

# **LT 355: Critical Diversity and Decolonial Methodologies in the (Liberal) Arts**

Module: Writer and World / Producing Literature

Seminar Leader: Kathy-Ann Tan

Course Times: Fridays, 14:00 – 17:15

Email: [k.tan@berlin.bard.edu](mailto:k.tan@berlin.bard.edu)

Office Hours: to be arranged via email per individual requirements on Zoom

Credits: 8 ECTS, 4 U.S. credits

## **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.

This course is being offered as an OSUN online course and will include students joining from other OSUN universities.

**Zoom Link: (Same every week)**

**<https://zoom.us/j/91207620477?pwd=K21jSXNCVVNOQU1tVzNBYUIQZ21jQT09>**

**Meeting ID: 912 0762 0477**

**Passcode: ueKsS8**

## **Requirements**

active participation online, mid-term essay, final essay

## **Assessment**

Your in-class participation grade will be based on your contributions to discussion in class.

### **Attendance**

This class takes place in digital format. Attendance at all classes is a crucial part of the education offered by Bard College Berlin. To account for minor circumstances, two absences from twice-per-week courses or the equivalent (e.g. one absence from a once-per-week course) should not affect the participation grade or require documentation.

Bard College Berlin does not offer credit for any course in which a student has missed more than 30% of classes, regardless of the reasons for the absences, whether excused or unexcused.

The full Bard College Berlin attendance policy can be found in the Student Handbook, Section 2.8. Updates on any policy changes necessitated by COVID-19 will be sent to the college community by email.

### **Writing Assignments**

Please consult the BCB Study and Exam regulations. The mid-term essay, due in week 8, should be 2,500 - 3,500 words long. The final essay, due at the end of the completion week, should also be 2,500 to 3,500 words long.

### **Policy on Late Submission of Papers**

Please note the following policy from the Student Handbook on the submission of essays: *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. Where an instructor agrees to accept a late essay, it 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.*

### **Grade Breakdown**

Class participation: 20%

Mid-term essay: 40%

Final essay: 40%

### **Essay Deadlines**

**Mid-term essay: Friday October 22, 2021 at 12 noon**

**Final essay: Friday December 17, 2021 at 12 noon**

**All essays are to be submitted electronically by students to me via email: ([k.tan@berlin.bard.edu](mailto:k.tan@berlin.bard.edu)).**

## **Course Material:**

Excerpts from:

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. *We Should All Be Feminists*  
Sara Ahmed. *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life*  
Julie Cupples and Ramón Grosfoguel (eds.), *Unsettling Eurocentrism in the Westernized University*  
Kimberlé Crenshaw. *On Intersectionality*  
Paulo Freire. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*  
bell hooks. *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*  
Chandra Mohanty. *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*  
Fred Moten and Stefano Harney. *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study*

**All material will be circulated digitally. There will be no course reader for this class.**

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

Week 1: September 3

Introduction: Scope of the course, learning outcomes, expectations, situating the course within the context of BCB, etc.

Week 2: September 10

Excerpt from Kimberlé Crenshaw's *On Intersectionality*  
*Topic for discussion: What is intersectional feminism? Why is this theory and practice important to the field of higher education, especially the Liberal Arts?*

\*\*\*For those in Berlin, please see a couple of performances at "AESTHETICS OF SOLIDARITY 2021"

@ KURINGA (Space for Theatre of the Oppressed) FORUM THEATRE FESTIVAL – Art | Activism | Action, 13-19 September 2021, Uferstudios, Berlin-Wedding

This will be helpful to our discussion of Paulo Freire. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* in *Week 11*.\*\*\*

Week 3: September 17

Excerpt from Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *We Should All Be Feminists*.  
*Topic for discussion: Why should we all be feminists?*

Week 4: September 24

Poetry Session: Excerpts from *Embodied: An Intersectional Feminist Comics Poetry Anthology*  
*Topic for discussion: How do the poems engage with the theory and practice of intersectional feminism?*

Week 5: October 1

Excerpt from Chandra Mohanty's. *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*

Topic for discussion: How does Mohanty's text theorize and engage in an anti-racist critique of power structures? What does it mean to decolonize theory and practice solidarity?

Week 6: October 8

Colloquium session: discussion of topics and outlines for your mid-term essays. short 15 min presentation of your essay outlines – you may use powerpoint, prezi, .pdf, etc. You will be asked to give feedback on your classmates' topics and outlines. Both your own presentation and your feedback will count toward your class participation grade.

Week 7: October 15

Excerpt from Sara Ahmed's *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life*

Topic for discussion: How is Sara Ahmed's work central to the practice of antiracist, critical diversity and decolonial pedagogies in higher education?

**Week 8: No Class (Fall Break)**

**\*\*\* Mid-term essay: Friday October 22, 2021 at 12 noon \*\*\***

Week 9: October 29

Music Session: Listen to this playlist by artists such as Princess Nokia, Janelle Monáe, Lizzo and others, and watch the accompanying music videos:

<https://bcgavel.com/2018/10/27/nasty-women-an-intersectional-feminist-playlist/>

Topic for discussion: How do these tracks and music videos engage with the theory and practice of intersectional feminism?

Week 10: November 5

Excerpt from bell hooks' *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*

Topic for discussion: what are the principal tenets of bell hooks' notion of engaged pedagogy? How can you see that applied to the Liberal Arts?

Week 11: November 12

Excerpt from Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*

Topic for discussion: Summarize the basic tenets of Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed. How does it differ from bell hooks' notion of engaged pedagogy?

Week 12: November 19

Invited Guest Lecture by visual and performance artist Nathalie Anguezomo Mba Bikoro on decolonizing the archive and radical practices of healing, transformation and restorative justice in art and education

Week 13: November 26

Excerpt from Fred Moten and Stefano Harney. *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study*

*Topic for discussion: How is Moten and Harney's notion of the undercommons relevant to the context of the Liberal Arts? How can we decolonize the curriculum and forms of study?*

Week 14: December 3

Colloquium session: discussion of topics and outlines for your final essays. short 15 min presentation of your essay outlines – you may use powerpoint, prezi, .pdf, etc. You will be asked to give feedback on your classmates' topics and outlines. Both your own presentation and your feedback will count toward your class participation grade.

Week 15: December 10

Excerpt of chapters from Julie Cupples and Ramón Grosfoguel (eds.), *Unsettling Eurocentrism in the Westernized University*

*Topics of discussion: How can one decolonize the (western/westernized) university?*

Week 16: Completion Week

**\*\* Final essay due Friday December 17, 2021 at 12 noon \*\***