



## 14<sup>th</sup> POSTGRADUATE COURSE FEMINISMS IN A TRANSNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE:

### **Beyond the Ruins of Capitalism: Stolen Concepts, Deep Silences, Resurfaced Frictions**

(Online course in virtual Dubrovnik, Inter-University Centre, 24-28 May, 2021)

#### **Course directors:**

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#### **Course description:**

When in 2019 we chose the topic of our next feminist course "Beyond the Ruins of Capitalism", following the book by Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing (2015), we could not predict that this topic would be more relevant than ever before due to the multifold crisis caused by the COVID 19 pandemic. Given that, like most international gatherings, our IUC course could not be held in Dubrovnik this May, it will exceptionally be organized virtually via Zoom digital platform, in the same time slot (May, 24-28<sup>th</sup>). We are keeping the same analytical focus, but with a new sensitivity for the isolated, vulnerable and 'plastic' subjects many of us are becoming these days. On the other side, we do believe that the tectonic upheavals and the threat of emergency that has shaken up neoliberal states in all parts of the world, will give a new impetus to feminist agency and give strength to the thinking of radical change. However, a desire for radical thinking and radical social change was a common thread of all feminist seminars in Dubrovnik, which has been gathering activist women from Croatia and elsewhere in the world since 1999.

Before her death, feminist author and activist Kate Millett reflected upon her lifetime struggle with abject poverty as she was increasingly marginalized in the academy. Asking her readers, "who stole feminism?", Millett voiced her anxieties that the feminist movement had been hijacked from within (1998). Her question continues to remain relevant today as we witness the growing oppression, silencing, and policing of those on the margins of academia (and beyond). The rise of attacks against 'gender ideology', particularly from the clerical edifice, demands a revisiting and rethinking of historical debates and contemporary engagements in feminist contributions across all disciplines. By highlighting poverty, urban deterioration, economic and ecological crises, the "ruins of capitalism"



(Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, 2015) underscores the inability of capitalist society to protect its citizens and its cities. As national economic imperatives clash with the demands of globalized capital, we face the terrifying realities of late capitalism with the rise in viral pandemics, ecological destruction, warfare, or deindustrialization. Bearing witness to that, we would like to explore stolen concepts within feminist knowledge production, as well as the deep silences informed by the erasure of alternative genealogies of thought. By exploring the frictions in both traditions and epistemologies of feminist theory and engagement, can we reveal internal elements of epistemic violence as feminist fracture across identity and political lines?

The course intends to study such violence and, at the same time, to trace the elements of resistance and refusal of nihilism and self-destruction that seem to be haunting women everywhere, with an attention also to the postcolonial milieu, in terms of worldly migration, diasporic experience, disseminated exile and displacement. We would like to understand the imposed failures and, at the same time, to intersect the theories and practices of feminism engagement that value 'optimistic', affirmative, productive, theoretical, communal, and political new framings of life. In this sense, our focus will go to the counter-capitalist assemblages, the open-ended gatherings of potential herstories, the multiple and productive social and cultural rhythms that occur in the peripheries of capitalistic production, the forms of survival both in everyday contests or in forms of creative imagination, the feeling with the body and the senses, the changes within the specific circumstances of or with disturbed and contaminated human and non-human landscapes.

Given the shorter and condensed online format of our seminar this year, we invite scholars and doctoral students to apply with short proposals (200 words) by March 8, 2021. The format will be 15-minute presentations and roundtables. Proposals may consider some of the following issues:

- the ambivalent impact of early capitalism on female agency and thought
- humanisms, abolitionism and liberalism vs. feminist project
- the feminist critique of theology
- the historical rise of the nation and the limits and/or capacities of 'political sisterhood'
- the 'ruins of socialism' vis-a-vis the 'ruins of capitalism'
- the notions of 'peripheries' and 'alternative margins' vs 'centers' of capitalistic productions
- postcolonial theories of philosophical engagement with worldly displacement and global dissemination
- the analysis of 'friction', meaning diverse and conflictual social interactions, 'encounters of difference'
- feminist theories of the Anthropocene and feminist political alliances around ecological complexity
- collaborative co-living of different species
- the feminist materialistic ideas of 'latent commons' and 'third nature' (Tsing)



### **Eligibility:**

IUC courses are conducted at postgraduate level. All interested postgraduate students may apply to participate, although the course targets young scholars and postgraduate students with a defined interest in women's/gender studies, transnational studies, philosophy, sociology, literary and cultural studies, postcolonialism, or anthropology. The course will be limited to 30 participants in order to provide sufficient space for discussion, seminar work and student presentations. The **IUC course fee is 25 EUR** which includes the access to the panels and roundtables supported by Zoom meetings platform, recording, editing and posting course video materials on the IUC homepage (<https://iuc.hr/online-lectures>). As a gesture of support for the Inter-University Centre in Dubrovnik, and an expression of hope that we will meet next year in this unique city, the course fee is expected from all participants. The working language of the course is English.

### **Application Procedure:**

Please submit a 200-word proposal and your CV. Place all current contact information at the top of your CV. Send submissions by e-mail to [fmgabrie@ffzg.hr](mailto:fmgabrie@ffzg.hr) (Francesca Maria Gabrielli). Use the subject: IUC Dubrovnik 2021. The proposal deadline is 8th March, 2021.