



# **GENDERED VIOLENCE AND TRANSFORMATIVE JUSTICE**

**A COMMUNITY COURSE**

**WITH ANNA CARASTATHIS AND VALENTINA AZAROVA  
FEMINIST AUTONOMOUS CENTRE FOR RESEARCH**

**Feminist Autonomous Centre for research  
Syllabus**

**Gendered Violence and Transformative Justice**

Community Course  
Winter 2024

**January 30 to April 2, 2023**

Tuesdays 6–9 p.m.  
FAC (in person)  
Ag. Panteleimonos 7b  
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**Facilitators:**

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Office hours: Wednesdays 4-6 pm  
(in person or virtually, by appointment)

What is gendered violence? (How) can we end it?

This ten-week community course is designed as a space of embodied learning through collective reflection, enquiry, and action with the aim of revisiting our understandings of gendered violence through the lens of abolitionist feminist struggles to end it. We will ask how violence—in its intra- and interpersonal, as well as its systemic institutional and structural manifestations—appears at intersections, becomes ambient, even atmospheric. This course is particularly addressed to people already engaged in social struggles against gendered, racialised, and sexualised violence. We extend an invitation to co-create a space of self-inquiry and reflexivity with a view to collaborative action, within the course and beyond it.

In this course, we will consider that there is a two-way, dialectical relation between the conceptual and theoretical understandings of violence, abuse, and harm that inform the ways in which we understand such experiences, and our visions and practices of justice and accountability in response to them. Such conceptions of and responses to violence, particularly as enabled by legal logics and the state's so-called justice systems, often reproduce the violence of domination and separation perpetuated by oppressive systems. Through reading, listening, and sharing views, we will develop an understanding of this lexicon, with a view to unlearn the epistemic violence inherent in the ways we are often habituated to talk or think about gendered, racialised, and sexualised violence. We will also try to imagine, cocreate and perhaps even experiment with other ways of addressing violence.

**Questions.** The facilitators of the course bring the following questions (to which participants, and all of us collectively, will add others):

- What is "gendered" about gendered violence? How does violence enforce normative genders? Is gender itself violent? How is the violence of gender implicated and co-constitutive of the violence of race, and how are they sexualised?
- How do we integrate the lessons around the ways in which dominant approaches

to “gender-based violence” reproduce carceral feminist approaches to justice, for instance by either supporting racist policing or masculinist forms of protection?

- How can we heal from the effects of state violence by prefiguring alternative conceptions of justice that do not rely on state control and punishment or carceral logics? Such as: transformative justice, communities of care, and feminist self-defence.
- How can transformative justice approaches illuminate pathways of resistance to and abolition of gendered, sexualised, and racialised violence?

In this community course, we hope to engage with Black feminist and transfeminist abolitionist theories of violence and justice in response to violence in our communities, movements, at the state and international levels, including militarism, racial capitalism and colonialism. We hope to collectively reflect on the ways in which responses to gendered violence can be aligned with a praxis of resistance to violence that centres collective care and transformation as forms of justice. What are the implications of such political imaginaries and prefigurative praxes for our own political subjectivities, collectivities, and movements in the here and now?

**Readings:** We invite participants to read and build upon our collective [Resource List](#) during the individual preparation period (December 2023–January 2024). We will also continue to do so from our side, in the coming weeks. We will discuss and decide on the readings on which we'll focus together at our first course meeting.

**Praxis:** Course participants are invited to co-create and share their thoughts and feelings about the topics and issues we discuss throughout the course, through any media that would help them, including a piece of writing, a mural, a strategy for an autonomous feminist shelter, a film, etc.... We suggest that we collectively organise a public forum the week of March 8 (to take place on March 5), during which we might want to present some of these creations.

**Languages:** English, with possibility of serial translation<sup>1</sup> into Greek if needed.

**Contact hours:** 30, Ten three-hour course meetings. Participants commit to attending all of them (barring unforeseen emergencies and other unavoidable barriers).

