



Colonial Legacies: Understanding Race, Racism and the Politics of Belonging

Summer Semester 2025: 14 April– 18 July 2025

CATEGORY

Urban Diversity

COURSE STRUCTURE

2 contact hours à 45 min per week (summer semester: 14 weeks)

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Time

Day: Friday, 10-12 c.t. (10.15-11.45am)

Place

Hausvogteiplatz 5-7, Room 0323-26

COURSE LANGUAGE

This course is taught in English, and the assigned readings will be in English. To understand the texts and discussions in class, a language level B2 (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) is required. The class will adapt to the range of English skills present. Class time will prioritise verbal skills in English through speaking, discussions with fellow students, and conversations with invited guest lecturers. Due to the sensitive nature of the course, students are encouraged to pause or clarify language used at any time. When possible, key terms will be gathered to build a growing lexicon of vocabulary. We will also address language's role in shaping thought and understanding within cultures. Reading and writing skills will be developed through assigned readings, comprehension activities throughout the course, and written reflections, all in English. Translations may be possible; however, proficiency in English is essential for participation in this course.

Language requirements (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages)

English B2

TARGET GROUP

Berlin Perspectives courses are designed for undergraduate students; however, Master students may participate if their home university agrees. Regular Humboldt-University zu Berlin students can select the course within the elective part of their study program (überfachlicher Wahlpflichtbereich üWP). It is important to note that this course is open to all students from all walks of life with a strong interest in the course topic. The central goal of the course is to foster critical thinking and explore how interlocking systems of racism, who we are, based on our individual social location and experiences of privilege and oppression, both historically and in the present.

CREDITS = 5 ECTS

The Berlin Perspectives courses are offered by the Career Center as part of the elective program üWP. Registration takes place via Agnes. All courses are accredited according to the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).

COURSE DESCRIPTION

How are individual and collective differences manipulated by structures of power, privilege, and oppression? How does this legacy of systemic inequality shape our global and national experiences today? Studying the works of African and Western theorists, this course introduces how race, class, gender, and sexuality have been intertwined in a globally connected world. This course not only explores the fundamental concepts, theories, and historical experiences that form the basis of scholarly work in comparative race, gender, sexuality, and class studies but also provides a global perspective. Through an interdisciplinary framework, we critically examine the creation, transmittal, interpretation and institutionalisation of difference-based systems of oppression. We then apply this international and historical understanding to a modern domestic lens, examining how these histories mould and proliferate inequality throughout Germany. Students will leave this course with a heightened connection to their global community and the ability to critically apply classic and critical race feminist theory to power, privilege, and oppression structures, all while broadening their international perspective.

The African continent and the ancestral homeland are central to any informed analysis and understanding of the dispersal of its people. With its cultural richness and diversity, Africa continues to influence receiving societies as various ethnic groups create new cultures and revive old ways as circumstances allow. Scholars engaging with the African diaspora must be cautious not to oversimplify the experiences of its diverse people.

In this course, students are not only learning theories but are also encouraged to apply them practically. They are urged to undo – unlearn and dismantle unjust practices, assumptions, and institutions – and to take persistent action to create and build alternative spaces and ways of knowing, particularly concerning the Black (African) Diaspora. Berlin will be used as a case study for the themes covered. Still, students are encouraged to reflect on their identities and the expressions of various identities around the city. The course sessions, composed of lectures, online discussion forums, and an excursion through Berlin's Black History, are designed to give students a wide interdisciplinary introduction into the othering of (Black) Africans so that they can interpret contemporary African issues with an informed historical background.

Keywords: African feminism; Critical race theory; Feminist theory; Gender and Sexuality Studies; LGBTQ+ History; Postcolonial studies; Race and racism

COURSE OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

To be filled in later...

To achieve their academic goals, by the end of the course, students stand to gain:

Knowledge

- To **examine** how historical configurations of gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, social class, and other categories of difference have operated as systems of power and (in) equality
- **Analyse** the variety of resistance strategies to Colonialism put in place by the colonised and the historical processes that led to decolonisation and independence
- **Explain** how anti-Black racism acts institutionally, structurally, interpersonally and individually
- To **reflect** on the ambivalent legacy of colonialism and illustrate this with concrete examples

Academic/Transferable Skills

- **Employing** significant theories and conceptual frameworks, such as Critical race theory and Feminist theory, we can significantly impact the study and analysis within academia.
- **Framing** contemporary political events within their social and historical contexts, students can gain a deeper understanding.
- **Engaging** in discussions about the historical and current relevance of political dynamics.
- **Integrating** knowledge from various disciplines not only broadens our understanding but also has the potential to transform our perspectives on race, class, gender, and sexuality, and other categories of difference.

READINGS

Adonis, C. K., & Silinda, F. (2021). Institutional culture and transformation in higher education in post-1994 South Africa: a critical race theory analysis. *Critical African Studies*, 13(1), 73-94.

