

SE 224- Social Justice: The Transnational Feminist Perspective

Lecturer: Dr. Cassandra Ellerbe

Course Times: Wednesdays 14:00h-17:15h – (online)

Email: c.ellerbe@berlin.bard.edu

Office Hours: Wednesdays Online – 13:00h-14:00h

Course Description:

This course introduces students to the contributions of transnational feminist practices to social justice movements and politicized organizing across the globe. We will address the issues of gender and socio-economic inequality, lgbtiq rights, environmental racism, neo-colonialism and the geopolitics of forced migration.

Utilizing an interdisciplinary theoretical approach (social justice theory from an intersectional perspective, human/social geography, critical whiteness studies, transnational feminism and queer theories), we will examine various historical as well as current case studies that are linked to the call for social justice.

This course aims not only to discuss the purpose and necessity for a theoretical understanding of social justice and political activism, but also to assist students in the development of critical thinking and the ability to recognize the global connection of various social problems.

The course entails lectures, in class discussions and presentations, off-campus excursions, 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 exactly and why is necessary?
2. How does it relate to feminism?
3. What is transnational feminism?
4. What can I as an individual contribute to the practice of transnational feminism and social justice within my immediate sphere?
5. How does transnational feminism manifest in various spaces across the globe?
6. 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.

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

1. Eltahawy, Mona. *Headscarves and Hymens. Why the Middle East Needs a Sexual Revolution*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2015
2. Grewal, Inderpal & Kaplan, Caren. *Scattered Hegemonies: Postmodernity and Transnational Feminist Practices*. Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press, 1994
3. Harper, Breeze. *Sistah Vegan. Black Female Vegans Speak Out on Food Identity, Health and Society*. Brooklyn, N.Y.: Lantern Books, 2010.
4. hooks, bell. *Feminist Theory. From Margin to Center*. Cambridge: South End Press (2nd edition), 2000.
5. Shiva, Vandana. *Who Really Feeds the World?* London: ZED Books, 2015.
6. Wekker, Gloria. *White Innocence-Paradoxes of Colonialism and Race*: Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2016.
7. Taylor, Sonya Renee. *The Body is Not an Apology: The Power of Radical Self-Love*, Oakland, 2018.

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 short oral presentations on readings and or case studies within the course, and writing short responses to online guest lectures. Due to the current Covid-19 pandemic, off-campus visits will not take place. 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 8 (24 March 2021).

The final 1500- word paper for the course is due 26 May 2021 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 three or more of the readings and at least three of the theoretical approaches to transnational feminism/feminism 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	30%
Short presentations	20%
Reading & homework assignments	10%
Final paper & group action plan	40%

Class Schedule: Tentative

Week 1

Wed. / 3 February

14:00-17:15

Introduction: Attendance will be taken.

Explanation and discussion of the goals of the course, the syllabus, required readings, grading, and policies.

Week 2 –

Wed. 10 February

14:00 -17:11

1. Lecture & discussion

Transnational Feminism & Social Justice – What’s up with these two issues? And whose theories count!

Readings: Text available at Bard College library

Introduction: “*Scattered Hegemonies and Postmodernity and Transnational Feminist Practices*”. Grewal & Kaplan
Transnational Feminist Practices and Questions of Postmodernity – Grewal, Inderpal & Kaplan, Caren – pp-1-33

Chapter Seven: The Politics of Location as Transnational Feminist Practice - Kaplan, Caren – pp. 137-152

Chapter Eleven: Autobiographic Subjects and Diasporic Locations – Grewal, Inderpal – pp. 211-254

Pdf excerpts in class folder

Students should be prepared to explain and comment on the chapters!

Film-Clip: "The Legacy of Scattered Hegemonies" (2014) : <https://bcrw.barnard.edu/videos/the-legacy-of-scattered-hegemonies/> - Please view film before class!

