

## **(in) Visibly Black: understanding race, racism and the politics of belonging in Berlin**

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Winter Semester 2022/23: 17 October 2022 – 18 February 2023

### **CATEGORY**

Migration and Identity

### **COURSE STRUCTURE**

2 contact hours à 45 min per week (winter semester: 16 weeks)

### **WEEKLY SCHEDULE**

#### **Time**

Tuesday, 12-14 c.t.

#### **Place**

Room 0323-26, Hausvogteiplatz 5-7

### **COURSE LANGUAGE**

This course is taught in English, including assigned readings will be in English. For the understanding of the texts and the 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, engagement in discussions with fellow students, and conversations with invited guest lectures. 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 and comprehension activities throughout the course, along with written reflections, in English. Translations may be possible, however proficiency in English is a necessary element for involvement in this course.

**Language requirements** (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages)

English B2

## TARGET GROUP

International exchange students of all subjects with a strong interest in the course topic. Berlin Perspectives courses are designed for undergraduate students. Master students may participate if their home university agrees. Regular degree-seeking 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 across all intersections of society 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

**English:** How do our unconscious biases impact the way we view people within the African Diaspora? The course aims to explore intersectional inequalities of citizenship and the politics of Belonging and how our unconscious biases impact the way we view (Black) Africans and people within the African Diaspora. 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 relationship between racial and ethnocultural diversity.

The African continent and the ancestral homeland must be central to any informed analysis and understanding of the dispersal of its people. Africa, in all of its cultural prosperity and diversity, remains alive in the receiving societies as the various ethnic groups created new cultures and recreated their old ways as circumstances allowed. Scholars engaging with the African diaspora must be wary not to homogenize the experiences of the diverse people within the diaspora. Whilst there are certain commonalities, there are also fundamental differences born of the societal context, the history, the political, economic, and racial circumstances. A focus will be given to narrative and discourses, both as tools for analysis and comprehending society's othering of the Black body. Exploring these debates plays an important role in understanding the intricacies of how different forms of citizenship are experienced and negotiated by people within the African diaspora.

Students are encouraged to the intentional notion of undoing – unlearning and dismantling unjust practices, assumptions, and institutions – as well as 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 themes covered, however, students are encouraged to reflect on their own identities and the expressions of various identities around the city. Class

sessions will be composed of lectures, online discussions forums and an excursion through Berlin's Black History. Course materials and readings are designed to give special emphasis to the African Diaspora initiatives and perspectives of shaping their own history. Ultimately the course provides students with a wide interdisciplinary introduction into the othering of (Black) Africans, so that students can interpret contemporary African issues with an informed historical background.

**German:** Berlin. Wie beeinflussen unsere unbewussten Vorurteile die Art und Weise, wie wir Menschen der afrikanischen Diaspora wahrnehmen? Dieser Kurs hat das Ziel, intersektionale Ungleichheiten von Staatsbürgerschaft, sowie der Politik des „Dazugehörens“ und wie unsere unbewussten Vorurteile unsere Wahrnehmung von (Schwarzen) Afrikaner\_innen und Menschen der afrikanischen Diaspora beeinflussen, zu untersuchen. Der Zusammenhang zwischen Migration, sozialem Zusammenhalt und nationaler deutscher Identität ist mehr und mehr zu einem politischen Streitpunkt geworden. Historisch betrachtet hat die Ansiedlung von Migrationsgruppen und die Formation von Gruppen ethnischer Minderheiten Veränderungen der sozio-kulturellen, politischen und wirtschaftlichen Landschaft des Migrationslandes zur Folge. Wir werden die Zusammenhänge zwischen ethnischer und ethno-kultureller Diversität untersuchen.

