

# PT160: Feminism Is for Everybody

Seminar Leader: Agata Lisiak

Course Times: Mondays and Wednesdays 9-10.30 am

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Office hours: Monday 10.45-12; Wednesday 12.30-1:30

## Course Description

Named after bell hooks' 2000 essay collection, this course offers an introduction to feminism as a political movement. In the course of the semester, students will discuss and apply various feminist theories and methodologies to explore a range of historical and contemporary cultural phenomena and engage critically with selected works of literature, film, and visual art. Bringing together feminist contributions from sociology, cultural studies, political science, art history, activism, and more, the course will also serve as an introduction to the work of such influential thinkers as Sara Ahmed, Angela Davis, Nawal El Saadawi, Silvia Federici, Alexandra Kollontai, Audre Lorde, Angela McRobbie, Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Laura Mulvey, Rebecca Solnit, and Clara Zetkin, among many others. Aside from semiweekly seminar-style discussions, the course will feature a one-day workshop with invited guests and an optional visit to a book launch.

## Requirements

### Attendance

Your preparation, attendance, and participation are crucial. Please complete the required readings, be on time for each class, and contribute meaningfully to the discussions. A class participation mark will be awarded on the basis of your preparation for and engagement in class discussions, as well as your homework. Please consult the [Student Handbook](#) for BCB's policy on absences and bear in mind that tardiness and missing more than two classes will affect your participation grade. This mark makes up 30% of the final grade.

### Readings

**A course reader is required for this class.** I recommend getting your own copies of Sara Ahmed's [Living a Feminist Life](#), as well as [Feminism for the 99%: A Manifesto](#) by Cinzia Arruzza, Tithi Bhattacharya, and Nancy Fraser.

As I am sure you have read or would like to (re)read feminist texts that are *not* included in the reader, early in the semester I will ask all class participants to submit their suggestions for additions to the syllabus. Once a list of suggested readings is complete, I will share it with everyone enrolled in the class, and each seminar participant will vote for the texts they would like to read most. Up to four texts with the highest number of votes will then be discussed in the first week of December 2019.

### Assignments

Students are required to complete the following assignments for this course:

- 1) A 5-minute **biographical presentation** on one of the thinkers whose work we will be discussing. Early in the semester, students will draw a name from a list of authors included in the syllabus and prepare a concise and informative presentation that will help contextualize our discussions of said thinker's work. The deadlines will be synced with the syllabus and assigned individually. I will do the first few presentations myself so that all class participants get a chance to familiarize themselves with the format.
- 2) After discussing several **feminist manifestos** in class, students will work in small groups to create

their own. The manifesto format is open (digital, zine, video, standard written piece, etc.) What matters most for this assignment is your demonstration of critical engagement with the texts we have covered in this class. The manifesto drafts will be workshopped in class on 14 October and the final versions will be presented in class on 21 October.

3) Expect a short **pop quiz** some time after the fall break. The quiz will offer you an opportunity to present your take on the assigned texts in writing rather than through discussions (10-15 min).

4) The final assignment for this class will be a **3000-word academic essay** written in response to one of three prompts inspired by the readings.

We will discuss the requirements for each of these assignments in detail in class.

### Communication

Please get in touch with me when you have any questions for which you cannot find the answers in the syllabus or if there is anything else related to the class that you would like to discuss. You can contact me after class or make an appointment via email.

### Policy on Plagiarism and Late Submission of Papers

As specified in the *Student Handbook*, “Bard College Berlin students are expected to adhere to the highest standards of integrity and intellectual engagement in their academic work. Attendance and thorough preparation for class, as well as commitment to the pursuit of excellence in written work, are fundamental requirements of Bard College Berlin’s programs.” Acts of academic misconduct (plagiarism, self-plagiarism, collusion, cheating) will be reported and result in a disciplinary process (see the Student Handbook for details). 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. If we agree to accept a late essay, it must be submitted within four weeks of the deadline and cannot receive a grade higher than a C. Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment.

