COURSE DETAIL

ESSAYS BY WOMEN WRITERS AFTER WW II. FORMS, CULTURAL PRACTICES, ETHICS

Country
Germany

Host Institution
Free University of Berlin

Program(s)
Free University Berlin

UCEAP Course Level
Upper Division

UCEAP Subject Area(s)
Comparative Literature American Studies

UCEAP Course Number
112

UCEAP Course Suffix

UCEAP Official Title
ESSAYS BY WOMEN WRITERS AFTER WW II. FORMS, CULTURAL PRACTICES, ETHICS

UCEAP Transcript Title
POST-WW2 WOMN ESSAY

UCEAP Quarter Units
4.50

UCEAP Semester Units
3.00

Course Description

This seminar first develops a brief overview of the form and theory of the essay as a literary genre. Primarily, however, the course reads and analyzes essays North American women writers who, in particular from the 1960s onwards, appropriated and henceforth shaped the form and tradition of the essay. To understand the profound aesthetic and social influence and the cultural work of women authors after World War II, the course devotes some time to canonical authors such as Susan Sontag and Joan Didion. Not least because of the very cultural authority of these writers and their early and pivotal periods of production in the era of counterculture and the women's movement in the United States, the Cold War and accelerating globalization, the course explores how these - and other - women essayists wrote about the Other, about the world. Frequently, in the essay itself and in research on it, the "I," the introspection of the writer, takes center stage. While this is highly relevant to an understanding of the genre, the course wants to venture a shift of perspective and ask: What forms of observation and description, what ethics of regarding the Other (or lack thereof) can be found in these texts? What imagery, cultural valences, and political implications can be distilled from the essays? In addition, the course pays special attention to works by African American women writers such as Audre Lorde, Alice Walker, and June Jordan. African American writers in particular used the essay as a medium of political self-authorization, social critique, and literary renegotiation of cultural knowledge and female and minority subjectivity. Which distinct aesthetics of factual writing did they develop, how did they inscribe themselves in canonical essay traditions, yet how did they also perform productive fractures and critiques of these and develop alternative forms of essayistic thinking and writing?

Language(s) of Instruction
English

Host Institution Course Number

32201

Host Institution Course Title
ESSAYS BY WOMEN WRITERS AFTER WW II. FORMS, CULTURAL PRACTICES, ETHICS

Host Institution Course Details
https://www.fu-berlin.de/vv/en/lv/751758?query=Essays+by+women+writers+after+WW...

Host Institution Campus

Host Institution Faculty
JOHN F. KENNEDY-INSTITUT FÜR NORDAMERIKASTUDIEN

Host Institution Degree

Host Institution Department
John-F.-Kennedy-Institut für Nordamerikastudien

Course Last Reviewed
2022-2023

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