

S0322 Critical Diversity and Decolonial Methodologies in the Liberal Arts Classroom

Seminar Leader: Kathy-Ann Tan

Course Times: Mondays, 12:30 – 15:45

Email: k.tan@berlin.bard.edu

Office Hours: by email appointment

Course Description

In this class, we will combine theory and practice to develop a critical methodology that harnesses the potential of a Liberal Arts higher education in fostering antiracist, critical diversity and decolonial ways of thinking and doing. This is a methodology that draws on a growing body of intersectional research and scholarship from the fields of literary and cultural theory, as well as the cultural politics of education, in particular, decolonial and antiracist education. It engages with pedagogies of dissent, survival, and resistance, and provide one means of answering the question that postcolonial feminist scholar Chandra Mohanty asks, "What does it mean to think through, theorize, and engage in questions of difference and power?" The objective of this class is thus to address the conditions of cultural and knowledge production and dissemination in higher education, particularly in the Liberal Arts, the oldest program of higher education in Western history, while attuned to notions of accountability and social justice.

All reading material will be collected in a course reader, handed out as xeroxes, and/or will be made available on-line.

Requirements

Attendance

Attendance is required at all classes. Absences are registered in all classes. Illness leading to inability to attend classes, or submit work, must be reported to the College Registrar; a medical note should be submitted to the Registrar within one week of the absence. Bard College Berlin cannot offer credit for any course in which a student has missed more than 30% of classes, whether the absences are on documented medical grounds or not. More than two absences in a semester will significantly affect the participation grade for the course. In addition, students should consult the Student Handbook for regulations governing periods of illness or leaves of absence.

Writing Assignments

This course has two essay assignments: one mid-semester and one end of semester essay (5000 – 7000 words in total). It also has informal assignments, including giving presentations on readings and writing reading responses and/or discussion questions in advance of seminar meetings. Since this is a seminar, active and informed participation in class is a required and graded element of the course.

Essay Deadlines

Mid-term essay deadline: Wednesday, **October 24, 5pm.**

Final essay deadline: Wednesday, **December 12, 5pm.**

Policy on Late Submission of Papers

Essays that are up to 24 hours late will be downgraded one full grade (from B+ to C+, for example). Instructors are not obliged to accept essays that are more than 24 hours late. Late essays (if you are allowed an extension) must be submitted within four weeks of the deadline and cannot receive a grade of higher than C. Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment (policy from the Student Handbook on the submission of essays).

Grade Breakdown

Class participation and contribution to blog/web presence/project): 1/3 of final grade

Mid-term essay: 1/3 of final grade

Final essay: 1/3 of final grade

Classroom Etiquette/ Nature of in-class participation

Students are expected to have read all the texts scheduled for discussion in class – this will be the basis of our critical analysis and interpretation. Thoughtful, constructive dialogue is expected in this class. There will be less frontal teaching than open discussion. Students are encouraged and expected to participate and share their ideas while considerately respecting the viewpoints of other students, especially if they are different.

Academic Integrity

Bard College Berlin has a no-tolerance policy with regard to academic plagiarism, cheating in an examination, submitting papers bought on the Internet or other source, or submitting the same paper for credit in two courses without authorization. This amounts to academic misconduct or dishonesty and students will be reported immediately. When you are using another's ideas, language, or syntax, whether through direct quotation, summary, or paraphrase, you must formally acknowledge this by signaling it in the MLA parenthetical format (<http://www.mla.org/style>).

Schedule

Part 1: Critical Diversity Studies: Theory

Week 1 – September 3.

Introduction and outline of the course

Week 2 - September 10.

Readings: Chapters 2 & 3 on “Institutional Life” and “The Language of Diversity”, from Sara Ahmed’s *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life* (pp. 19 – 82)

Week 3 – September 17

Readings: Chapter 2, “The University and the Undercommons”, from Fred Moten and Stefano Harney’s *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study* (pp. 22 -43) and Iris Marion Young’s “The 5 Faces of Oppression” (.pdf)

Week 4 – September 24

Readings: On Intersectional Feminisms – Readings: Short excerpts from by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s *We Should All Be Feminists*, Kimberlé Crenshaw’s *On Intersectionality* and Chandra Mohanty’s *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*

Part 2: Critical Diversity Studies Methodology

Week 5 – October 1

Readings: on Paulo Freire’s philosophy of education and critical pedagogy of the oppressed (.pdf), and on bell hooks’ engaged pedagogy. (.pdf)

Week 6 – October 8

Readings: Chapter 6, “Black Feminist Contributions to Decolonizing the Curriculum” by Francesca Sobande and Chapter 12: “Other Knowledges, Other Interculturalities: Colonial Difference, Epistemological Bias, and Eurocentrism in Intercultural Dialogue” by Robert Aman, in Julie Cupples and Ramón Grosfoguel (eds.), *Unsettling Eurocentrism in the Westernized University* (2018)

Week 7 – October 15

Colloquium for discussing mid-term essays. Please circulate your mid-term essay layouts by October 13 at the latest so we all have time to read them and give you feedback. Your mid-term essay should be a 2500-word response/reflection piece to any two “theoretical” texts we have read so far in class.

Week 8 – October 22

Guest talk by Dr. Noa Ha, Director, Center for Integration Research at the TU Dresden

Mid-term essays due Wednesday October 24, 5pm.

Week 9 – October 29 (NO CLASS, FALL BREAK)

Part 3: Cultural Expressions of Diversity (Focus on critical diversity in literature, arts and performance, and music)

Week 10 – November 5

Literature: Excerpts from Billy-Ray Belcourt's *This World is a Wound* and Kay Ulanday Barrett's selected poems, and others

Week 11 – November 12

Arts & Performance: Artworks by Juliana Huxtable, Travis Alabanza and Alok Vaid-Menon, Paul Mpagi Sepuya and others

Week 12 – November 19

Music: Music by Angel Haze, Mykki Blanco, Janelle Monáe, and others

Part 4: Critical Diversity Studies Project & Exploration (Working on our Blog/Web presence together)

Week 13 – November 26

Brainstorming and planning our blog/web presence/project together, Overview of aims and methodologies, hands-on research session, bringing our ideas together and assigning of individual tasks (e.g. bibliography, resources/links, theory section, etc.)

Week 14 – December 3

Colloquium to discuss the final essay (a 2500 word reflection piece on your part of the project). Please circulate your summaries/outlines by December 1.

Week 15 – December 10

Concluding session & uploading our blog/web presence onto the internet. Please have your material ready (bring it to class on a USB-stick and/or bring your laptops).

Final essays due Wednesday, December 12, 2018.

Week 16 – December 17 (NO CLASS, COMPLETION WEEK)