

BERLIN PERSPECTIVES

African(ing) while in Berlin: Diversity, Citizenship, and Politics of Belonging

Semester:	winter semester 2020/21
Course instructor:	Azakihiwe Höhling Email: hoehlina@hu-berlin.de
Subject area:	<i>Culture and Society</i>
Credits:	5 ECTS
Time:	<i>Monday 10 –12 c.t. (10:15-11:45)</i>
Room:	Zoom (Please note: This semester, all classes take place online. If however the general conditions allow it, the seminar room 0323-26 (3 rd floor) at Hausvogteiplatz 5-7 can be used by the courses.)

Course description:

This course is designed to introduce participants to the wide interdisciplinary perspective on the status in citizenship, Diversity, and Politics of belonging for people within the African Diaspora in Berlin. The relationship between migration, social cohesion and national German identity has become an increasingly contentious political issue. Historically, the settlement of migrant groups and the formation of minority ethnic groups have changed the socio-cultural, political and economic fabric of receiving societies. We will explore the role these debates play within the African diaspora's sense of belonging, as well as how different forms of citizenship are experienced and negotiated on an everyday basis in Berlin. Class sessions will be composed of lectures, online discussions forums and an excursion through Berlin's Black History.

We will address questions such as: what different forms of citizenship exist and how might these be practiced in society? How people within the African Diaspora forge a sense of identity and belonging in Berlin and Germany? What is the relationship between racial and ethnocultural diversity and citizenship? What facilitates or hinders the integration of settled African migrant groups and individuals? How do our unconscious biases impact how we view people within the African Diaspora?

Learning objectives:

The objective of this Bachelor-level course is to equip students with an in-depth understanding of the complexities of being African while in Berlin. It will enable participants to read, understand and critically reflect on how we view people within the African Diaspora and deepen our understanding of citizenship, diversity, belonging, and diasporic identities.

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

Knowledge

- How citizenship and sense of belonging are experienced differently in Berlin.
- Factors that contribute to the negotiations of German identity
- What it means to be Anti-Racist
- Reflecting on our unconscious Biases
- Reflect on the applicability of Eurocentric categories/concepts for describing Africans.

Academic/Transferable Skills

- Analyze and critically reflect on how people within the African diaspora are portrait
- Select relevant theories and methods for analyzing people within the African Diaspora
- Articulate the importance of Decolonization and what it means for people in the African Diaspora

Competencies

- Apply relevant theories and concepts to engage in self-reflexively with constructs of Citizenship, Diversity and the Politics of Belonging
- Apply relevant theories and concepts in independent work to engage self- reflexively with constructs of race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexuality, nationality

Assessment portfolio:

- 1. Homework and active participation (30%):** The course participants are requested to participate in all sessions actively and to submit homework on Moodle. Please keep in mind that active and regular participation in the course is essential for understanding the course objectives, which is the key to successfully delivering the Group Presentation and Final Essay.
- 2. Group presentation/response question on Excursion (20%):** Group presentation on site of Excursion/response question on Excursion.
- 3. Interview:** Interview someone who has insight to issues connected to African diaspora in Berlin. Interview must be directly related to the topic related to your Final Essay. (10%).
- 4. Essay:** Each participant must submit an essay on a topic related to the topic covered in the seminar. In this essay, you will need to develop a research question and answer it in a logical structure. About 1000-1500 words, due on the 26. February 2021. All topics must be approved by the instructor before 18.01.2021 (40%)

Language requirements:

The minimum language requirement for this course is English at B2. The reading materials and discussions will primarily be held in English. When possible, key terms will be gathered to build a growing lexicon of vocabulary. The reading materials and discussion will primarily be in English.

Writing Assignments

Reading guides For some assigned readings, I have created a Critical Response Question that participants must complete and submit on the Moodle Platform. The questions are meant to draw your attention to important aspects of the texts we read. Because many of our sessions will be asynchronous and not held live via Zoom, the reading guides will show me that you have completed the readings.

