SYLVIA WYNTER: THE COLONIALITY OF BEING (16072)

Summer Term 2020 | Thursday 12-14 Uhr | online teaching
Taught by: Henrike Kohpeiß & Jan Slaby

April 23	Introduction: Topic and Work Formats Webex-Meeting
April 30	Aimé Césaire: *Discourse on Colonialism* (1950)
May 7	Katherine McKittrick / Sylvia Wynter: *Unparalleled Catastrophe for our Species? Or, to Give Humanness a Different Future: Conversations* (2015), P. 1-33

[Coloniality of Being]

| May 14 | Sylvia Wynter: *Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom: Towards the Human, After Man, Its Overrepresentation--An Argument* (2003)
Introduction, Part I (-283) |

   (May 21: *Christi Himmelfahrt* bank holiday, no class)

May 28	Sylvia Wynter: *Unsettling the Coloniality of Being,* Part II (283-303)
June 4	Sylvia Wynter: *Unsettling the Coloniality of Being,* Part III, IV (303-331)
June 11	Denise Ferreira da Silva: *Before Man – Sylvia Wynter's Rewriting of the Modern Episteme* (2015)

[Sociogeny]

June 18	Frantz Fanon: *Black Skin White Masks* (1952; Ch. L. Markmann translation 1967/1986), Introduction, ch. 1, ch. 5, ch. 6
June 25	Sylvia Wynter: *Towards the Sociogenic Principle: Fanon, Identity, the Puzzle of Conscious Experience and what it is like to be "Black"* (1999)
July 2	Katherine McKittrick: *Axis, Bold as Love: On Sylvia Wynter, Jimi Hendrix, and the Promise of Science* (2015)
July 9	*tba*
July 16	*tba*

Work formats and course requirements

We plan a mixture of work formats which combine live sessions for the entire group with self study and group-based formats, including a higher amount of writing assignments throughout the semester. As we all learn new things as we go along under these new conditions, our initial ideas and plans may change in the coming weeks. Please make sure to send us feedback and suggestions for improving our course and tell us early if things do not work well.

Modul exam options

We will offer students the chance to obtain a term-paper-equivalent graded exam through essaywriting throughout the semester. The essays will relate to the week's reading. <u>**Four short essays**</u> (1000-1300 words each) will be counted for a full term paper. If you chose this option, we will provide speedy and relatively detailed feedback on everybody's first two essays. The other two essays will be read and graded after the term has ended in mid-July. This way, we hope to offer a somewhat more hands-on writing training and closer monitoring of progress, and hopefully enabling more participants to obtain the full credits/Modulschein.

We will offer the chance to hand in an essay every week. The first week's essay (on the text by Césaire), will not be graded and doesn't count for the exam, so you can use it as a training session and for "testing the waters". From week 2 onward, you have the chance to submit an essay counting to the final grade every week. We request essays be submitted by Saturday, 2pm, as pdf attachment to jan.slaby@fu-berlin.de and Henrike.kohpeiss@fu-berlin.de

Of course, the option to write a regular term paper during the summer break remains in place (deadline: September 30, 2020).

Course work formats

Weekly questions

We require each participant to regularly submit questions/commentaries to the discussion board of the Blackboard course page. The question/commentary should engage with an aspect of the week's course reading that is particularly difficult/interesting/relevant/thought provoking or something else that catches your attention. Questions/Comments should be about 130-180 words long, and provide some context to make the issue you raise intelligible to the casual reader. Obviously, you can use these questions as preparations for potential essay topics. To obtain "aktive Teilnahme", you are required to upload **seven** such questions/commentaries, deadline is Wednesdays 2 pm before each session. The questions/commentaries have to be typed or pasted into the discussion board for the respective week (no file attachments).

Team audio presentation

We will create permanent study groups of 4 or 5 participants. These groups should be a main forum for discussing the course texts, and we will often reserve some of the seminar time on Thursdays for group discussions. Each group is required to prepare one **audio presentation** on a central concept from Wynter (we will provide a list of concepts soon). Presentations should be about 10-13 minutes long and adhere roughly to a podcast format (that is, scripted, focused text, presented in an engaging conversational style that makes for good listening). We plan to have one presentation in each week, starting with week 2 (May 7). Presentations should be made available via Blackboard no later than 6pm on Wednesdays before the session.

The seven weekly question and the participation in a study group audio presentation together make up "aktive Teilnahme".

Discussion "in class"

We will not do a regular online classroom discussion for the full 90 minutes each week, because the dynamics and intensity probably won't equal the ways in which we would be discussing in person. The study groups are formed in order to create a more convenient space for online exchange that hopefully allows more people to speak than big online gathering would.

As instructors, we will contribute to this format by firstly, giving a kick-off input for each session to the whole course, reacting especially to your weekly questions and, secondly, "visiting" / temporarily participating in the study groups.

Unless otherwise indicated (via blackboard e-mail usually Wednesday evenings), we begin each week's session with a meeting with the whole course, via webex meetings (FU Berlin software of choice, freely available at cedis both online or as app for download).

This semester, teaching will be a dynamic process of constant adjustments. The conversation and exchange with you, the course participants is very important for it. We are very excited about teaching Sylvia Wynter's work and will try to live up to its greatness by being flexible and listening to your suggestion, to make that come across.

If you have any questions, feedback, critique, suggestions or need help – course-related or concerning your overall studies – please do not hesitate to contact us. We are here to help and are committed to making this semester work for all of you.

Technicalities

For plenum sessions, we will work with the application "WebEx Meetings" that is made available by FU for this semester. We will meet for each session in a pre-scheduled meeting to listen to the initial input "together" and then split into the groups. For the group work, we will try to use the "WebEx-Teams" App/Browser version in which you can not only meet for the group calls, but also communicate in a chatroom, share documents and other materials. It is similar to the application "Slack" and can be a nice and less complicated addition to Blackboard. You can find an overview of functions and how to install it here (Only available in German): https://wikis.fu-berlin.de/display/webexwiki/Webex+Teams

Other options for group work are "WebEx-meetings" or "WebEx Training", which is a bit more basic and can be accessed through your Zedat-Account in the "Webex" Section.

Our inputs will be recorded and made available in case people have poor internet connection or cannot participate for other reasons.

We suggest for you to have your group meetings during the regular time of the seminar. But since the coming months will be difficult in different ways and people might have to adopt other schedules for childcare or the like, you are free to reschedule. Just make sure that you remain in a continuous exchange with your group and help not to let anybody just drop unnoticed, which is more likely under these circumstances.

Audio Presentations, format and submission details

Your presentations should be about 10-13 minutes long and adhere roughly to a podcast format (that is, scripted, focused text, presented in an engaging conversational style that makes for good listening). We plan to have one presentation in each week, starting with week 2 (May 7). Presentations should be made available via Blackboard no later than 6pm on Wednesdays before the session.

To record your scripted audio contributions, you can use quick time player on your computer, a voice recording app on your phone or whatever other equipment is available to you. The files should be uploaded to the respective session-folder in the "Material"-section. Valid formats are .aiff, .mp3, .midi, .mp, .wav, or .wma.