

PT241 FEMINISM AND COMMUNITY
OSUN Network Course
at Bard College Berlin and BRAC University, Bangladesh

Seminar Instructors:

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Office Hours: by appointment

Schedule: Mondays and Wednesdays, 2:00 – 3:30 pm CET

Location: TBA

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This OSUN network course on feminisms and community is offered to advanced BA students at Bard College Berlin and students at BRAC University. Students will have face-to-face classes at their home institutions, selected joint BCB-BRAC online sessions, and individual and collaborative student assignments.

The course will explore a variety of feminisms across time and place through the concept of community. The specific themes and topics we will focus on are theories of community, global feminisms, early twentieth century feminisms, black feminisms, intersectional communities, feminist communities and projects in Berlin. We will discuss how different forms of feminism have produced different forms of community, for example through the creation of smaller and larger networks, through group engagement with larger social issues, but also through all kinds of writing (letters, journals, manifestos, zines), various forms of art and literary practice, as well as the creation of archives or the organization of political activism.

Among the questions we will address are the following: What kinds of communities do different feminisms create? (in/through salons, reading groups, women's movement gatherings, political parties, concepts of sisterhood, communes, autonomous groups, bookstores, associations, guilds, unions, etc.). How do feminist theories in different geographical, national, and temporal contexts address the theme of community? What is a community? Is a community something that by definition involves similarity (e.g., Internet communities, or communities based on gender, race, and/or class), or can it involve larger entities and more diversity, and be based on shared political goals? Finally, is our class a community? How do we become a community, or even an active community, across the two participating groups of students at Bard College Berlin and BRAC University?

COURSE 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 an essential part of the educational experience at Bard College Berlin. To accommodate minor circumstances, **two absences** from a bi-weekly class or its equivalent (e.g., one absence from a once-a-week class) should not affect the participation grade or require documentation.

Bard College Berlin will not grant credit for any course in which a student has missed more than 30% of class time, regardless of the reasons for the absences. The full Bard College Berlin attendance policy can be found in the Student Handbook, Section 2.8.

Please note: **No electronic devices** are allowed in class. Please come to class with **printed texts**.

GRADING & PARTICIPATION

Students should be on time and prepared for each class. Being prepared means

- (1) having completed the assigned readings
- (2) bringing a non-electronic copy of the assigned reading to class, and
- (3) being prepared to initiate and contribute to discussion
- (4) Participating in digital formats and collaborative assignments with BRAC students and faculty. Participation in class discussion should be both regular and productive; quantity alone will not positively affect the participation grade.

ASSIGNMENTS

The course assignments involve:

- writing of **four response papers (500-700 words)** on an assigned material from the syllabus. Response papers are always due before the class session on the material you have chosen. Note that you must submit at least two response papers in the first half of the semester (before fall break).
- **“Adoption” of one text** from the syllabus that you are not writing a response to. You are responsible for introducing the text in class on the day that it is assigned and for animating and moderating our discussion.

- Submission of a **final essay** (2000 words) on **December 15, 23:59 hrs.**
- **Posting comments** and brief statements **on digital platforms** (padlets or google docs), which are considered as part of the participation grade.

POLICY ON LATE SUBMISSION OF PAPERS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Essays that are up to 24 hours late may be downgraded up to one full grade (e.g., from B+ to C+). Instructors are not required to accept essays that are more than 24 hours late. If an instructor agrees to accept a late essay, it must be submitted within four weeks of the due date. After that, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment. Grades and comments will be returned to students in a timely manner. Students also have the right to make an appointment to discuss essay assignments and feedback during the instructor's office hours.

Late submission of response papers and the final essay will result in failure of the course.

Students will receive mid-semester 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 time during the semester to discuss class progress.

LIBRARY AND BOOK PURCHASE POLICIES

Assigned texts will be available as a printed **course reader** that students must purchase from the library; the use of digital copies in class is not permitted. Recommended further readings will be made available electronically and on a BCB library course reserve shelf.

Students are required to buy the following books:

Virginia Woolf, *Three Guineas* (1939), London: Penguin Modern Classics, 2000
ISBN: 978-0141184609

GRADE BREAKDOWN

Participation (including posts on padlets): 40%

Response papers: 20%

Final paper: 20%

Text adoption and moderation: 20%

COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEKS 1 - 3: THEORIES OF COMMUNITY AND SOCIABILITY

Week 1

Monday, September 4

Course Introduction: Lecture and discussion: What is a community?

Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (1983) (“Introduction” and “Cultural Roots”)

Iris Marion Young, “The Idea of Community and the Politics of Difference” (1986)

Wednesday, September 6

Friedrich Schleiermacher, “Toward a Theory of Sociable Conduct” (1799)

Week 2

Monday, September 11

Ferdinand Tönnies, *Community and Civil Society* (1887), (selection)

Wednesday, September 13

Georg Simmel, “The Sociology of Sociability” (1949)

Week 3

Monday, September 18

Mette Louise Berg and Magdalena Nowicka, *Studying Diversity, Migration and Urban Multiculture* (2019), (“Introduction: Convivial tools for research and practice”)

Magdalena Nowicka and Tilmann Heil, “On the Analytic and Normative Dimensions of Conviviality and Cosmopolitanism” (2015)

WEEKS 3 – 4: INTRODUCTION TO (GLOBAL) FEMINISMS

Wednesday, September 20

Lucy Delap, *Feminisms. A Global History* (2020), (“Introduction”)

Week 4

Monday, September 25

Elora Shehabuddin, *Sisters in the Mirror: A History of Muslim Women and the Global Politics of Feminism* (2021) (selection)

Tuesday, September 26 (5 – 6:30 CET) 1st JOINT ZOOM SESSION WITH BRAC UNIVERSITY

Guest lecture: "Sisters in the Mirror: A History of Muslim Women and the Global Politics of Feminism" by Elora Shehabuddin, University of California, Berkeley

Wednesday, September 27

Excursion to *Missy Magazine* with a guest lecture by Sonja Eismann

WEEKS 5 – 6 WOMEN IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE AROUND 1800: SALONS, WRITERS, ARTISTS

Week 5

Monday, October 2

NO CLASS (Replacement: joint zoom session with BRAC University on Tuesday, September 26)

Wednesday, October 4

Henriette Herz, "Memoirs of a Jewish Girlhood" (1850)

Rahel Varnhagen, "Selected Letters" (1805-1819)

Deborah Hertz, "Public Leisure and the Rise of Salons" (1988)

Week 6

Monday, October 9

Hannah Arendt, *Rahel Varnhagen. The Life of a Jewess* (1957, selections)

Wednesday, October 11 (2-3:30p CET) – 2nd JOINT ZOOM SESSION WITH BRAC UNIVERSITY

Topic: Lecture by Ulrike Wagner on Nineteenth-Century Feminism and Jewish Salon Culture in Berlin

WEEK 7 – 10: POLITICAL FEMINISMS AROUND THE WORLD

Monday, October 16

Excursion to LOBE Block (TBC)

Wednesday, October 18 (2-3:30p CET) – 3rd JOINT ZOOM SESSION WITH BRAC UNIVERSITY

Topic: Discussion of Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain, *Sultana's Dream and Padmarag* (1905); introduction by Seuty Sabur

FALL BREAK (October 23 – 29)

Week 8

Monday, October 30

NO CLASS (Replacement: joint zoom mini conference with BRAC University on Saturday, November 17)

Wednesday, November 1 (2-3:30p CET) – 4th JOINT ZOOM SESSION WITH BRAC UNIVERSITY

Topic: Guest lecture by Seuty Sabur, “Women’s Rights and Social Movements in Bangladesh: The Changing Political Field” (2021)

Week 9

Monday, November 6

Students bring feminist texts from different contexts to present and discuss in class

Wednesday, November 8

Students bring feminist texts from different contexts to present and discuss in class

Week 10

Monday, November 13 (2-3:30p CET) – 5th JOINT ZOOM SESSION WITH BRAC UNIVERSITY

Topic: WORKSHOP (students develop their own feminist manifestos in small groups)

Wednesday, November 15

Essays, manifestos and pamphlets on suffragism and women’s rights from Europe, South America, North America, Asia, Africa

Saturday, November 17 (Time TBD) – 6th JOINT ZOOM Mini Conference on Students’ Feminist Manifestos

WEEK 11 Communities of Outsiders: Virginia Woolf, *Three Guineas* (1939)

Monday, November 20

Virginia Woolf, *Three Guineas* (1938)

Wednesday, November 22

Virginia Woolf, *Three Guineas* (1938)

WEEKS 12 – 13: BLACK FEMINISM AND LGBTQ+

Monday, November 27

Carole Boyce Davies, *Left of Karl Marx: The Political Life of Black Communist Claudia Jones* (2008), (chapter 5)

Wednesday, November 29

bell hooks, "Sisterhood" (1986)

Maria C. Lugones and Pat Rosezelle, "Sisterhood and Friendship as Feminist Models" (1995)

Week 13

Monday, December 4

Angela Davis, *An Autobiography*, introduction and chapter 1 "Nets"

Wednesday, December 6

Discussion of film: Audre Lorde, *The Berlin Years* (1984-1992)

Audre Lorde, "Age, Race, Sex, Class: Women Redefining Difference" (1984)

Week 14

Monday, December 11

Afro-German communities in Berlin (details will follow soon)

Wednesday, December 13

Wrap-up & conclusion

Week 15 - Completion Week (December 18 – 20)

ESSAY DEADLINE: DECEMBER 16, 23:59 HRS