

Feminist Autonomous Centre for research
Call for Participants
Abolition Feminisms
Community Course
Fall 2022

October 4 to December 6, 2022

Tuesdays 6-9 p.m.

FAC research (in person)

Ag. Panteleimonos 7b

104 46 Athens

Instructor: Anna Carastathis

Email: anna@feministresearch.org

Office hours: Mondays and Tuesdays,

10 am to 1 pm

(in person or virtually)

Since the Black Lives Matter uprisings in the summer of 2020 in the aftermath of the police killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Tony McDade, calls to defund the police and abolish the prison industrial complex have resonated with many people around the world. Abolition, today, circulates widely as an idea; increasingly, people identify their politics as “abolitionist.” While the verb “to abolish” seems negative, abolition feminists insist that abolition is not just about tearing the current system down, but rendering it obsolete. “Abolition is about presence, not absence” as geographer Ruth Wilson Gilmore has said: “it’s about building life-affirming institutions,” in place of current ones, which reproduce, normalise, and proliferate violence. Abolitionist feminists seek to prefigure alternative conceptions of justice that do not rely on state control and punishment or carceral logics (including transformative justice, communities of care, and feminist self-defense). In this community course, we will engage with Black feminist theories of abolition, including, notably, the work of philosopher and former political prisoner Angela Davis. We will ask: What are the implications of abolition feminisms for our own political subjectivities, collectivities, and movements in the here and now?

Languages: English and Greek (passive bilingualism)¹

Contact hours: 30 (ten three-hour course meetings. Prospective participants should be available to attend all of them, barring unforeseen emergencies.)

Preparation hours: 70 (prospective participants should be aware that this is a reading- and writing-intensive course that requires a time commitment outside meetings of approximately 7 hours per week over ten weeks).

Cost: there are no tuition fees; participants should be or become [members](#) of FAC for the academic year 2022–2023 (sliding scale: €0–€200).

Participants: 10

¹ Passive bilingualism refers to the practice of alternating two languages in an interlocutory context: in this case, people who feel most comfortable to speak and write (active use of language) in Greek can do so, but must have adequate knowledge of the English language in listening and reading (passive use of language) to understand their interlocutors and the readings—and vice versa (English speakers must have sufficient ease in passive use of Greek).

Instructional method: The pedagogical approach in community courses at FAC is informed by feminist, decolonial epistemologies. We emphasise experiential engagement with theoretical and political questions, reflecting on our positionality and acknowledging our embodiment.

Further, in community courses instructors and participants commit to creating horizontal relationships that disrupt and deconstruct hegemonic hierarchies between “professor” and “student,” based on FAC’s [code of contact](#).

Disrupting the division of labour between “research” and “teaching/learning,” community courses at FAC stage a process of enquiry-based learning. Enquiry-based learning is a pedagogical method that mirrors the research process through four stages:

- (1) **ask:** generate, pose, and refine the question(s);
- (2) **investigate:** seek information, perspectives, approaches to answer the question(s);
- (3) **create:** bring something into existence that illuminates the question(s) and response(s) to it/them (in written, oral, visual, or other material form);
- (4) **present/discuss:** share what you have produced with others and seek their responses to it, including new questions;
- (5) **reflect:** think about the process/product and reflect on the original question(s), often generating new ones.

Although this process is not always linear and its stages may be overlapping and/or recursive, in this course we will use it as a model to structure our time together (see schedule below).

Objectives:

- To learn about abolitionist feminist theories, which originate in Black feminist praxis;
- To engage deeply with feminist arguments in favour of abolishing the prison industrial complex and develop informed positions on the political imperatives they raise;
- To understand the abolitionist critiques of carceral feminism, on the one hand, and police/prison reform, on the other.
- To reflect on the implications of abolitionist arguments for an intersectional feminist theory of justice;
- To understand the intellectual lineages of abolition feminisms (including intersectionality, Black Marxism, Black Power, communism, and anarchism) as

well as the socio-historical contexts in which abolition feminisms arise (including the legacy and afterlives of slavery in mass incarceration);

- To become acquainted with the underpinnings of contemporary struggles for prison abolition, police abolition, and border abolition;
- To consider how carcerality, control, and punishment has been theorised by abolitionist feminisms as infusing social relations and institutions beyond literal prisons (such as education, asylum/migration, welfare, health care, family, etc.), constituting a carceral continuum;
- To free and expand our imaginations and orient ourselves toward the normative horizons of abolition feminisms (including transformative justice).