### **Grade Breakdown and Deadlines**

Class participation (includes homework): 30%  
Assignment 1 (presentation): 10% // deadline TBA  
Assignment 2 (manifesto): 25% // 20 October 2019  
Assignment 3 (pop quiz): 5% // date TBA  
Assignment 4 (final paper): 30% // 18 December

### **Schedule\***

Class 1 // 2 September 2019

**“Feminists are made, not born”** (bell hooks)

- Ahmed, Sara. Feminism is sensational. *Living a Feminist Life*. Durham: Duke UP, 2017.
- hooks, bell. Consciousness-Raising. *Feminist Education for Critical Consciousness. Feminism Is For Everybody*. Cambridge: South End Press, 2000. 7-12, 19-24.

Class 2 // 4 September 2019

**“It is for men to talk, especially me. I am the master”** (Homer)

- Homer. *The Odyssey*. Trans. Emily Wilson. Excerpts.
- Carson, Anne. The Gender of Sound. *Glass, Irony and God*. New York: New Directions, 1992.

Class 3 // 9 September 2019

**“Your silence will not protect you”** (Audre Lorde)

- Lorde, Audre. The Transformation of Voice into Language and Action. *Sister Outsider*. Berkeley: Crossing Press, 2007. 40-44.

- Solnit, Rebecca. A Short History of Silence (Parts I & II). *The Mother of All Questions*. Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2017. 17-38.

Class 4 // 11 September 2019

**“The language of the witch-hunt ‘produced’ the Woman as a different species”** (Silvia Federici)

- El Saadawi, Nawal. The Thirteenth Rib of Adam. *The Hidden Face of Eve*. London: Zed Books, 2007. 187-208.
- Federici, Silvia. *Caliban and the Witch*. Brooklyn: Autonomedia, 2004. 179-192.

\* NO CLASSES on 16 & 18 September – makeup on 19 October (Saturday) \*

Class 5 // 23 September 2019

**“There is strength in unity”** (Alexandra Kollontai)

- Kollontai, Alexandra. “On the History of the Movement of Women Workers in Russia” (1919) and “Working Woman and Mother” (1916).
- Zetkin, Clara. *Selected Writings*. Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2015. Excerpts.
- hooks, bell. Global Feminism. *Feminism Is For Everybody*. Cambridge: South End Press, 2000. 44-47.

Class 6 // 25 September 2019

**“Some problems we share as women, some we do not”** (Audre Lorde)

- Crenshaw, Kimberle. Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics. *The University of Chicago Legal Forum* 140 (1989): 139-167.
- Lorde, Audre. Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference. *Sister Outsider*. Berkeley: Crossing Press, 2007. 114-123.

Class 7 // 30 September 2019

**“More smiles? More money”** (Silvia Federici)

- Loy, Mina. *Feminist Manifesto*. 1914.
- Federici, Silvia. *Wages Against Housework*. 1975.
- Combahee River Collective. *A Black Feminist Statement*. 1977.

Class 8 // 2 October 2019

**“We must stay unhappy with this world”** (Sara Ahmed)

- Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi. We Should All Be Feminists. 2013. \*\*\*Watch online\*\*\*  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=192&v=hg3umXU\\_qWc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=192&v=hg3umXU_qWc).
- Ahmed, Sara. *Killjoy Manifesto*. *Living a Feminist Life*. Durham: Duke UP, 2017.
- Koyama, Emi. *The Transfeminist Manifesto*. 2001.

Class 9 // 7 October 2019

**“This is how you smile to someone you don’t like very much”** (Jamaica Kincaid)

- Kincaid, Jamaica. *Girl*. *The Story and Its Writer: An Introduction to Short Fiction*. Ed. Ann Charters. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2003. 320-321.
- Minhas, Priya. *How Not To Be? Good Immigrant USA*. London: Dialogue Books, 2019. 52-66.
- Riot Grrrl Manifesto. 1991.

Class 10 // 9 October 2019

**“The global girl comes forward”** (Angela McRobbie)

- McRobbie, Angela. Top Girls? Young Women And The New Sexual Contract. *The Aftermath of Feminism: Gender, Culture and Social Change*. London: Sage, 2009. 54-93.

Class 11 // 14 October 2019

Feminist manifesto workshop.

Class 12 // 16 October 2019

**“Who feels entitled—and is rewarded—for taking up social space in public?”** (Sarah Banet-Weiser)

- Banet-Weiser, Sarah. *Empowered: Popular Feminism and Popular Misogyny*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2018. 1-40.

