



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

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Winter Semester 2024/25: 14 October 2024 – 14 February 2025

### **CATEGORY**

Colonial Studies

### **COURSE STRUCTURE**

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

### **WEEKLY SCHEDULE**

#### **Time**

Tuesday, 12-14 c.t. (12:15-13:45)

#### **Place**

Hausvogteiplatz 5-7, Room 0323-26

### **COURSE LANGUAGE**

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

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

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 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 Humboldt-Universität's course catalogue *Agnes*. All courses are accredited according to the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

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. We will consider the relationship between colonialism and white supremacy in Germany, whilst examining the ongoing debate around how German (Anti-) racism has been influenced by earlier colonial ideology and practice. We will turn to the resurgence of colonialism as a theme in recent literature and historiography and examine the state of play in contemporary (international) debates about the colonial past.

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.

## **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 centre 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 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

In order to be granted 5 ECTS, participants will be asked to actively attend all 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.

- **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.
- **Class Excursion:** Reflection paper on the Class Excursion
- **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 Z. Nocanda

I am a doctoral candidate at the Institute for Asian and African Studies at Humboldt University in Berlin, in collaboration with the University of Pretoria in 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 with Merit from the University of Glasgow in Scotland. Additionally, 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 in Germany and the University of Cape Town in South Africa. My research interests include Black Consciousness, African migration, intersectional inequalities, racial injustices, and cultural relativism.

While teaching in the third space, I aim 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, I employ a variety of teaching methods and provide ample opportunities for students to showcase their learning.

# COURSE SCHEDULE

2 hours à 45 min per week (16 weeks)

Christmas Break: 23 December 2024 – 3 January 2025

**Week 1: 15.10.2024 Moodle Introduction**

**Week 2: 22.10.2024 Research Questionnaire**

**Week 3: 29.10.2024 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 assignments via Moodle

**Due:** 18<sup>th</sup> October 2024 at 16:00 pm (Berlin Time)

**Week 4: 05.11.2024 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:** Research Assignment

**Due:** 7<sup>th</sup> November 2024 at 16:00 pm (Berlin Time)



**Week 5: 12.11.2024**  
**Race vs 'Rasse'**

**Terms and Conditions: Social Construction of**

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 6: 19.11.2024**

**Reading Week**

**Week 7: 26.11.2024**

**Part I: Terms and Conditions**

**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 by 21<sup>st</sup> November 2024 at 16:00pm (Berlin Time)

**Week 8: 03.12.2024**

**Part II: Terms and Conditions**

**Required Reading:**

**Assignment:** To be announced on Moodle

**Due:** To be announced on Moodle by 28<sup>th</sup> November 2024 at 16:00pm (Berlin Time)

**Week 9: 10.12.2024**

**Part III: Terms and Conditions**

**Required Reading:**

**Assignment:** To be announced on Moodle by the

**Due:** To be announced on Moodle by 5<sup>th</sup> December 2024 at 16:00pm (Berlin Time)

**Week 10: 07.01.2025**

**Reading Week**

**Week 11: 14.01.2025**

**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 12: 21.01.2025**  
**Colonial Quarter?**

**(in) Visible Black History of Berlin: African or**

**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 13: 28.01.2025**

**Decolonize: Rethinking institutional culture in higher education: The Lesson from South Africa**

**Week 14: 04.02.2025**

**African Feminism**

**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 15: 11.02.2024**

**(Anti-) Racism in Germany**

Many 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 persecution 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 16:**

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

## 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 have 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 opinion in this international classroom.

**Academic guidelines:** Comply with academic integrity policies. **Plagiarism** in even a small assignment will result in failing the entire course. See **ZSP-HU** (Fächerübergreifende Satzung zur Regelung von Zulassung, Studium und Prüfung der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin), **§ 111** (Täuschung).

**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: 5<sup>th</sup> August 2024