

The Wretched of the Pandemic. Postcolonial local and global perspectives on the Corona Crisis

Sommersemester 2021

Dr. Vanessa E. Thompson

Course Description:

The current Corona crisis has (again) laid bare the differential logics at the heart of racial gendered capitalism. Whether it be the continuing necropolitical responses to the flight and movement of those rendered migrants, refugees and asylum seekers; the further expansion of neoliberal securitization and policing alongside intersectional vectors of vulnerabilities; the state sanctioned abandonment of vulnerable groups through underfunding and austerity; or articulations of the gendered and racialized division of labor, often termed 'essential work'— although Covid-19 makes no difference, the crisis unfolds alongside differential vectors of exploitation and domination. This course engages with this differentiability by drawing on key texts from political, social and cultural theories, especially from black, postcolonial, feminist, critical racism and migration studies. Tracing the historicity of global pandemics and their linkages to enslavement, colonialism and global capitalism, the course analyses epidemics as social and political conjunctures. During the course, we will also analyse particular but entangled fields of the pandemic, such as public health policies and medical racism, societal structures of care work, containment and incarceration, migration, global inequalities and poverty. Besides the reading and discussion of texts, students will work on and present small practical research projects.

Course Organisation:

The course consists of short lectures and presentations by the instructor and invited guests, collective discussions, break up sessions for smaller group discussions, and group presentations of small research projects at the end of the course. Course sessions foreground discussion of the texts, so please come prepared. Besides theoretical texts and empirical studies, the course will be supplemented by cultural and media formats and productions.

Class climate

In this course we will aim to establish a respectful, accountable and inclusive atmosphere. Please contact me as the instructor of this class with any discomfort with regard to the class climate, accessibilities and/or challenges.

The current situation in this pandemic poses multiple challenges to teachers and students alike (and though many of these are not new, the pandemic has often deepened them, e.g. worries about families and friends, health conditions, care work, financial hardships, online stress, access to facilities, and politics of solidarity). It is not expected to learn 'as usual' under these conditions.

Please contact me if there are special needs or problems with regard to the online-course and we will try to find a solution together.

Course Program:

1. 15.04.2021 Introduction

Introduction to the course, course participants introduction, guidelines and course climate, organizational questions

2. 22.04.2021 The Wretched of the Earth

Fanon, Frantz (1963): *The Wretched of the Earth*, New York: Grove Press, pp. 1-62.

Wynter, Sylvia (1994): 'No Humans Involved: An Open Letter to my Colleagues', *Forum N.H.: Knowledge for the 21st Century*, 1(1): 47-72.

3. 29.04.2021 Can the Subaltern Speak?

Spivak, Gayatri Ch. (1988): 'Can the Subaltern Speak?', in: C Nelson & L. Grossberg (eds.), *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, pp. 271-313.

Loomba, Ania (2005): *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*, New York: Routledge, pp. 192-204

4. 06.05.2021 Pandemic Biopolitics

Foucault, Michel (1997): *Society Must Be Defended, Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-76*, New York: Picador, pp. 239-265.

Lorenzini, Danielle (2020): 'Biopolitics in the Time of Coronavirus', online:
<https://criting.wordpress.com/2020/04/02/biopolitics-in-the-time-of-coronavirus/>
(Accessed April 14, 2021).

Matthew, Hannah, Hutta, Jan S. & Christoph Schemann (2020): 'Thinking Corona measures with Foucault', online:
<https://www.kulturgeo.uni-bayreuth.de/de/news/2020/Thinking-Corona-measures-with-Foucault/Thinking-Corona-measures-with-Foucault.pdf>
(Accessed April 14, 2021).

5. 13.05.2021 Necropolitics

Mbembe, Achille (2003): 'Necropolitics', *Public Culture* 15(1): 11-40.

6. 20.05.2021 Infectious Diseases and the Wretched

Film and discussion: *Bending the Arc* (2017), directed by Pedro Kos and Kief Davidson

7. 27.05.2021 Racial Capitalism and Covid-19

Bhattacharyya, Gargi (2018): *Rethinking Racial Capitalism. Questions of Reproduction and Survival*. London, New York: Rowman & Littlefield, chapter 4, pp. 101-125.

Bhambra, Gurminder (2020): 'Rethinking Brexit in the light of Covid-19', online:
<https://archive.discoverysociety.org/2020/04/22/rethinking-brexit-in-the-light-of-covid-19/>
(Accessed April 14, 2021).

Edwards, Zophia (2021): 'Racial Capitalism and COVID-19', online:
<https://monthlyreview.org/2021/03/01/racial-capitalism-and-covid-19/>
(Accessed April 14, 2021).

Haymarket Books Video: How to Beat Coronavirus Capitalism:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5lxwLHRKaB0>
(Accessed April 14, 2021).

8. 03.06.2021 Social Reproduction and Care

Federici, Silvia (1998): *Caliban and the Witch*, Brooklyn, New York: Autonomedia, pp. 61-131.

Alcorta, Eli Gómez (2020): 'CoronaShock and Patriarchy', online: <https://thetricontinental.org/studies-4-coronashock-and-patriarchy/> (Accessed April 14, 2021).

Leiblfinger, Michael, Prieler, Veronika, Schwiter, Karin, Steiner, Jennifer, Benazha, Aranka, & Helma Lutz (2020): 'Impact of COVID-19 policy responses on live-in care workers in Austria, Germany, and Switzerland', *Journal of Long-Term Care*:144-150.

9. 10.06.2021 Securitization. Borders and Policing

Heller, Charles (2021): 'De-confining borders: towards a politics of freedom of movement in the time of the pandemic', *Mobilities*, 16(1): 113-133.

Thompson, Vanessa E. (2020): 'Beyond Policing, for a politics of breathing', in Koshka Duff (eds.), *Abolishing the Police*, London: Dog Section Press, pp. 179-193.

Mezzadra, Sandro & Maurice Stierl (2020): 'What happens to freedom of movement during a pandemic?', online: <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/can-europe-make-it/what-happens-freedom-movement-during-pandemic/> (Accessed April 14, 2021).

10. 17.06.2021 Medical Racism and Sanitary Apartheid

Benjamin, Ruha (2020): 'Black Skin, White Masks: Racism, Vulnerability & Refuting Black Pathology', online: <https://aas.princeton.edu/news/black-skin-white-masks-racism-vulnerability-refuting-black-pathology> (Accessed April 14, 2021).

Taylor, Keeanga-Yamahtta (2020): 'The Black Plague', online: <https://www.newyorker.com/news/our-columnists/the-black-plague> (Accessed April 14, 2021).

Mazarura, Tatenda & Mark Heywood (2021): 'China and Russia versus the West: What will be the true cost of vaccine nationalism for Africa?', online: <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2021-03-29-china-and-russia-versus-the-west-what-will-be-the-true-cost-of-vaccine-nationalism-for-africa/> (Accessed April 14, 2021).

Bonhomme, Enda (2021): 'From HIV to Covid, pandemics show us fear of disease is coloured by prejudice', online: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/feb/22/hiv-covid-pandemics-fear-disease-prejudice>

11. 24.06.2021 Group Project Sessions

12. 01.07.2021 Group Project Sessions

13. 08.07.2021 Project Presentations

14. 15.07.2021 Project Presentations

15. 21.07.2021 Final Discussion

Roy, Arundhati (2020): 'The Pandemic is a Portal', online:

<https://www.ft.com/content/10d8f5e8-74eb-11ea-95fe-fcd274e920ca>

The Leap and the Intercept (2020): 'A Message from the Future II: The Years of Repair', online:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2m8YACFJIMg>