Reading: Cherrie Moraga, *This Bridge Called My Back. Writings By Radical Women of Color* And When You Leave Take Your Pictures With You, Barbara Smith p.61-62 & Lesbianism an Act of Resistance – Cheryl Clarke p.128-137
– Readings available in the Bard Library!

17:30- 19:00

Film-Clip: The New Transgender Movement

Week 15

Mon. /6 May

15:45 – 17:15

4th Case Study: Black Lives Matter – Documentary: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tgFI0phqRIY>

Reading: Black Lives Matter 4 –Year Report

17:30-19:00 – Film & class discussion

Week 16 - Completion week/ last session

Mo. / 13 May

15:45-19:00

Presentation- Group action plans

Friday / 17 May

Final paper due