COURSE DETAIL

POLITICAL CULTURES OF IGNORANCE
Country Germany
Host Institution Humboldt University Berlin
Program(s) Humboldt University Berlin
UCEAP Course Level Upper Division
UCEAP Subject Area(s) Sociology Political Science
UCEAP Course Number 117
UCEAP Course Suffix
UCEAP Official Title POLITICAL CULTURES OF IGNORANCE
UCEAP Transcript Title POL CULTR IGNORANCE
UCEAP Quarter Units 4.50
UCEAP Semester Units 3.00

Course Description

Ignorance looms large in our current political discourses. From the ignorance of epidemiological facts shaping pandemic policy and public compliance or willful ignorance of climate change which continues to perpetuate the reliance of fossil fuels to naive ignorance of epistemic exclusions that to reproduce marginalizations on the basis of race and gender, ignorance takes center stage in key public debates. With so much putative ignorance around, one might get the impression that ignorance more than knowledge gives shape to contemporary political cultures. Yet, with a more careful eye towards how ignorance functions, it is clear that we are not dealing with a singular idea. Rather, there are multiple discourses around, definitions of, and practices built on ignorance. This seminar distinguishes between two particular modalities of ignorance: positive and negative ignorance. That is, 1) ignorance defined through the absence of specific forms of knowledge, and 2) ignorance defined in terms of someone's positionality in and situated knowledge of a complex system. The course traces the first modality of ignorance via its deployment in current political debates such as climate change, racial marginalization, and intersectional feminism. In these discourses, ignorance functions as a foundation for critique, as a moral imperative, and even as basis for political activism. The second modality of ignorance, perhaps better understood in terms of aporia, can be found today in a variety of positive programs for dealing with complexity (aporetics) such as administrative decentralization, neoliberal economics, and even public sector design. The course introduces some of the epistemological and practical preconditions for such aporetic governance. Finally, the seminar asks what forms of research, ethical conduct, and political practices may be mobilized in response to or built upon ignorance and aporia.

Language(s) of Instruction
English

Host Institution Course Number
532840

Host Institution Course Title

POLITICAL CULTURES OF IGNORANCE

Host Institution Course Details
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Host Institution Campus

Host Institution Faculty
KULTUR-, SOZIAL- UND BILDUNGSWISSENSCHAFTLICHE FAKULTÄT

Host Institution Degree

Host Institution Department
Kulturwissenschaft

Course Last Reviewed
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