Discussion forums Because we cannot engage in group discussions in the classroom and Zoom will only be used for some sessions, you will be asked to engage in Moodle discussion forums with your peers during those weeks when there is no Zoom meeting. In most cases, participants will be provided with critical response question relating to a particular seminar. You will then post your reply to the discussion forum. I will provide a specific start and end dates for each discussion forum. If you have not participated in the discussion forum by the end date, you will not receive any credit for the assignment. Participants are encouraged to keep up-to-date on African current affairs and to bring timely issues and topics to class/forum discussions so that the seminar becomes a dynamic setting for engaging within the African Diaspora's realities.

Recommended Book: Please do not purchase the books under 'Recommended Books' for class, these are merely suggestions to further your knowledge and the African perspective beyond the classroom. Many of the themes discussed in the recommended books will be covered in class through other reading lists that will be made available to you.

Timetable:

Session 1: **02.11.2020 Introduction – Ungubani? Who are you? Lead with Ubuntu**

***Zoom Session**

Part I: Introductions of instructor and students

Part II: review of the syllabus and assignments

Reading: Ungubani? Ndigum Xhosa

Recommended books:

I am because you are: Ubuntu by Mungi Ngomane

Everyday Ubuntu: Living better together, the African way by Nompumelelo Mungi Ngomane

Session 2: **09.11.2020 Where is the 'African' in African Studies?**

"It is clear that those who produce knowledge about something wield considerable power over it. In this vein, African Studies remains a colonized space rife with misrepresentation, homogenization and essentialising about Africa" (Pailey, 2016).

Readings:

Oyekan Owomoyela. 1994. "With Friends like These... A Critique of Pervasive Anti-Africanisms in Current African Studies Epistemology and Methodology," *African Studies Review*. 37(3): 77-101.

<https://africanarguments.org/2016/06/07/where-is-the-african-in-african-studies/>

<https://africasacountry.com/2019/08/there-is-no-africa-in-african-studies>

Wainaina, Binyavanga. 2005. "How to Write About Africa." Granta. London: Granta Publications. <https://granta.com/how-to-write-about-africa/>

Homework: How many people within the African Diaspora hold senior positions with the four Berlin Alliance Universities? Please specify the university, department and position held. (Upload on Moodle until 19.11.2020)

Session 3 **23.11.2020 Colonialism hiding in plain sight: African or Colonial Quarter?**

Readings:

Blades, Mark/Kitchin Rob (eds.) (2002): *The Cognition of Geographic Space*, London/New York: I.B. Tauris, pp. 1 – 10

Aitken, Robert/Rosenhaft, Eve (2013): *Black Germany. The Making and Unmaking of a Diaspora Community, 1884 – 1960*, Cambridge University Press, pp. 1 – 21

Trüper, Ursula (2013): *Das Afrikanische Viertel in Berlin Wedding*. In: Diallo, Omar/Zeller, Joachim (eds.): *Black Berlin. Die deutsche Metropole und ihre afrikanische Diaspora in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, Berlin: Metropol, pp.177 – 182

<https://africasacountry.com/2018/03/what-are-the-politics-of-colonial-memory-in-germany>

Homework: What are the (Hi)stories of Germany's role in Namibia and present-day repercussions?

In which part of the African Continent will you find traces of Germany in language, heritage, former colonies? (Upload on Moodle until 07.12.2020)

Recommended books:

Kein Platz an der Sonne: Erinnerungsorte der deutschen Kolonialgeschichte by Jürgen Zimmerer

Afropean: Notes from Black Europe, by Johny Pitts

Session 4 **30.11.2020 Berlin's Black History - (Class Excursion)**

This week, we will meet offline and discover the city's Black History together. In historical terms, we will first deal with Afro-German culture and social history, which includes contributions of black people during World War I and II. We will then explore the

influences/traces of Black people in Mitte and end in Wedding, where we have the Congo Conference, traces of colonialism and today's black community. (Detailed meeting point and schedule will be announced a week before)

Homework: 1-page reflection on excursion. (upload until (10.12.2020))

Session 5 **14.12.2020 Decolonize Berlin**

This part of the seminar is designed to be an invitation to participants to develop their knowledge and deepen their understanding of colonialism and the importance of decolonization in Berlin. In focusing on the questions of lived experience, resistance, historical amnesia of Berlin's colonial history and the struggle for alternatives. Participants are invited to grapple with the associated questions: What are the experiences of Africans, Afro-Germans, Afro-Europeans and Afro-Americans living in Berlin? How do we see and hear their voices in everyday life? What do we do with this knowledge?