Aitken, R., & Aitken, R.J.M. (2007). Exclusion and Inclusion Gradations of Whiteness and Socio-economic Engineering in German Southwest Africa, 1884-1914. Peter Lang.

Bazana, S., & Mogotsi, O. P. (2017). Social Identities and Racial Integration in Historically White Universities: A Literature Review of the Experiences of Black Students. *Transformation in Higher Education*, 2, 25.

Chinua Achebe, "An Image of Africa," in *Research in African Literatures*, Vol. 9, No. 1, Special Issue on Literary Criticism (Spring, 1978), 1-15.

Cyril K. Adonis & Fortunate Silinda (2021): Institutional culture and transformation in higher education in post-1994 South Africa: a critical race theory analysis, *Critical African Studies*, DOI: 10.1080/21681392.2021.1911448

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

<https://africasacountry.com/2012/11/why-does-south-african-history-continue-to-be-written-primarily-by-white-scholars>

<https://africasacountry.com/2015/03/open-letter-to-60-minutes-regarding-its-reporting-on-africa>

<https://africasacountry.com/2015/04/the-postcolonial-problem>

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

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

Jürgen Zimmerer: Annihilation in Africa: the "race war" in German Southwest Africa (1904–1908) and its significance for a global history of genocide.

Letsekha, T. (2013). Revisiting the debate on the Africanisation of higher education: An appeal for a conceptual shift. *The Independent Journal of Teaching and Learning*, 8(1), 5-18.

Luvalo, L. M. (2019). Relationship between transformation and institutional culture. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 33(1), 184-199.

Mampane, R. M., Omidire, M. F., & Aluko, F. R. (2018). Decolonising higher education in Africa: Arriving at a glocal solution. *South African Journal of Education*, 38(4).

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.

Plantation Memories Episodes of Everyday Racism Grada Kilomba, Chapter 5

Priyamvada Gopal: On Decolonisation and the University:
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/0950236X.2021.1929561>

Terre Blanche, M., Fourie, E., & Segalo, P. (2020). Teaching community psychology decolonially: A pedagogical journey. *Review of General Psychology*, 1089268020974588.

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

ASSIGNMENT INFO

Workload and assignments

To be granted 5 ECTS, participants will be asked to actively attend all sessions, prepare and revise the classroom/online sessions, and hand in the following **assignments**:

- **Positionality Paper:** The initial step in driving social change is to gain a thorough understanding of your own history and to comprehend your standpoint epistemology and social location. This is the objective of your first assignment. You are expected to participate in an analytical discussion regarding how your identities intersect with social forces. Specifically, you will primarily focus on how intersectionality, oppression, privilege, and social constructs impact your life and shape your experiences. This short paper asks you to understand your relationship to the topics covered in this course.
- **Questionnaire:** To encourage collaborative learning and in-depth exploration of specific topics, students will participate in a questionnaire related to the course content.
- **Critical Response Question/ Literature Review:** A literature review prompts scholars to analyse academic work critically. The purpose of a literature review article is to concentrate on a specific topic or a series of related topics, pinpoint gaps in the existing literature, and highlight areas that need further research.

- **Class Excursion:** Reflection paper on the Class Excursion
- **Reaction Papers:** A two-page (typed) reaction paper will be expected for selected texts. Your paper should be an analysis and not a summary of the work. Students should focus on one aspect of the text, for example: the narrator, the plot, gender roles, language, or any other relevant issues. Students must include at least one critical response question on any aspect of the text they did not understand at the end of the reaction paper. This question is a crucial part of your paper, as it encourages you to seek clarification and deepen your understanding of the text. The instructor may ask students to share their perspectives orally with other students in class.
- **Final Assignment and the Workshop:** Each student is required to submit an essay or an extensive literature review on a topic related to the subjects discussed in the seminar. The length of the submission should be between 2000-2500 words. Before starting the assignment, students must get their chosen topics approved by the instructor to ensure relevance to the course.

Failure to fulfil one of the mentioned components results in failure of the class.

Assessment Components

The final grade will be composed of the above-mentioned assignments.

YOUR INSTRUCTOR

Azakhiwe Z. Nocanda

Azakhiwe Z. Nocanda, a doctoral candidate at the Institute of Educational Sciences, focusing on Gender and Diversity in Educational Science at Humboldt University in Berlin, is deeply immersed in significant research. Her PhD research investigates the intricate dynamics of class, race, gender, and ethnicity in the Othering of Africans in the context of migration. She earned her M.A. in Sociology with Merit from the University of Glasgow in Scotland and holds a joint Master of Arts in Social Sciences from the Global Studies Program from Albert-Ludwig University of Freiburg in Germany and the University of Cape Town in South Africa. Her research interests encompass Black Consciousness, African migration, intersectional inequalities, and cultural relativism.