Der afrikanische Kontinent, das Land der Vorfahren muss der zentrale Punkt jeder fundierten Analyse und jedes Verständnisses, im Hinblick auf die Zerstreuung seiner Menschen, sein. Afrika in all seinem kulturellen Reichtum und seiner Vielfalt lebt in den Migrationsländern weiter. Angepasst an die jeweiligen Umstände wurden, durch die immigrierten ethnischen Gruppen, Kulturen neukreiert und rekreiert. Wissenschaftler\_innen, die sich mit der afrikanischen Diaspora befassen, müssen achtsam sein, die Erfahrungen der diversen Menschen innerhalb der Diaspora nicht zu homogenisieren. Es gibt zwar Gemeinsamkeiten, es existieren aber auch fundamentale Unterschiede aufgrund von sozialen Kontexten und geschichtlichen, politischen, wirtschaftlichen und ethnischen Umständen. Ein Fokus (des Kurses) wird die Rolle von Narrativ und Diskurs, als analytische Werkzeuge und als Mittel zum Verständnis von gesellschaftlichem „Othering“ von Schwarzen Menschen sein. Diese Debatten zu untersuchen, spielt eine wichtige Rolle, um die Feinheiten und unterschiedlichen Art und Weisen in denen Staatsbürgerschaft von Menschen, innerhalb der afrikanischen Diaspora, gehandelt wird.

Studierende sind dazu ermutigt bewusst diskriminierende Praktiken und Vorurteile zu „entlernen“ und innerhalb von Institutionen, zu dekonstruieren. Außerdem sind sie ermutigt nachhaltige Aktionen zu kreieren und alternative Räume und Wege zu schaffen, insbesondere im Hinblick auf die (afrikanische) Diaspora. Berlin wird als Fallstudie, für die vorgegebenen Themen des Kurses, dienen. Studierende sind zusätzlich dazu aufgerufen ihre eigene Identität zu reflektieren, sowie die Art und Weise, in der sich diverse Identitäten innerhalb der Stadt ausdrücken. Der Kurs besteht aus Vorlesungen, online Diskussionsforen und Exkursionen durch Berlins Schwarze Geschichte. Kursmaterialien legen einen besonderen Fokus auf Initiativen der afrikanischen Diaspora und Perspektiven zum Formen der eigenen Geschichte. Das Ziel des Kurses ist Studierenden einen ausführlichen, interdisziplinären Überblick über das „Othering“ von (Schwarzen) Afrikaner\_innen zu geben, sodass sie (in Zukunft) zeitgenössische Afrika bezogene Themen mit einem fundierten, historischen Hintergrundwissen interpretieren können.

## COURSE OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

The objective of this Bachelor-level course is to equip students with an in-depth understanding of the complexities of being African in Berlin. Engage in discussion and information-sharing on the historical context of race and racism in Germany and its present day impacts on the (Black) African Diaspora. Placing experiences of race, class and gender at the center of interpretation, "(in) Visibly Black: understanding race, racism and the politics of belonging in Berlin" introduces basic concepts and perspectives of the Othering of Africans. Focusing on present-day issues (with reference to historical trends), we will examine lived experience with an emphasis on how people within the African Diaspora interacts with other identities. Students will be challenged throughout the semester to develop their own answers to some of these questions and develop their own thoughts and arguments through discussion, and writing. In addition, to understand and critically reflect on the most recent theoretical and empirical research as it relates to the Black Body. It will enable students 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.

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

### Knowledge

- **Describe** and **explain** key ideas and concepts concerning the social construction of race and ethnicity
- **Explain** how anti-Black racism acts institutionally, structurally, interpersonally and individually
- Understanding the endemic nature of Anti-Black racism in German society
- Different intersections of negotiation (One's) German identity
- **Articulate** and **critically** examine personal beliefs and opinions about race, class and gender
- **Identify** and **describe** the differences between multicultural and anti-racist education
- Demonstrate understanding of the **impact** of implicit bias, micro-aggressions, and in society
- **Reflect** on the applicability of Eurocentric categories/concepts for describing Africans

### Academic/Transferable Skills

- Producing assignments in different forms including presentations, written essays, research proposals, and critical response questions that require students to reflect on assigned readings, lectures, and their lived experience.
- Evaluate and analyze a wide range of source material from diverse perspectives
- Integrating knowledge from different disciplines in order to develop a new understanding on issues of race, racism, colonialism, intersectionality, inequity and how people within the African diaspora are portrayed within German society.