Week 3

Wed. 17 February
14:00-17:15

bell hooks: *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*
Chapters: 1- 4 – Pdf excerpts in class folder

Clip: bell hooks & Laverne Cox discuss: "What is Feminism?"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9oMmZIJjgY&t=809s>

Clip: bell hooks & guests: "How Do We Define Feminist Liberation?"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k9l9zqv2wB4>

Week 4

Wed. 24 February
14:00-17:15

Social Justice, Feminist Perspectives and the Environment

Reading: Text- *Who Really Feeds the World?* - Dr. Vandana Shiva –Read: Introduction, and chapters 1, 6, 8 & 9
Film clip: 1 TED x Marsala - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ER5ZZk5atIE> - Please view before class

2. Interview with Chris Hedges- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1282XZ_8ofw. We will view this clip together.

Week 5

Wed. 3 March
14:00– 17:15

The Green Belt Movement – East Africa

1. Reading: "Speaking Truth to Power:" <https://www.greenbeltmovement.org/wangari-maathai/key-speeches-and-articles/speak-truth-to-power>
2. Reading: Documented lecture by Wangare Maathai - <https://www.greenbeltmovement.org/wangari-maathai/key-speeches-and-articles/inaugural-world-food-law-distinguished-lecture>
3. Film & discussion: "Taking Root The Vision of Wangare Maathai:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wjs0F8FdSCw>

Students will be required to comment on and discuss the readings and film!

Week 6

Wed. 10 March

14:00- 17:15

Lecture & discussion

The Sistah Vegan Project

Reading: *Sistah Vegan Project* – Harper, A. Breeze - Chapters 1- 4

Film clips: Please view prior to class.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ndJ314WTEU>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ndJ314WTEU&t=176s>

Please also view:

Dr. Ruby Hamad: Film: "Feminism, Veganism & Patriarchy' SVF"-

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hFbVHc7SQcE>

Week 7

Wed. /17 March

14:00- 15:30

Race, Sexuality & (Post) Coloniality in the Netherlands.

Reading: White Innocence Paradoxes of Colonialism and Race – Wekker, Gloria – Chapter no. 2 - *The House That Race Built* pp. 50-80

Chapter no. 4 - *Of Homo Nostalgia and (Post) Coloniality, Or Where did All the Critical White Gay Men Go?* pp. 108-138.

Text available in the Bard College library

Students will have to prepare statements and present these during the session. Topics to be discussed from the reading will be assigned prior to 17 March.

Week 8

Wed. 24 March

14:00-17:15

Transnational Feminism & Intersectionality

Recorded lecture by Dr. Emilia Roig – Director of the Center for Intersectional Justice (CIJ) in Berlin

Reading: *Reach Everyone on the Planet*– Pdf available in class folder. Each student must read one of the chapters and discuss it with the class.

Social Justice SOS – Pdf available in class folder – Please read the following sections: No. 2/Sumi Cho, no.5/Heidi Hartmann, no. 9 Ezra Young, no. 12 /Alicia Garza, no. 14/Dallas Goldtooth, no. 15/ Eve Ensler

Film clip: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ROwquxC_Gxc

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9dcj5tegl7l>

Week 9 –

Wed. 31 March- Semester break!! - No session

Week 10

Wed. 7 April
14:00- 17:15

“Audre Lorde- Transnational Feminist Legacies”.

Reading: Text: *I am Your Sister*” edited by Byrd et. al. Oxford Press, 2009, - [Excerpts to be found in class folder](#)

Reading: Text: Ellerbe-Dueck, Cassandra & Wekker, Gloria: Naming Ourselves as Black Women in Europe in *Audre Lorde’s Transnational Legacies* Bolacki, Stella & Broeck, Sabine (2015) [Excerpts to be found in class folder](#)

Guest lecture & discussion with Dr. Marion Kraft

Week 11

Wed. 14 April
14:00- 17:15

Zora Neale Hurston – Anthropology and Womanist Theory.

Reading: Text: Zora Neale Hurston: A Woman Half in Shadow – Washington, Mary Helen in *I Love Myself When I am Laughing ... And Then Again When I am Looking Mean and Impressive* – A Zora Neale Hurston Reader, 1979.

[Excerpts to be found in class folder](#)

Reading: Text: Must I be a Womanist “– Coleman, Monica A. - [Pdf in class folder.](#)

Documentaries on Zora Neale Hurston:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7k1ozpwiQIM>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=42F6ZGZ2o4>

