

PT160 TRANSNATIONAL FEMINISM IS FOR EVERYBODY

Seminar Leader: **Agata Lisiak**

Course Times: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 10:45 am – 12:15 pm

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Office Hours: by appointment

Course Description

Named after bell hooks' 2000 essay collection *Feminism Is for Everybody*, and with an essential transnational focus, this course offers an introduction to feminism as a political movement to end sexist oppression across differences. Students will discuss, try out, and question various feminist theories and methodologies to critically examine a range of cultural, social, and economic issues across geographical and historical contexts. While acknowledging the importance of one's personal experience in finding feminism and committing to it, this course also invites students to look beyond the personal and focus on political projects that actively seek out solidarity-yielding connections. Among other topics, we will discuss the demands of early socialist women's rights activists, queer feminist formations in the Global South, transfeminist activism in Latin America and beyond, sex workers' struggles across borders, decolonial feminist interventions in Europe, and the connections between gender justice and environmental justice. Bringing together feminist contributions from sociology, philosophy, cultural studies, political science, activism, and more, the course will also serve as an introduction to the work of such influential thinkers as Sara Ahmed, Angela Davis, Silvia Federici, Alexandra Kollontai, Audre Lorde, Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Françoise Vergès, and Clara Zetkin, among many others. Students will employ feminist methodologies as a means to question established knowledge paradigms and dominant intellectual traditions derived from the Global North. The transnational feminist dimension of this course is also reflected in its design as parts of it were jointly developed 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, and Bard College Berlin in Germany) and scholars affiliated with Off-University.

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.

Assignments and Assignment Deadlines

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

Gender autobiography: a reflection. This is a five-stage assignment that centers the importance of process rather than the final outcome. In the first stage, upon reading Sara Ahmed's chapter from *Living a Feminist Life*, students will be asked to reflect in writing on their gender socialization in class and share it with their peers in small groups. In the second stage, students will be asked to post their revised 300-word statements on the padlet. In the third stage, students will read their peers' statements, comment on each other's posts, and consider them in relation to their own. In the fourth stage, students will substantially revise their original statement to a 1000-word paper, with their peers' comments and statements in mind, and engaging with at least one text assigned for this class. Detailed prompts and deadlines for the individual stages of the assignment will be posted on Google Classroom. Students will present their gender autobiography drafts in class on **26 September**. In the fifth and final stage, students will revise their gender autobiography and submit the completed versions by **28 September**.

Manifesto. In this collaborative midterm assignment students will work in small groups with their peers to 1) develop an original feminist manifesto that centers solidarity across difference or 2) collaboratively translate an existing feminist manifesto into languages in which it is not yet available. In addition to the manifesto, every student will write a 1000-word reflection paper on the collaborative experience of the writing and/or translating process, in which they will engage with at least two texts assigned for this course. Detailed prompts and deadlines for individual stages of the assignment will be announced on Google Classroom. The deadline for the manifesto and reflection paper is **19 October**.

Final project/essay. For their final project, students can choose between a 3000-word academic essay on the topic of their choice related to one of the course's themes or a 'creative component' (video, zine, sound piece, installation, etc.) accompanied by a 1000-word academic essay. Regardless of the format they choose, students will engage carefully with at least two texts assigned for this course (including at least one from the second half of the semester). Students will have the opportunity to workshop their drafts in class and discuss them with me in individual meetings. If you opt for a 'creative component', you will be required to present it in class on **5 December**. The final written version of this assignment is due latest by **20 December**.

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

Seminar preparation and participation - 30% for the semester (15% for weeks 1-7 + 15% for weeks 8-14)

Gender autobiography – 15%

Manifesto – 25%

Final project/paper – 30%

A note on the grading process and rubrics

Most assignments for this course center the importance of process as much as the final outcome. In the first two weeks of the semester, we will discuss expectations and challenges related to grading, and will jointly develop rubrics for each graded assignment.

***** STUDENTS ARE REQUIRED TO PURCHASE A COURSE READER FROM THE LIBRARY *****
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES WILL BE POSTED ON GOOGLE CLASSROOM

Schedule

Week 1

Feminist Education and Politics

Class 1 // 5 September

- Sara Ahmed. Feminism is sensational. *Living a Feminist Life*. Durham: Duke UP, 2017. 21-42.
- bell hooks. Consciousness-Raising: Feminist Education for Critical Consciousness. *Feminism Is for Everybody*. Cambridge: South End Press, 2000. 7-12.

Class 2 // 7 September

- We will continue discussing the readings assigned for Class 1.

Week 2

Feminism and Internationalist Politics, Part 1

Class 3 // 12 September

- Clara Zetkin. Women's Right to Vote. 1907.
- Rosa Luxemburg. Women's Suffrage and Class Struggle. 1912.
- Rosa Luxemburg presented by Agata Lisiak on the Dead Ladies Show Podcast (2022):
<https://deadladiesshow.com/2022/03/08/podcast-51-rosa-luxemburg/>

Class 4 // 14 September

- Alexandra Kollontai. [Make Way for Winged Eros](#). 1923.
- AK47 podcast: Episodes 9 & 10: <https://ak47.buzzsprout.com/251881/1004301-9-a-k-47-make-way-for-winged-eros-a-letter-to-working-youth-part-i> &
<https://ak47.buzzsprout.com/251881/1012641-10-a-k-47-make-way-for-winged-eros-a-letter-to-working-youth-part-ii>

Week 3

Feminism and Internationalist Politics, Part 2

Class 5 // 19 September

- bell hooks. Global Feminism. *Feminism Is for Everybody*. Cambridge: South End, 2000. 44-47.
- Chandra Talpade Mohanty. Under Western Eyes. *Feminist Review*. 1988.