**Preparation hours:** 50, Participants should be aware that this is a reading- and writing-intensive course that requires a time commitment outside meetings of approximately 5 hours per week over ten weeks. Individual preparation in advance (reading through the resource list) can lessen this weekly time commitment.

**Cost:** there are no tuition fees; participants are invited to become [members](#) of FAC for the academic year 2023–2024 (sliding scale: €0-€200).

**Participants:** 17

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<sup>1</sup> Serial translation refers to practices of interpretation that occur in real time, after the speaker has spoken, as opposed to simultaneous interpretation, where the interpreter is speaking over the speaker on a different audible or, in the case of sign languages, visible channel.

**Pedagogical approaches** in community courses at FAC are informed by feminist, decolonial epistemologies. We emphasise experiential engagement with theoretical and political questions, reflecting on our positionality and acknowledging our embodiment and embodied knowledges. We try to form a community in which we listen deeply and hold space for each other's and our own experiences. To do this, in community courses facilitators and participants commit to creating horizontal relationships that disrupt and deconstruct hierarchies (such as between "professor" and "student") that are omnipresent in learning institutions, which commodify expertise and exclude whole worlds of knowledge and discovery. We are committed to co-create our own community agreements, aligned with FAC's [code of contact](#).

**Enquiry-based learning:** Disrupting the division of labour between "research" and "teaching/learning," community courses at FAC stage a process of enquiry-based embodied colearning. 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 (please see **schedule** below).

**Political education:** We do not see learning as filling a lack, but opening up a window to a new understanding. This is a risky process, which requires us to create a braver and safe(r) space both intrapersonally (with oneself) and interpersonally (with each other). Participants in this community of shared enquiry co-create their agreements, creating a space of consensual exchange, in which we consciously inhabit a learning position with respect to urgent political issues and movement responses. We thus cultivate time for reflection, which we try to synthesise with action; praxis.

**Course format:** The first half hour of each class (6-6:30 pm) is for arrival, grounding, and informal conversation. The class meeting starts promptly at 6:30 pm. We start with a check-in circle, where people are invited to optionally share how they are arriving in the space, feeling, experiences they have been having, as well as how they've connected to readings and other inputs, or work they've been doing on their creative intervention. We then turn to a discussion of the day's readings and inputs. We take a break midway (7:30 pm). After the break, we delve deeper into the issues that arose that most interest us, or that we have most questions about. We highlight any next steps or actions to be taken in

the next week(s). We close with a check-out circle and part ways for the evening (9:00 pm).

**Collective care:** We want to facilitate a care-full space of exchange that can hold and be held by everything we carry with us; our experiences, pain, emotions, trauma, complaints, questions, etc. We see the possibilities for reciprocal care as part of the knowledges, discovery, and organising we can do together in the collective experience we hope to have together through and beyond this course. Talking about gendered, racialised, and sexualised violence can bring many feelings, memories, numbness. It can also replicate views that are implicated in epistemic and representational violence. In the spirit of unlearning and collective care, we commit to help each other avoid shaming, stigmatising, and victim-blaming language and punitive logics and behaviour, with gentleness and compassion. We commit to being careful about making graphic descriptions of violence, avoiding them where possible and prefacing them with a content warning and giving time for people to object or leave the room. What is shared in this space stays in the space. We invite us to practise vulnerability and surrender to our interdependence by redistributing the burden of feeling bad about ourselves, others, and our environments, in as much as we can, and to find ways to support and offer solidarity to each other.

**The Space:** FAC is located on the ground floor of a house, so we invite you to feel at home:

- We have a kitchen with a fridge, tea kettle, and coffee machine. Tea and coffee are offered. We try to reduce the use of single-use plastics and packagings.
- All-/no genders bathroom. Please do not flush anything down the toilet; use the bin provided.
- Backyard. Please feel free to smoke here, and please do not smoke indoors.
- Please feel free to eat in all the spaces **except** the Feminist Library, or when handling library materials.
- We operate on the principle of sharing all the "reproductive" labour keeping the space clean, please participate, if you can.
- The space is accessible to people using wheelchairs with ramps, but we regret the bathroom is not universally accessible. We will relocate the course to an accessible location if this is a barrier to participation.
- Quiet breaks can be taken in the back study/reading room (both doors can be closed as needed), we take breaks as each person needs them and encourage you to take your own whenever and in whatever way you may need them.