(Note: Sarah Banet-Weiser will be reading from *Empowered* at ProQM on 18 October 2019, 8:30 pm)

\*\*\* SPECIAL EVENT (Classes 13 & 14) // 19 October 2019 (Saturday) \*\*\*  
**New Feminisms, New Questions** – a workshop with invited guests  
Speakers and readings TBA

Class 15 // 21 October 2019

Feminist manifesto presentations and discussion.

Class 16 // 23 October 2019

**“Borderless and brazen”** (May Ayim)

- Kilomba, Grada. *Plantation Memories: Episodes of Everyday Racism*. Unrast, 2008. Excerpts.
- Ayim, May. *blues in schwarz weiss*. 1996. Selected poems.
- Hammad, Suheir. Not Your Erotic, Not Your Exotic. 2002. \*\*\*Watch online\*\*\*  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xarc5PFknfw>.

### FALL BREAK

Class 17 // 4 November 2019

**“A lifetime of oppressive moments”** (Nimmi Gowrinathan)

- Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses. *boundary 2*, 12.3 (1984): 333-358.
- Gowrinathan, Nimmi. [On the Myth of Stockholm Syndrome and Women Guerrilla Fighters](#). *LitHub* 2018.

Class 18 // 6 November 2019

**“We embrace our pluralities”** (Naveen Minai and Sara Shroff)

- Marinucci, Mimi. *Feminism is Queer: The Intimate Connection Between Queer and Feminist Theory*. London: Zed Books, 2016. 89-110.
- Minai, Naveen and Sara Shroff. Yaariyan, Baithak, Gupshup: Queer Feminist Formations and the Global South. *Kohl: a Journal for Body and Gender Research* 5.1 (2019): 31-44.

Class 19 // 11 November 2019

**“Maybe I am dead and this is hell”** (Samantha Irby)

- Grosz, Elizabeth. *Volatile Bodies: Toward A Corporeal Feminism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994. 3-24.
- Irby, Samantha. [The Body That Bleeds](#). *Unruly Bodies*. 2019.
- Behringer, Allison. Bodies Podcast. <https://www.bodiespodcast.com> \*\*\* online \*\*\*

Class 20 // 13 November 2019

**“Girls are coming out of the woods”** (Tishani Doshi)

- Smith, Molly and Juno Mac. *Revolting Prostitutes: The Fight for Sex Workers’ Rights*. London: Verso, 2018. 22-39.
- Adetiba, Elizabeth. Tarana Burke Says #MeToo Should Center Marginalized Communities. *The Nation* 17 November 2017.
- Doshi, Tishani. Girls Are Coming Out Of The Woods. 2017.

Class 21 // 18 November 2019

**“Men look at women”** (John Berger)

- Nochlin, Linda. *Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?* 1971.
- Berger, John. *Ways of Seeing*. London: Penguin, 1972. Excerpts.

Class 22 // 20 November 2019

**“So fuck their canon”** (Rebecca Harrison)

- Mulvey, Laura. “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema.” *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*. Eds. Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen. New York: Oxford UP, 1999: 833-44.
- Harrison, Rebecca. *Fuck the Canon (Or, How Do You Solve a Problem Like von Trier?): Teaching, Screening and Writing About Cinema in the Age of #metoo. MAI: Feminism and Visual Culture* 2018.

Class 23 // 25 November 2019

**“Like diamonds in the sky”** (Rihanna)

- Sciamma, Céline, dir. *Girlhood*. 2014.

Class 24 // 27 November 2019

Discussion.

Class 25 // 2 December 2019

Readings suggested by students.

Class 26 // 4 December 2019

Readings suggested by students.

Class 27 // 9 December 2019

**“Freedom is a constant struggle”** (Angela Davis)

- Davis, Angela. *Freedom Is A Constant Struggle*. Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2016. Excerpts.
- Emejulu, Akwugo. On the problems and possibilities of feminist solidarity: The Women’s March one year on. *IPPR Progressive Review* 24.4 (2018): 268-273.
- Majewska, Ewa, Elżbieta Korolczuk, Julia Kubisa, Katarzyna Rakowska. From the Women’s Strike to the Feminist International: In Struggle We Unite – Voices from Poland, *Viewpoint* 18 June 2019,

Class 28 // 11 December 2019

Wrap-up discussion.

\* Please note that the schedule is subject to change. All the changes will be communicated in class or via email.