

SE 224- Social Justice: The Transnational Feminist Perspective

Lecturer: Dr. Cassandra Ellerbe

Course Times: Mondays 14:00h-17:15h

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Office Hours: tba

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: Students can purchase these texts. One copy of each book will be 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.

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 the case studies 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 8 (25 March 2020).**

The final **1500-word** paper for the course is due **15 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 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. / 29 January

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 –

Mon. 5 February

14:00 -17:15

1. Lecture & discussion

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

Readings:

Introduction: “*Scattered Hegemonies and Postmodernity and Transnational Feminist Practices*”. Grewal & Kaplan

Chapter One: Transnational Feminist Practices and Questions of Postmodernity – Grewal, Inderpal & Kaplan, Caren

Chapter Six: Traddutora, Traditora: A Paradigmatic Figure of Chicana Feminism - Alarcón, Norma

Chapter Seven: The Politics of Location as Transnational Feminist Practice - Kaplan, Caren

Text available at Bard College library

Film-Clip: “The Legacy of Scattered Hegemonies” (2014) – Film will be shown in class

Week 3

Wed. 12 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=9oMmZIJjY&t=809s>

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

Week 4

Wed. 19 February
14:00-17:15

Social Justice, Feminism 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>

2. Interview with Chris Hedges- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1282XZ_8ofw

Week 5 - Assignment due

Mon. / 26 February
14:00– 17:15

The Green Belt Movement – East Africa

Reading: “Speaking Truth to Power:” <https://www.greenbeltmovement.org/wangari-maathai/key-speeches-and-articles/speak-truth-to-power>

Reading: Documented lecture by Wangare Maathai - <https://www.greenbeltmovement.org/wangari-maathai/key-speeches-and-articles/inaugural-world-food-law-distinguished-lecture>

Film & discussion: “Taking Root The Vision of Wangare Maathai:”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wjs0F8FdSCw>

Week 6

Wed. / 4 March
14:00- 17:15

The Sistah Vegan Project

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

Film clips: We will view together in class

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

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

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

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

Week 7

14:00- 15:30

Wed. /11 March

Student presentations and discussion: Group 1

Students will be required to make short max. 10 min. individual presentations/responses based on readings and lecture topics:

15:45 17:15 – Group 2

Week 8

Wed./18

14:00-17:15

Transnational Feminism & Intersectionality

Lecture & discussion

Text: *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>

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

Week 8 – Assignment due !

Mon. /25 March

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: *Audre Lorde’s Transnational Legacies* , Bolacki, Stella & Broeck, Sabine 2015- [Excerpts to be found in class folder](#)

We will watch the film- “A Litany for Survival” Directed by: Ada Gay Griffin & Michelle Parkerson- 1996

Guest lecture by & discussion with Dr. Marion Kraft

Week 9 –

Wed. 1 April – Feminist Activism Can Cost You Your Life!

14:00- 17:15

Students will be requested to research the following feminist activists from the Global South and be able to discuss their trajectories in class:

1. Elisa Badayos, Philippines
2. Samira Khalil, Syria
3. Marielle Franco, Brazil
4. Olivia Arévalo Lomas, Peru
5. Razan Al-Najar, Palestine
6. Barin Kobane, Kurdistan
7. Anna Campbell, United Kingdom

Striking Back Against the Patriarchy!

“We make House Calls”: Sampat Pal Devi & “The Gulabi Gang “: <https://gulabigang.in/index.php>

Film clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EXwH-kjSUSs>

Week 10 –

Wed. 8 April - Semester break!! - No session

Week 11

Wed. 15 April

14.00– 17:15

Feminist Activists from the Arab World:

Text: “Headscarves and Hymens: Why the Middle East Needs a Sexual Revolution” – Eltahawy, Mona. Please read the following chapters: **Black Veil, White Flag, One Hand Against Women, The God of Virginity & Speak for Yourself.** – **Excerpts in class folder**

Article: “Why Do They Hate Us? The real war on women in the Middle East”- Eltahawy, Mona – **Pdf in class folder.**

“Imperial Feminism, Islamophobia and the Egyptian Revolution.” Naber, Nadine. 2011. Jadaliyya. Online at: www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/616/imperial-feminism-islamophobia-and-the-egyptian-revolution

Guest lecture by Hanna Khalef - Freie Universität Berlin

Week 12

Wed. 22 April

14.00– 17:15

Queer Perspectives

Text: **Dyketactics!** Bacchetta , Paola– UC Berkeley– **class folder**

Text: **Yearning to Be What We Might Have Been: Queering Black Male Feminism** by Pritchard, Eric Darnell- **Text in class folder**

Climate Justice Matters for People of Colour:

16:00- 17:15

Lecture and presentation by two activists from *BPoC Environmental and Climate Justice Collective Berlin*. To be confirmed

Week 13 – Group projects

14:00-17:15

Wed. 29 April

Group projects/presentations

Week 14

Final Session

14:00-17:15

Wed. 6 May

Group projects/presentations

Wed. 15 May

Final paper due!