- Select relevant theories and methods for analyzing people within the African Diaspora
- The ability to read, critique, apply, and understand the theory and content discussed throughout the course.

### 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 independently in order to engage self- reflexively with constructs of race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexuality, nationality.

## **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>

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

[https://www.humanityinaction.org/knowledge\\_detail/facing-the-past-to-liberate-the-future-colonial-africa-in-the-german-mind/](https://www.humanityinaction.org/knowledge_detail/facing-the-past-to-liberate-the-future-colonial-africa-in-the-german-mind/)

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 global 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 Nandan: 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

In order to be granted 5 ECTS, participants will be asked to

actively attend all sessions (a minimum of 75% attendance is required for classroom and online sessions)

prepare and revise the classroom/online sessions

hand in the following **assignments**:

- **Positionality Paper:** The first step in creating social change is to become fluent in your own history and to understand your stand point epistemology and social location. This is the goal of your first assignment. You will engage in an analytical discussion of how your identities interact with social forces. In particular, you will centrally address how intersectionality, oppression, privilege, and social constructions affect your life and inform your experiences.

This short paper asks you to understand your own relationship to the topics that will be covered in this course. [1] [SEP]

- **Critical Response Question/ Literature Review:** Literature review are designed to encourage scholars to critical analyse academic work. The object of a mini Literature Review article is to highlight a particular topic or series of linked topics; highlighting where the gaps are in the literature; and highlighting where there are areas for research development.
- **Questionnaire:** In order to foster cooperative learning and an in-depth study of a particular topic of interest, students will take-part in a questionnaire related to the topics covered in the course. [1] [SEP]
- **Class Excursion:** Reflection paper on the Class Excursion [1] [SEP]
- **Final Assignment:** Each student must submit an essay or an extensive literature review on a topic related to the topics covered in the seminar. This should be between 1800-2000 words. All topics must be approved by the instructor before as they should be relevant to the course. In addition, take-part in a questionnaire on topics related 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 Nocanda-Höhling

I am a (Xhosa) South African doctoral candidate at Humboldt University, Berlin in collaboration with the University of Pretoria, South Africa. My Ph.D. research focuses on the intersection of class, race, gender and ethnicity in the Othering of Africans in the context of Migration. I obtained my M.A in Sociology and graduated with Merit from the University of Glasgow (Scotland). In addition, I hold a joint Master of Arts in Social Sciences from the Global Studies Programme at the Institute for Sociology at Albert-Ludwig University of Freiburg (Germany) and the University of Cape Town (South Africa). My research interest includes Black Consciousness, African migration, intersectional inequalities and racial injustices and cultural relativism.

As an instructor teaching in the third space, my goal is to encourage my students to open their minds to other ways of knowing the world and recognize that in doing so. The African continent and the ancestral homeland must be central to any informed analysis and understanding of the dispersal of its people. Recent exposure and the rising number of discussions about the different dimensions of racism and different types of discrimination experienced by people within the African Diaspora have reaffirmed that while racial prejudices often exist unconsciously, they need to be understood and challenged to ensure an informed anti-racist stance is adopted. Africa, in all of its cultural prosperity and diversity, remains alive in the receiving societies as the various ethnic groups created new cultures and recreated their old ways as circumstances allowed. During the course I provide a variety of methods for learning during class and provide ample opportunity for students to demonstrate their learning.

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## COURSE SCHEDULE

### Week 1: 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

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

**Due:** To be announced on Moodle



## **Week 2:                               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:**

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.

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

**Assignment:** To be announced on Moodle

**Due:** To be announced on Moodle

## **Week 3:                               Terms and Conditions: Social Construction of Race vs 'Rasse'**

Students will further their understanding of historical, social and intellectual construction of race within Germany and around the world; its origins and relation to African colonialism; and the underlying reasons behind the social construction of race.