Readings:

Fanon, F., 2008. Black skin, white masks. Grove press. Only read Chapter 4 *The So-Called Dependency Complex of Colonized Peoples* (61-81)

Biko, S. 1978. "I write what I like." (44-51) London: Bowerdean

<https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2017/apr/04/germanys-other-brutal-history-should-berlins-african-quarter-be-renamed>

<https://www.dw.com/en/berlins-african-quarter-to-change-colonial-era-street-names/a-43474130>

Mangcu, X., 2016. Decolonizing South African sociology: Building on a shared "text of Blackness". *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race*, 13(1), pp.45-59.

Homework: What do you understand under the term Decolonize? Why is it significant particularly in the context of Berlin, Germany? with 2 related examples within the African Diaspora in Berlin or on the African Continent (Upload on Moodle until 04.01.2021)

Recommended books:

My Black Skin: Schwarz. Erfolgreich. Deutsch. by Dayan Kodia

Mangcu, X. 2013. *Biko: A Biography*. New York: IB Tauris.

The Souls of Black Folk by W E B Du Bois

Session 6 **04.01.2021 Examining the State of German Identity: Citizenship and Belonging in the African Diaspora in Berlin**

***Zoom Session**

Readings:

Goertz, Karein K. (2003): Showing Her Colors. An Afro-German Writes the Blues in Black and White. In: Callaloo, Vol. 26, No. 2, 306 - 319

Yuval-Davis, Nira. 1997. "Citizenship and Difference," Feminist Review 17: 4-27

<https://www.dw.com/en/whats-life-really-like-for-black-people-in-germany/a-53159443>

Zoom session preparation: What makes up German identity? Can Black/African people be German? How often is your nationality questioned? How often do you have to defend your nationality to others (Personally)? When you think of a 'German person' what comes to mind? (Please upload pictures on moodle before this session so we can discuss on Zoom)

Recommended Books: Tupoka Ogette: exit RACISM: rassismuskritisch denken lernen

Session 7 **18.01.2021 Feminist (ing) while African**

"African women want liberation but they also want their culture and both can mutually exist"

Readings:

Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics. University of Chicago Legal Forum, 140(1), 139–167.

Pumla Dineo Gqola: Ufanele Uqavile: Blackwomen, Feminisms and Postcoloniality in Africa.

Mama Amina Identity and Beyond: rethinking Africanity. Nordiska Afrika Institutet 8 - 17.

McCall, Leslie (2005): "The Complexity of intersectionality", in: Signs. Journal of Women in Culture and Society 30/3, S. 1771-1802.

Homework: Watch the series of videos on African Feminists uploaded on Moodle

Online Quiz available on Moodle until the 28.01.2021

Session 8 **01.02.2021 (Anti-) Racism in Germany**

***Zoom Session**

Many of people in Europe belonging to the African Diaspora (Black Europeans and People of African Descent) face specific forms of racism - Afrophobia, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism and xenophobia. These forms of racism have also been shaped by Europe's history of colonial and repeated persecutions against minorities. Racism and its specific forms continue to be prevalent, ranging from very brutal acts of violence or harassment to extremely sophisticated forms of discrimination, instrumentalising Fundamental Rights to exclude minorities.

Readings:

<https://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/how-structural-racism-works-in-germany-a-1fcf3584-94b5-48ad-82a1-24807766cc2a>

<https://www.dw.com/en/racism-in-germany-an-issue-for-society-as-a-whole/a-53787641>

<https://www.dw.com/en/un-experts-accuse-germany-of-structural-racism/a-37745700>

<https://www.dw.com/en/germany-struggles-to-face-its-own-police-racism/a-53695640>

Homework: Questions on racism, anti-racism, white-privilege, "I have (a) Black friend (s)" discrimination and cultural appropriation. Specific questions/examples can be emailed to instructor for discussion in class. Participants identity to question will not be disclosed.

Watch all video uploaded on Moodle before this class session and keep in mind what stood out to you in the videos.

Recommended book:

Was weiße Menschen nicht über Rassismus hören wollen: aber wissen sollten by Alice Haster

Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You by Ibram X. Kendi

How To Be an Antiracist by Ibram X. Kendi

Session 9 **15.02.2021 Where do we go from here? Re (imagine) African (s)**

Session 10 **22.02.2021 Conclusion of Course**

In this session of the winter semester 2020/21, the course participants will review the course contents.

