

OSUN Course – Social Justice & Transnational Feminism

Seminar Leaders: Dr. Cassandra Ellerbe & Dr. Aysuda Kölemen

Email: c.ellerbe@berlin.bard.edu - a.kolemen@berlin.bard.edu

Office Hours: By appointment via Zoom

Mondays: 10:45h-13:45h

Course Description

This course acknowledges the importance of transnational feminism as a toolkit for social-justice activism. Transnationalism has been a key element of socialist and intersectional feminist movements from their very inception. In the early twentieth century, Clara Zetkin and Alexandra Kollontai worked closely together to advocate for the rights of women workers everywhere. African-American Caribbean poet, teacher, and activist Audre Lorde connected with her peers across the world – including Black women in Germany – to jointly develop strategies for survival and battle sexual, racial, and class oppression. More recently, scholars and activists Cinzia Arruzza, Tithi Bhattacharya, and Nancy Fraser, in their *Feminism for 99%*, have built on the accomplishments of the International Women's Strike (2017) and mobilized for feminist solidarity across borders. Students will critically evaluate the subject of feminist inquiry and analyze case studies with focus on social justice. Students will also engage with the histories and uses of transnational feminism, identify some of the challenges for transnational feminism and develop tactics to overcome them. Designed jointly by scholars and educators from across the Open Society University Network (AlQuds Bard College in Palestine, American University of Central Asia in Kyrgyzstan, Bard College in the United States, Bard College Berlin in Germany, Central European University in Austria, SOAS, University of London in the United Kingdom, University of the Witwatersrand in South Africa) and scholars affiliated with Off-University, the course is part of the Transnational Feminism, Solidarity, and Social Justice project. Through a series of shared readings and assignments, students will have a unique opportunity to engage with their peers and professors from OSUN campuses, build alliances locally and internationally, and experiment with forms of expression.

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 embodied experiences.

The course entails lectures, in class discussions and presentations, and guest lectures by local experts & scholars.

In addition, there are several primary questions that will accompany this course:

1. What is social justice and why is it necessary?
2. How does social justice relate to feminism?
3. What exactly 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?

Required Course Texts: These texts are available in the class folder

Additional required reading materials will be handed out as photocopies and/or will be available in the class folder.

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.

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 (**Mondays – 10:45h- 13:45h CET**) - 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/>

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.

Assessment

Writing Assignments

This course has **written assignments, (individual and group)** consisting of two pages or max. 1000 words. **Writing short responses to online guest lectures will also be required. 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 (e.g., readings,) completed for each class. **Please make every effort to contact and communicate with us if you are facing a challenging situation that hinders your ability to complete an assignment on time.**

There will be a mid-term paper (max. 1500 - word) due **13 March 2023** and a final paper also consisting of (max. 1500 - word) due **15 May 2023**. The papers should be an analysis of a transnational feminism related case study from the respective countries of the class participants or based upon the readings. The paper should reference at least three or more of the readings and at least three of the theoretical approaches to transnational feminism and social justice 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 to 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/>

Cell phones, Laptops & iPads: Cell phones 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!!](#)

Assignments

Writing Assignments

This course consists of a joint network assignment and a 1000-word reflection paper. Student participation is a pertinent element of the course and will be graded!

Policy on Late Submission of Papers

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 a professor agrees to accept a late assignment, it should be submitted by the new deadline agreed upon by both parties. 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.

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.

Grade Breakdown

Class participation and attendance	30%
Written assignments/reflection paper	30%
Mid-term paper	20%
Final paper	20%

Class Schedule/tentative

Week 1 - Cassandra

Mon. / 30 January 2023

10:45-13:45

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

Feminist Foundations & Social Justice

Introduction: Lecture & discussion

Readings:

- “*Scattered Hegemonies and Postmodernity and Transnational Feminist Practices*” (pp.1-33) Grewal & Kaplan (1994)
- “*Transnational Feminist Theory and Practice: An Introduction*”: Carolyn Zerbe Enns, Lillian Comas Díaz & Thema Bryant-Davis (2021) *Transnational Feminist Theory and Practice: An Introduction*, Women & Therapy, 44:1-2, 11-26,
- “*Five Faces of Oppression*”: Young, Iris Marion (2004).