Outcome: Participants in the course will be supported through 4 workshops and in office hours to create a piece of writing (max. 4000 words, in Greek or English) that represents their learning/research process. That is, the written text (which can be analytical, argumentative, narrative, expository, fictional, poetic, etc.) will address a question developed, researched, analysed, and reflected upon, drawing on readings, collective discussions, and our own experiences. These texts will go through a process of revision during the course and be presented in the form of an open-access edited publication.

Readings:

Angela Y. Davis, *Are Prisons Obsolete?*

Angela Y. Davis with Eduardo Mendieta, *Abolition Democracy: Beyond Empire, Prisons, and Torture*. (Δημοκρατία χωρίς δεσμά. Αμερικανική αυτοκρατορία, φυλακές και η ανεκπλήρωτη κατάργηση της δουλείας, μτφ. Κώστας Ράπτης)

Angela Y. Davis, *Freedom Is A Constant Struggle*.

Angela Y. Davis, Gina Dent, Erica R. Meiners, Beth E. Richie, *Abolition. Feminism. Now*.

Άντζελα Ντέιβις, *Φεμινισμός της κατάργησης. Θεωρίες και πρακτικές του καιρού μας. Ενδέκατη ετήσια διάλεξη στη μνήμη του Νίκου Πουλιαντζά*, μτφ. Μιχάλης Λαλιώτης.

Brenna Bhandar and Rafeef Ziadah, eds., *Revolutionary Feminisms* (selections)

Robyn Maynard, *Policing Black Lives: State Violence in Canada from Slavery to the Present*.

Mariame Kaba, *We Do This 'Til We Free Us*.

Ching-In Chen, Jai Dulani, Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, *The Revolution Starts at Home: Confronting Intimate Violence within Activist Communities*. (selections)

And more...

Schedule:

Phase 1. ASK

October 4

First course meeting. Introductions. Collectively setting the parameters of consensual exchange within the course. Presenting the initial questions with which we come to the course. “Quescussion.” Participants select 1 text to read over the coming week and summarise in the following meeting to help us create our syllabus.

October 11

Presentation of text summaries. Collective creation of course syllabus (we’ll decide together what to read when). Refinement of research questions.

Phase 2. INVESTIGATE

October 18

Readings: TBD

Discussion of readings. During the week, participants begin to read widely and purposefully in relation to their research question. Discussion of “active reading” strategies.

October 25

Readings: TBD

Discussion of readings. During the week, participants continue to read widely and purposefully in relation to their research question. Participants may also conduct one or two “expert interviews” during the coming week. Discussion of expert interview method.

November 1

Readings: TBD

Discussion of readings. During the coming week, participants synthesise their reading/interviews as we shift from reading/listening to writing. Discussion of reading-to-writing transition.

Phase 3. CREATE

November 8

Readings: TBD

Writing Workshop 1: Outline

Discussion of readings. On Monday by 10 am, participants will email the instructor their outline, which will be discussed in this course meeting. (A template for the outline will be provided)

November 15

Readings: TBD

Writing Workshop 2: Very rough draft. On Monday by 10 am, participants will email the instructor a “rough and dirty” draft of their text. These drafts will be workshopped during the course meeting. We will discuss the politics of citation, and identify when we might need to go back to “asking” and “investigating” in and through writing.

November 22

Readings: TBD

Writing Workshop 3: Revised draft. On Monday by 10 am, participants will email the instructor a revised draft. In the workshop we will discuss the ways to finalise a draft, check our citation practices, and how to “let go” of a piece of writing..

Phase 4. PRESENT

November 29

Readings: TBD

Writing Workshop 4: Final draft. On Monday by 10 am, participants will email the instructor a final draft. The last workshop will be about proofreading.

PHASE 5. REFLECT

December 6

Last course meeting. Conclusions. Reflective circle. Next steps?

To submit an expression of interest, [please fill out this form](#).

Deadline: September 27, 11:59 p.m. Athens time.

You will be notified of the outcome by the end of the week, September 30.

If you have any questions or concerns, please email the instructor at anna@feministresearch.org.