Remarks:

Contacting Instructor: For quick questions or to schedule an appointment, the best way to contact is via email at hoehlina@hu-berlin.de Please contact the instructor in advance when you cannot attend a session. You might be able to complete a make-up task.

Class Conduct A positive learning environment relies upon creating an atmosphere where diverse perspectives can be expressed, particularly in a course that focuses on pressing and controversial social and political issues. Each student is encouraged to take an active part in class/forum discussions and activities. Honest and respectful dialogue is expected. Disagreement and challenging of ideas in a supportive and sensitive manner is encouraged. Hostility and disrespectful behavior is not acceptable.

Just as we expect others to listen attentively to our own views, we must reciprocate and listen to others when they speak, especially when we disagree with them. However, in this class, our emphasis will be on engaging in the mutual exploration of issues as presented in the course readings as scholars.

Zoom meetings We will meet in Zoom videoconferences about every other week, but this schedule is only approximate. Please therefore note the specific dates of our Zoom meetings. Zoom fatigue is a phenomenon that we have all experienced by now, so I will try to keep Zoom meetings to a length of 45 minutes per meeting to ensure a focused and productive discussion. All meetings will be held when our class would have taken place in person, Mondays at 10 a.m. We utilize the Moodle platform for downloading reading materials, sharing other resources, participating in the discussion, and uploading course assignments.

Religious and Disability Accommodation: Students needing academic accommodations for a disability must first contact Disability Advisory Service at <https://www.hu-berlin.de/en/studies/behinderte/bewerbung-en/application>. Student/s should then schedule an appointment with me to make appropriate arrangements. It is essential that you address your needs early in the semester, before assignments are due. Students who need to miss class for religious reasons should provide me with an explanation, in writing, during the first week of the seminar.

Academic integrity: All participants must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Universities policy.

Literature: All literature and course resources will be available via Moodle

Aitken, Robert/Rosenhaft, Eve (2013): *Black Germany. The Making and Unmaking of a Diaspora Community, 1884 – 1960*, Cambridge University Press, pp. 1 – 21

Biko, S. 1978. "I write what I like." (44-51) London: Bowerdean

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Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 140(1), 139–167.

Davis, Kathy (2008): Intersectionality as buzzword: A sociology of science perspective on what makes a feminist theory successful. In: *Feminist Theory* 9, S. 67-85.

Fanon, F., 2008. *Black skin, white masks*. Grove press. Only read Chapter 4 *The So-Called Dependency Complex of Colonized Peoples* (61-81)

German Colonialism Made Simple Bradley Naranch
<https://read.dukeupress.edu/books/book/251/chapter/110268/IntroductionGerman-Colonialism-Made-Simple>

Goertz, Karein K. (2003): *Showing Her Colors. An Afro-German Writes the Blues in Black and White*. In: *Callaloo*, Vol. 26, No. 2, 306 - 319

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<https://www.dw.com/en/racism-in-germany-an-issue-for-society-as-a-whole/a-53787641>

<https://www.dw.com/en/un-experts-accuse-germany-of-structural-racism/a-37745700>

<https://www.dw.com/en/whats-life-really-like-for-black-people-in-germany/a-53159443>

<https://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/how-structural-racism-works-in-germany-a-1fcf3584-94b5-48ad-82a1-24807766cc2a>

<https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2017/apr/04/germanys-other-brutal-history-should-berlins-african-quarter-be-renamed>

Mama Amina Identity and Beyond: rethinking Africanity. *Nordiska Afrika Institutet* 8 - 17.

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McCall, Leslie (2005): "The Complexity of intersectionality", in: *Signs. Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 30/3, S. 1771-1802.

Oyekan Owomoyela. 1994. "With Friends like These... A Critique of Pervasive Anti-Africanisms in Current African Studies Epistemology and Methodology," *African Studies Review*. 37(3): 77-101.

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Wainaina, Binyavanga. 2005. "How to Write About Africa." *Granta*. London: Granta Publications. <https://granta.com/how-to-write-about-africa/>

Yuval-Davis, Nira. 1997. "Citizenship and Difference," *Feminist Review* 17: 4-27