

PT241– FEMINISM AND COMMUNITY

OSUN network course – BCB and CEU

Seminar Instructors:

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- at CEU: Francisca de Haan and Jasmina Lukic

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Office Hours: by appointment

Schedule: Mondays and Wednesdays, 2.00-3.30 pm CET

Course Description

This OSUN Network course on Feminisms and Community is offered for advanced BA students at Bard College Berlin and MA students at CEU, who will have in-person classes at their own campus plus a number of shared, online classes (or parts of classes), individual and shared student assignments, and a shared final in-person student conference in Berlin.

The course will explore a variety of feminisms across time and place through the concept of community. The specific themes and topics we will focus on are global feminisms, creating modernist feminist communities, socialist feminisms and memory, Black feminisms, creating LGBTQ communities since the 1950s, intersectional communities, online feminist communities, feminism and ecology, and feminism and decolonial thinking. We will discuss how different forms of feminisms have generated different forms of communities, for example through the creation of smaller and bigger networks, through group engagements with larger societal issues, but also through all kinds of writings (letters, journals, manifestos, zines), different forms of art and literary practices, as well as the setting up of archives or organizing political activism.

The questions we will address include the following: What kind of communities do different feminisms create? (in/through salons, reading communities, women's movements meetings, political parties, concepts of sisterhood, communes, autonomous groups, bookshops, associations, work guilds, unions, etc.). How do feminist theories across different geographical, national, and temporal contexts address the topic of community? What *is* a community? Is a community something which by definition involves similarity (for example, internet communities, or communities based on gender, race, and/or class), or can it include larger entities and more diversity?

And last but not least: is our class a community? How do we become a community, or even an active community, across the two participating groups of students at BARD and CEU?

Requirements

Academic Integrity

Bard College Berlin maintains the highest standards of academic integrity and expects students to adhere to these standards at all times. Instances in which students fail to meet the expected standards of academic integrity will be dealt with under the Code of Student Conduct, Section 14.3 (Academic Misconduct) in the Student Handbook.

Attendance

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. The full Bard College Berlin attendance policy can be found in the Student Handbook, Section 2.8.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR FALL 2021: Some students may need to begin the semester remotely due to travel restrictions caused by the pandemic. In addition, all students and instructors must refrain from in-person attendance if they are feeling ill. Depending on the circumstances, instructors may ask students to wear a mask at all times during class. Instructors will make efforts to offer alternatives to in-person attendance where needed, including remote participation or asynchronous options.

Assessment

Participation

Students should arrive to each class on time and prepared. Being prepared means

- (1) having completed the assigned reading
 - (2) whenever possible, bringing to class a non-electronic copy of the assigned reading, and
 - (3) being ready to initiate and to contribute to discussion
 - 4) contributing to the digital formats and shared tasks in collaboration with CEU students and faculty
- Engagement in class discussion should be regular as well as productive; quantity alone will not favorably affect the participation grade.

Assignments

The course involves **shared assignments across the two campuses**, including **postings** on digital platforms, **short presentations** on assigned texts, the preparation of a **conference presentation** for

the final conference in Berlin (format to be clarified later), the participation to the final conference, and a **short conference paper** in preparation for their conference presentation (about 2500 words - format to be clarified later).

Policy on Late Submission of Papers and Assignments

Essays that are up to 24 hours late can be downgraded up to 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. Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment. Grades and comments will be returned to students in a timely fashion. Students are also entitled to make an appointment to discuss essay assignments and feedback during instructors' office hours.

Late submission of the conference paper and failure to submit material for the conference will result in failing the course.

Students receive mid- and end-of-semester grades for their seminar work. Students are entitled to make an appointment with an instructor to discuss seminar participation, or may be asked to meet with the instructor at any stage in the semester regarding class progress.

Library and Book Purchase Policies

Most assigned texts will be available in digital format and/or as library books. Recommended readings will be made available at BCB on a dedicated section of the library reserve shelf.

Students are required to buy the following books:

Bernardine Evaristo, *Girl, Woman, Other* (London: Penguin, 2020), ISBN 978-0241984994

Virginia Woolf, *Three Guineas* (1939) - the library has a few copies available

Grade Breakdown

Participation (including regular posting on digital platform): 30%

Short paper: 25%

Presentations: 20%

Conference preparation and paper: 25%

Schedule

Week I - Feminist theory in history I

Monday 30 August and Wednesday 1 September

Readings for the week: Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) (excerpts)
Introductory meeting on Monday 30 August

Week 2 - Early feminism and communities: salons and the creation of (literary) communities

Monday 6 September

Readings: Fanny Lewald, *The Education of Fanny Lewald. An Autobiography* (1861-62) (excerpts);
Henriette Herz, *Memoirs of a Jewish Girlhood*; Rahel Varnhagen, *Letters*; Hannah Arendt, Rahel
Varnhagen, *The Life of a Jewess*.