While teaching in the third space, she aims to encourage students to broaden their perspectives and acknowledge the importance of the African continent and its ancestral homeland in understanding the dispersal of its people. Recent discussions about racism and discrimination within the African Diaspora have highlighted the need to address unconscious racial prejudices and adopt an informed anti-racist stance. Africa's cultural richness and diversity have significantly impacted receiving societies, as various ethnic groups have created new cultures and revived their traditional ways. Throughout the course, she employs various teaching methods and provides ample opportunities for students to showcase their learning.

COURSE SCHEDULE

2 hours à 45 min per week

Week 1:

Moodle Introduction

Required Readings:

Assignment: Positionality Paper + Intake Questions: You will find the instructions for this on Moodle. Please upload all assignment via Moodle

Due: 17th April 2025 at 16:00pm (Berlin Time)

Week 2:

Research Questionnaire

Required Reading: No assigned reading for this week

Group activity/assignment: Data collection

Assignment: Research questionnaire

Due: to be announced on Moodle

Week 3:

Introduction

Required Reading: Ungubani; Who are you?

Group activity / assignment:

Part I: Introductions of instructor and students

Part II: Review of the syllabus and assignments

Week 4:

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).

Required Readings: All readings are available on Moodle

1. 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.

Group activity/assignment: Research

Due: to be announced on Moodle

On the **DATE 2025** have an assignment due at **16:00 pm**. **This is also the day whereby you will decide if you will REMAIN or LEAVE the course** so we can make space for students on the waiting list. If you do not upload this assignment on Moodle, I will assume you have decided to **LEAVE the course** and with that, I will remove you from the **AGNES** as well as **Moodle** list of the course.

Week 5:

Terms and Conditions: A matter of words

Theory and Practice: The relationship between theory and practice in social science has always been contentious. Recently, many have emphasised the importance of language in capturing how knowledge is applied in practice. Students will deepen their understanding of the historical, social, and intellectual construction of terms in German and globally. They will investigate specific terms and the conditions under which they are utilised, depending on the particular social and historical context. This includes exploring the origins of race in relation to African colonialism and the underlying reasons behind the social construction of race.

Required Reading:

1. Haney López, I. F. (1994). The social construction of race. In Richard Delgado (Ed.) Critical Race Theory: The cutting edge (pp. 191-203). Philadelphia, PA: Temple University.
2. Eigen, Sara and Mark Larrimore (eds.). The German Invention of Race. SUNY Press, 2006.

Assignment: Group Work

Due: To be announced on Moodle

Week 6:

Reading Week

Group activity: Group Presentations

Assigned Reading Due: to be announced on Moodle

During **Week 6** your group will have a 20-minute one-on-one meeting with me to review the structure of your group presentations.

Week 7:

Group Presentations: Part I

Group activity: Group Presentations

Week 8:

Group Presentation: Part II

Group activity: Group Presentations

Week 9:

Colonial Legacies in Germany

Required Reading:

1. Jürgen Zimmerer: Annihilation in Africa: the "race war" in German Southwest Africa (1904–1908) and its significance for a global history of genocide.
- 2.

Group activity/assignment: Critical response questions in preparation for this week's class

Due: to be announced on Moodle

Week 10:

Colonialism hiding in plain sight

Required Reading: To be announced on Moodle

Group activity/assignment: To be announced on Moodle

Due: To be announced on Moodle

Week 11:

Decolonize

Please keep **THURSDAY 26th June 2025** open as a work shop connected to the class will take place on this day.

Week 12:

Feminist (in) while African

This session aims to introduce and frame African Feminism in various contexts, highlighting its intersections with patriarchy, culture, and religion. It will explore feminism from an African feminist perspective, providing a platform for diverse voices and fostering a sense of inclusion and value. The focus will be on questions of equality, equity, liberation, and resistance, introducing students

to the sociocultural processes that shape the experiences of African women and how scholars on the continent address these. Additionally, the session will examine how African feminists develop theoretical and conceptual frameworks grounded in the African worldview to advance the cause of African women. This course section explores the diversity of feminist strategies employed by African women from different regions of the continent to shape their lives. Our primary focus will be to discuss the varied experiences of African women based on an understanding of their social positions as reflected in their cultural productions. We will address feminism in Africa by examining feminist issues through three concentric circles: What are the familial and local gender constructions that socialise women? In what ways do these align with or contradict the notion of women as subjects of the state? Given these two sets of issues, we will engage students in understanding how African feminist concerns differ from or parallel those negotiated by feminists in the West.

Required Reading: To be announced on Moodle

Group activity/assignment: To be announced on Moodle

Due: To be announced on Moodle

Week 13: **Re(imagining) colonial legacies**

Week 14: **Where do we go from here?**

The course and its syllabus are subject to change. Last update: 6th January 2025