### **Required Reading:**

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.

Eigen, Sara and Mark Larrimore (eds.). *The German Invention of Race*. SUNY Press, 2006.

**Assignment:** To be announced on Moodle

**Due:** To be announced on Moodle

## **Week 4:                               Colonialism hiding in plain sight**

### **Required Reading:**

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

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

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

**Due:** To be announced on Moodle

**Week 5: (in) Visible Black History of Berlin: African or Colonial Quarter? Part I**

**\*Class Excursion**

We will then explore the influences/traces of German colonialism on the African continent.

**Group activity / assignment:** Reflection Paper

**Due:** To be announced on Moodle

**Week 6: (in) Visible Black History of Berlin: African or Colonial Quarter? Part II**

**Week 7: Reading Week**

**Week 8: Decolonize: Rethinking institutional culture in higher education: The Lesson from South Africa: Part II**

**Required Reading:**

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.

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

**Group activity / assignment:** To be announced on Moodle

**Due:** To be announced on Moodle

## **Week 9: Intersections of German Identity: Citizenship and Belonging in the African Diaspora in Berlin**

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? In this session we will examine framework for the study of belonging and the politics of belonging as it relates to a collective German identity.

### **Required Reading:**

Plantation Memories Episodes of Everyday Racism Grada Kilomba, Chapter 5 and 11

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

**Assignment:** To be announced on Moodle, Group Discussion on notions of identity, citizenship and the politics of belonging

## **Week 10: Feminist (ing) while African Part I**

This session of the course is aimed at introducing and framing African feminism in various contexts and how it intersects with patriarchy, culture and religion. It will explore Feminisms from an African-Feminist perspective to include a multitude of Black women's voices.

We will address the ways in which global feminism provides a space for women to describe their conditions from their own cultural and historical contexts and strengthens the foundation and development of a global intersectional feminist community. For African (Black) women writers around the world, and for women who tell their own stories, the engagement with Blackness, Germaness and feminism adds to a culture of survival and resistance.

**Required Reading:** These will be made available to students

**Group activity / assignment:** Guest Lecture

## **Week 11: Feminist (ing) while African Part II**

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 within Germany. 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.

Implicit bias on the other hand shapes our conscious thought, which in turn guides judgments and decisions.

**Required Reading:** To be announced on Moodle

**Group activity / assignment:** to be announced via Moodle

**Week 12: (Anti-) Racism in Germany**

**Week 13: Final Assignment Presentation**

Students are encouraged to explore a range of different topics, balancing them so that they are both relevant to your interests and also span the subject. During this week students will meet in smaller groups with the course instructor to discuss the content of their final assignment. Each student must submit an essay on a topic related to a topic covered in the seminar. The full details of the Final Assignment can found on Moodle under the section titled:

**Final Assignment**

Students will find all the necessary details concerning the Final Assignment.

**Final Essay due:** To be announced on Moodle

**Week 14: Final Assignment Presentation**

**Week 15: Re (imagine) African (s): Where do we go from here?**

**Week 16: Conclusion of course**

## TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

- Registration on Moodle (HU's e-learning platform)

### in case of online sessions

- Fully functional device (laptop, tablet, PC)
- Stable internet connection
- Software: Zoom (video/audio)
- *Recommended* hardware: external headset for better sound quality

## EXPECTATIONS & POLICIES

**Preparation for lively discussions:** be on time, have at least the required readings completed, and points in mind for discussion or clarification.

**Assignments:** complete all assignments according to the specified requirements on the schedule including handing them over to the lecturer.

**Commitment:** pay particular attention to the lecturer and respect differences of opinions (classmates', lecturers).

**Academic guidelines:** Comply with academic integrity policies (such as no plagiarism or cheating, nothing unethical) especially the academic honor code and the student code of conduct.

**Attendance policy:** Students must contact their class teachers to catch up on missed work – to excuse absence please contact the lecturer.

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The course and its syllabus are subject to change. Last update: 20<sup>th</sup> April 2022