Syllabus

Gender Studies

Frankfurt Summer School 2019

05 – 15 August 2019
Decolonisation and Feminisms

**General Outline**

The political debate about the restitution of objects removed from the colonies and exhibited in European museums is in full swing. Decolonising knowledges, cultures and policies, socialities and practices, decolonizing power relations in general are an urgent concern of global justice. Feminisms around the world emphasize that these are crucial political and epistemic questions. A critical reflection upon processes of ‘othering’ and disappropriation seeks to understand how coloniality is embedded in political and social structures and how experiences and perceptions of modernity are shaped by colonial heredities. Raising awareness for exclusionary practices includes self-reflection within emancipatory movements. Bearing this in mind decolonial feminist theory analyses unequal, intersecting power relations and brings forward solidarities and policies to overcome these inequalities.

This two weeks module for advanced master students provides insight into theoretical approaches of current feminist theory focusing on postcolonial/decolonial thought. Seminar presentations and discussions are accompanied by lighthouse lectures and practical experiences like face-to-face encounters with local activists and a walking tour along Frankfurt’s colonial ‘sights’.
Seminars

Week 1

05 August, 14-17:30

Session 1: The Coloniality of Gender

Vanessa Thompson

This session offers an introduction to critiques of colonialism and racial capitalism from a feminist perspective. It explores how gendered dynamics, relations and representations have significantly shaped and structured the projects of European enslavement, colonization and empire. Departing from an analytic that brings together the complex workings of race and gender, we will analyze and discuss the history, discourses and re-productions of (various forms of) colonialism, as well as resistance to it. The set of readings includes foundational texts on race, gender, enslavement and colonialism from a variety of perspectives (postcolonial-feminist, decolonial-feminist and black feminist thought) that offer some theoretical and methodological tools to critically explore prominent themes in the field such as labor, dispossession, nationalism and representation.

Key texts:

06 August, 9:00-12:30

Session 2: Entanglements, Differences and Intersectionalities

Vanessa Thompson

Black, chicana, jewish, muslim, third-world and migrant feminisms have crucially intervened in the theories and practices of mainstream western liberal feminisms. They have not only unmasked the universalist assumptions of global sisterhood by pointing at the effects of race, class, religion and sexuality on gendered identities, experiences and struggles, but have also explored the various realms of colonial complicities within white feminist thought. This session approaches decolonial feminisms from a relational perspective and offers students the opportunity to develop a critical vocabulary to analyze the variety of approaches and concepts within decolonial feminisms. The session discusses and traces prominent concepts such as triple oppression, intersectionality, borderlands and gendered orientalism by using a variety of sources, from scholarly articles to archival material, literary and visual formats as well as musical productions.

Key texts:


07 August, 9:00-12:30

Session 3: Transnational Feminist Solidarity in Times of Femonationalism and Carceral Feminism

Vanessa Thompson

Within the current crisis of neoliberal globalization, one can observe a dangerous liaison between right wing populism as well as racism and demands for women’s and LGBT*Q rights and security. The representations and characterizations of racialized and migrant masculinities as foundationally sexist, homo- and queerphobic and dangerous, the active mobilization of the criminal justice system, expansion of police and mass incarceration, necropolitical migration regimes, as well as military interventions in the name of gender equality are some of the most flagrant examples. In this session, we will historicize and discuss the current articulations of these liaisons by drawing on the concepts of femonationalism (Sara R. Farris) and carceral feminism (Angela Y. Davis, Beth E. Richie). We will further engage with the (im)possibilities of transnational feminist solidarities that challenge the current conjunctures.

Key texts (excerpts):


08 August, 9:00-12:30

Session 4: Orientalism Revisited from an Intersectional Perspective

Helma Lutz

Week 2

12 August, 9:00-12:30

Session 5: Experiences in Decolonizing the Curriculum

Working Group on Feminist De/Colonizations at Frankfurt University Social Sciences
13 August, 9:00-12:30 and 14 August, 9:00-12:30

**Sessions 6 and 7: Decolonization, Feminism and Cultural Politics**

*Onur Nobrega*

Sessions 6 and 7 engage with Germany’s colonial history and current debates and political struggles with regards to decolonization and feminism in cultural politics. We examine the role and recent works of academics, artists and activists of color in changing Germany’s cultural landscape. The course consists of theoretical readings in the sociology of culture, critical race studies and postcolonial studies, which support the students in developing an interdisciplinary theoretical framework to investigate the relationship between decolonization, feminism and cultural politics. Alongside the theoretical texts, the course also draws on an archive of artistic works and media examples and the students also have the opportunity to engage with artists, activists and curators in cultural institutions and the independent artistic scene in Frankfurt.

15 August, 9:00-12:30

Evaluation/Exam

**Lecturers**

**Prof. Helma Lutz, [Website](#)**

*Helma Lutz* is Professor of Sociology with a focus on Women’s and Gender Studies at the Department of Social Sciences at the Goethe University Frankfurt. Her main research topics include: Gender and Care, Transnational Migration, Intersectionality, Racism and Ethnicity as well as Qualitative and Biographical research methods. Since 2015, she is the acting director of the Cornelia Goethe Center for Women’s and Gender Studies.

**Dr. Onur Suzan Nobrega, [Website](#)**

Onur Suzan Nobrega is lecturer at the Institute of Sociology, Focus Culture and Migration at Goethe-University Frankfurt. She gained her PhD from Goldsmiths, University of London in Media and Communications with a thesis entitled »Postmigrant Theatre and Cultural Diversity in the Arts: Race, Precarity and Artistic Labour in Berlin«. Since 2008 Dr. Nobrega’s work has been internationally and transdisciplinary located in the fields of Sociology, Media, Film and Cultural Studies. Previously to and alongside academia, she has worked as journalist (die taz), tour manager for the Black German music project Brothers Keepers, curator for the postmigrant theatre Ballhaus Naunynstrasse Berlin and as project partner, organizer and lecturer for the Museum of Contemporary Art, Kunsthalle Mannheim’s Community College to the field of the arts, media and creative industries.

**Dr. des. Vanessa Thompson, [Website](#)**

*Vanessa Eileen Thompson* is a postdoctoral researcher and lecturer at the Institute of Sociology at Goethe-University Frankfurt. She was previously a distinguished guest lecturer in Gender and Queer Studies at the University of Cologne, Germany and a fellow at the Department of Black Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara.
Her research and teaching are focused on black studies, critical race and racism studies, post- and decolonial feminist theories and methodologies, gender and queer studies, critical criminology and security studies, and social movement theories.

**Working Group on Feminist De/Colonizations at Frankfurt University Social Sciences.**
Prof. Uta Ruppert et al.

**General Information**

The course comprises 24.5 contact hours (7*3.5 hours). Upon successful completion, 4 ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) points will be awarded for the course module. A single ECTS point is defined as the equivalent of 25 to 30 hours of student workload. This includes class hours, additional preparations for class activities, readings, assignments as well as final assessments.

**Attendance:**
Participants have to attend at least 80 % of the classes.

**Evaluation/Exam:**

The final evaluation will be based on a presentation at the end of the module. Possible subjects for the presentations are the topics of the sessions, texts read, unanswered questions, own study interests, etc. and will be discussed in detail during the sessions.

Assessment and award of credit points will be on a pass/fail basis, no grades will be given.