## Course Schedule:

### Phase 1. ASK

#### 0. December 2023–January 2024

##### Individual Preparation before the first meeting, January 30, 2024.

- Please formulate an initial research question
- Read widely across the [Resource List](#) with the question in mind
- Revisit and reformulate the question, bring it to a shape that you'd like to present to us all.
- Come with a proposal for 1 reading to read together in the course, either from the [Resource List](#) or another.
- Get in touch with Anna and Val if you have any questions or concerns.

#### 0. January 30, 2024 *[cancelled due to weather conditions]*

#### 1. February 6, 2024

**First course meeting.** Introductions. Community Agreements. Research Questions. Selection of readings (12).

#### 2. February 13, 2024

Readings:

1. Crimethink, [Accounting for Ourselves: Breaking the Impasse Around Abuse in Anarchist Scenes](#) (pdf, 52 pages).

#### 3. February 20, 2024

Readings:

1. Ejeris Dixon and Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, [Beyond Survival: Strategies and Stories from the Transformative Justice Movement](#) (epub)

- Introduction (5 pages);
- Chapter 6: What to do when you've been abusive by Kai Cheng Tom (9 pages);
- Chapter 27: Moving beyond critique by Mimi Kim (16 pages);
- Chapter 28: How we learned (Are learning) Transformative Justice by adrienne maree brown (3 pages).

2. Charmaine Chua, [Abolition is a Constant Struggle: Lessons from Minneapolis](#) (pdf) (21 pages)

### Phase 2. INVESTIGATE...

#### 4. February 27, 2024

Readings:

1. Eric Stanley and Nat Smith, [Captive Genders: Trans Embodiment and the Prison Industrial Complex](#) (pdf)

- Chapter titled "Identities Under Siege" by Lori Saffin (22 pages)

2. INCITE! [The Color of Violence Anthology](#) (pdf)

- Chapter 25: Critical Resistance & INCITE! Gender Violence and the Prison Industrial Complex (4 pages)
- Chapter 29: CARA, Taking Risks (16 pages)

## 5. March 5, 2024

Readings:

1. Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, [Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice](#). (pdf)
  - Not Over It, Not Fixed, And Living a Life Worth Living: Towards an Anti-Ableist Vision of Survivorhood (10 pages)
2. Staci Haines, [The Politics of Trauma](#) (epub)
  - Chapter 13: Personal and Systemic Transformation (25 pages)
3. Malkia Devich-Cyril, [Grief Belongs in Social Movements: Can We Embrace It?](#) (online)

## Phase 3. CREATE...

### 6. March 19, 2024

Readings:

1. Ching-In Chen, Jai Dulani, Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, [The Revolution Starts at Home](#)
  - Introduction (18 pages),
  - Think. Rethink. Accountable Communities by Connie Burk (14 pages)
2. adrienne maree brown, [Murmurations: Love Looks like Accountability](#) (online)

### 7. March 26, 2024

Readings:

1. Pinko, [After Accountability: A Critical Genealogy of a Concept](#)
  - Introduction (23 pages)
  - Analysing the Limits of Accountability (14 pages)
2. Melanie Brazzell, [What would really make us safe? Transformative Justice Approaches to Harm](#) (pdf, 6 pages)
3. Leah Jo Carnine & Fizz Perkal, [Queer Attachment: An Anti-Oppression Toolkit for Relational Healing](#) (pdf, 26 pages)

## Phase 4. PRESENT...

### 8. April 2, 2024

**TOPIC:** present collective projects

No Readings

## PHASE 5. REFLECT...

### 9. April 9, 2024

**TOPIC:** Last course meeting. Conclusions. Reflective circle.

No readings