Wednesday 8 September

Readings: Barbara Hahn, "A Dream of Living Together: Jewish Women in Berlin Around 1800" (2000);
Barbara Hahn, "The Myth of the Salon" (2005);

Week 3: Early feminism and communities: Theories of sociability and public sphere

Monday 13 September

Readings: Friedrich Schleiermacher, "Toward a Theory of Sociable Conduct" (1799); Georg Simmel,
"The Sociology of Sociability" (1949); Ferdinand Tönnies, *Community and Civil Society* (excerpts) (1887).

Wednesday 15 September

Readings: Jürgen Habermas, *The Public Sphere* (1964) (excerpts); Nowicka, M., and T. Heil, "On the
Analytical and Normative Dimensions of Conviviality and Cosmopolitanism" (2015).

Week 4 - Political and Transnational Issues in Feminism I

Monday 20 September

Readings for the week: essays, manifestos and pamphlets on suffragism from Europe, Central America,
North America; Asia and Australia.

Wednesday 22 September - Joined class with CEU

Lecture by Francisca de Haan on Global Feminisms

Week 5 - Political and Transnational Issues in Feminism II

Monday 27 September

Readings: Essays, manifestos and pamphlets on suffragism from Europe, Central America, North
America; Asia and Australia.

Wednesday 29 September - Joined class with CEU

Building a community of students: class activities and shared tasks TBA

Week 6 - Constructing Avant-garde and Modernist Feminist Communities

Monday 4 October

Readings: Mina Loy, "Manifesto of Psychodemocracy"; "Feminist Manifesto" (1914); Valentine de Saint Point, "Manifesto of the Futurist Woman"; Excerpts from the magazine *The New Freewoman*.

Wednesday 6 October - **Joined class with CEU**

Readings: Djuna Barnes, *The Ladies Almanack* (excerpts)
Lecture by Laura Scuriatti on Feminist Avant-Garde communities

Week 7 - Rethinking Avant-garde and Modernist Feminist Communities

Monday 11 October

Readings: Virginia Woolf, *Three Guineas* (1939)

Wednesday 13 October - **Joined class with CEU**

Guest lecture by Adelina Sanchez

Fall Break

Week 8 - Fall Break

Week 9 - Presentations and work in progress

Monday 25 October - Socialist Feminisms and Memory

Readings: Natalia Novikova and Kristen Ghodsee, "Alexandra Kollontai (1872–1952): Communism as the Only Way Towards Women's Liberation," in Francisca de Haan (ed.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Communist Women Activists around the World* (2022); Alexandra Kollontai, "The Social Basis for the Woman Question"

Wednesday 27 October - **Joined class with CEU**

Week 10 - Presentations and work in progress

Monday 1 November - Black Feminisms

Readings: Carole Boyce Davies, *Left of Karl Marx: The Political Life of Black Communist Claudia Jones* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008) (excerpts); Alice Walker, short story, tba.

Wednesday 3 November - **Joined class with CEU**

Week 11 - Intersectional communities: Bernardine Evaristo's *Girl, Woman, Other* I

Monday 8 November and Wednesday 10 November

Readings for the week: Bernardine Evaristo's *Girl, Woman, Other* in dialogue with texts by bell hooks and Toni Morrison

Week 12 - Intersectional communities: Bernardine Evaristo's *Girl, Woman, Other* II

Monday 15 November and Wednesday 17 November

Readings for the week: Bernardine Evaristo's *Girl, Woman, Other* in dialogue with texts by Kimberlé Crenshaw and Alice Walker

Week 13 - Contemporary positions: building communities

Monday 22 November

Film: Audre Lorde, *The Berlin Years*

Wednesday 24 November - Communities and the Common

Readings: Silvia Federici, *Feminism and the Politics of the Common* (excerpts)

DRAFT OF CONFERENCE PAPER DUE: FRIDAY 26 NOVEMBER 23:59 hrs

Week 14 - Transnational questions: decolonial feminism, ecology

Monday 29 November

Readings: texts and manifestos by Vandana Shiva, Chandra Mohanty.

Wednesday 1 December

Readings: Catherine Walsh, "On Decoloniality"; Breny Mendoza, "Coloniality of Gender and Power".

Week 15 - FINAL CONFERENCE

Monday 6 December

Wednesday 8 December

Essay Deadlines

The course includes mostly regular work in progress, such as in-class presentations, postings on digital platforms and preparation for the final conference. Students are required to regularly post comments and work following the assigned schedule which will be defined in the first weeks of the course.

Deadline for the draft of the conference paper: Friday 26 November, 23:59 hrs.