Week 2 – Cassandra

Mon. 6 February

10:45-13:45

Feminist Icons

1. Lecture & discussion: Topic: Angela Davis

Readings:

- *On Transnational Feminist Solidarity: The Case of Angela Davis in Egypt*: Sara Salem
- *Facing Our Common Foe: Women and the Struggle Against Racism*: Angela Davis, *Women Culture and Politics*, p.16-34 (& p.155-167)

Film clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WGJ5LHZkYSg>

Week 3 - Cassandra absent / Aysuda will teach the class

Mon. 13 February

10:45-13:45

Transnational Misogyny: Networked Misogyny in the Age of Social Media

Elise Thomas, Kata Balint (2022) *Algorithms as a Weapon against Women*, ISD Global.
<https://www.isdglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Algorithms-as-a-weapon-against-women-ISD-RESET.pdf>

Banet-Weiser, Sarah, and Kate M. Miltner. "# MasculinitySoFragile: Culture, structure, and networked misogyny." *Feminist Media Studies* 16.1 (2016): 171-174.

Menzie, Lauren. "Stacys, Beckys, and Chads: the construction of femininity and hegemonic masculinity within incel rhetoric." *Psychology & Sexuality* 13.1 (2022): 69-85.

AI can be sexist and racist — it's time to make it fair: <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-018-05707-8>

***Salem lecture on Tuesday. Attendance is optional, but you will receive bonus participation points for attending.**

Week 4 - Cassandra

Mon. 20 February

10:45-13:45

Social Justice, Feminism and the Environment

Readings:

- 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 - Cassandra

Writing Assignment Due! - Feminist Protests

Mon. / 27 February

10:45-13:45

The Body & Radical Self-love

Readings:

- Taylor, Sonya Renee – *The Body is Not an Apology: The Power of Radical Self-Love* (2018).

Chapter 1- pages 1-22 – Please read and answer the “Unapologetic Inquiries” (#3, #4, #5) included in the chapter and be prepared to discuss these in class.

A max. 700 word writing assignment that engages the “Radical Reflections”.

Week 6 - Cassandra

Wed. / 4 March

10:45-13:45

Transnational Collaborations

Readings:

- Lorde, Audre: *Notes from a Trip to Russia*
- Ellerbe, Cassandra & Wekker, Gloria (2015): “Naming Ourselves as Black Women in Europe” in Stella Bolaki & Sabine Broeck (eds.) *Audre Lorde’s Transnational Legacies*, p.55-73.

Film: *Audre Lorde the Berlin Years*: Dagmar Schulz

Week 7 – Cassandra

Mid-term paper due!!!

10:45 - 13:45

Mon. / 13 March

Public Space(s)

Interview assignment:

Readings: Excerpts from Phadke et. al *Why Loiter*

Week 8 - Aysuda

10:45 - 12:15

Mon. 20 March

Whose Body Is Worthy of Our Consideration? The Color, Gender and Class of Sickness, Pain, and Wellness

Readings:

From heart disease to IUDs: How doctors dismiss women's pain, Washington Post.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/wellness/interactive/2022/women-pain-gender-bias-doctors/>

Shahvisi, Arianne. "Medicine is Patriarchal, but alternative medicine is not the answer." *Journal of bioethical inquiry* 16.1 (2019): 99-112.

Werner, Anne, and Kirsti Malterud. "It is hard work behaving as a credible patient: encounters between women with chronic pain and their doctors." *Social science & medicine* 57.8 (2003): 1409-1419.

Excerpts from Roisin, Fariha. *Who Is Wellness For?: An Examination of Wellness Culture and Who It Leaves Behind*. HarperCollins, 2022.

Week 9 - Aysuda

10:45 - 13:45

Mon. 27 March

Protests in Iran

Keynote Speaker: Activist and scholar - Firoozeh Farvardin

Reading: TBA

Week 10 - Aysuda

10:45-13:45

Mon. 17 April

Gendered Bodies in Public Space

Connecting with AUCA campus to discuss interviews

Reading:

<https://behavioralscientist.org/how-better-urban-planning-can-improve-gender-equality/>

Week 11 - Aysuda

10:45-13:45

Mon. April 24

Who cares? Caring bodies as nobodies

Readings:

The Modern-Day Slaves of the Arab Gulf; What's really going on with domestic workers in Kuwait?

<https://www.ecdhr.org/?p=1578>

Moors, Annelies, et al. "Migrant domestic workers: A new public presence in the Middle East?" *Publics, politics and participation: Locating the public sphere in the Middle East and North Africa* (2009): 151-175.

Raijman, Rebeca, Silvina Schammah-Gesser, and Adriana Kemp. "International migration, domestic work, and care work: Undocumented Latina migrants in Israel." *Gender & Society* 17.5 (2003): 727-749.

Week 12 - Aysuda

10:45-13:45

Mon. May 8

Sexual pleasure and romantic aspirations: How romance novels, TV shows, and Instagram reflect and shape our approach to romantic relationships across the globe.

Readings:

We will decide on the readings, videos and visuals to be assigned together in class.