Class 6 // 21 September

- Kristen Ghodsee. Introduction to *Second World, Second Sex: Socialist Women's Activism and Global Solidarity during the Cold War*. Duke UP, 2018. 2-27.

Week 4

Gender Autobiographies and Feminist Manifestos

Class 7 // 26 September

- In-class presentations and discussion of gender autobiographies

Class 8 // 28 September

- The Combahee River Collective Statement. 1977.
- Zoe Leonard. I Want a President. 1992. (Also watch it performed by Mykki Blanco [here](#), 2016)
- Lady Gya. The Hystory of My Vagina: A Manifesto. *Kohl: A Journal for Body and Gender Research*. 1.2 (2015).
- Lastesis. *Set Fear on Fire*. 2023. An excerpt.
- E.A.S.T. (Essential Autonomous Struggles Transnational). Essential Strike Manifesto for the 8th of March. 2021.

Week 5

Social Reproduction

NO CLASS ON 3 OCTOBER (public holiday)

Class 9 // 5 October

- Silvia Federici. Wages Against Housework. 1975.
- Angela Davis. The Approaching Obsolescence of Housework: A Working-Class Perspective. 1977.

Week 6

Feminism and Internationalist Politics, Part 3

Class 10 // 10 October

- Tatsiana Shchurko. From Harlem to Tashkent: [a video talk](#). 2022.
- Audre Lorde. Notes from a Trip to Russia. 1976.

Class 11 / 12 October

- Verónica Gago. *Feminist International*. 2020. Excerpt.
- Verónica Gago in interview with Jo Littler. *Left Feminisms*. 2023.

Week 7

Manifestos and Archives

Class 12 / 17 October

- Feminist manifestos: a peer review session

Class 13 / 19 October

- Museum visit (an off-campus excursion, date announced in consultation with students)

***** FALL BREAK *****

Week 9

Anti- and Decolonial Feminisms, Part 1

Class 14 / 31 October

- Oyèrónkẹ́ Oyěwùmí. *The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourses*. 1997. Excerpt.

Class 16 / 2 November

- Audre Lorde. Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference. *Sister Outsider*. Berkeley: Crossing Press, 2007. 114-123.
- Françoise Vergès. *A Decolonial Feminism*. Trans. Ashley J. Bohrer with the author. 2021. Excerpt.

Week 10

Anti- and Decolonial Feminisms, Part 2

Class 17 / 7 November

- Angela Davis. Women in Egypt: A Personal View. *Women, Culture & Politics*. 1989.
- Sara Salem. On Transnational Feminist Solidarity: The Case of Angela Davis in Egypt. *Signs* 43.2 (2018): 245-266.

Class 18 / 9 November

- Naveen Minai 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.
- Kawthar & Jaha. Queering Space: a Working Draft. *Kohl: A Journal for Body and Gender Research* 6.4 (2020): <https://kohljournal.press/queering-space-working-draft> (READ ONLINE)

Week 10

Bodies and States, Part 1

Class 19 / 14 November

- B Camminga. Categories and Queues: The Structural Realities of Gender and the South African Asylum System. *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* 4.1 (2017). 61-77.
- Zanele Muholi catalog excerpts. Tate Modern, 2021.

Class 20 / 16 November

Guest lecture – speaker and readings will be announced via Google Classroom

Week 11

Bodies and States, Part 2

Class 21 / 21 November

- Molly Smith and Juno Mac. *Revolted Prostitutes: The Fight for Sex Workers' Rights*. London: Verso, 2018. 22-39.
- Juno Mac. The Laws That Sex Workers Really Want: [a ted talk](#). 2016.

Class 22 / 23 November

Meeting with Ciocia Basia, an activist group facilitating access to safe abortion in Berlin for people from countries where abortion is illegal. In addition to one mandatory reading, additional readings may be provided ahead of the event via Google Classroom:

- Agata Chelstowska and Agata Ignaciuk. Criminalization, Medicalization, and Stigmatization: Genealogies of Abortion Activism in Poland. *Signs* 48.2 (2023).

Week 12

Politics of Interdependence

Class 23 / 28 November

- Astra Taylor & Sunaura Taylor. Our Animals, Ourselves: The Socialist Case for Animal Liberation. *Lux* 2021.
- Watch Angela Davis in conversation with Grace Lee Boggs (2012) [here](#) – full video from [here](#).

Class 24 / 30 November

- Marwa Arsanios. Micro-Resistances: An interview with Samanta Arango Orozco. *Kohl: A Journal for Body and Gender Research* 8.2 (2022): <https://kohljournal.press/micro-resistances-interview-samanta-arango-orozco> (READ ONLINE).
- Robin Wall Kimmerer. *Braiding Sweetgrass*. 2013. Excerpt.
- Vivien Sansour on seeds in Palestine. Al Jazeera 2019: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XoexxUOeZak>.

Week 13

Workshops

Class 25 / 5 December

Workshop: peer review of final project drafts

Class 26 / 7 December

Re-reading: we will re-read and jointly annotate two texts already discussed this semester. The texts will be selected via a poll before 25 November.

Week 14

Reflections

Class 27 / 12 December

Presentation of final projects

Class 28 / 14 December

Wrap-up session, closing exercises