Activism: Gender, Sexuality and Race

Semester(s): S1
Location: Stockholm

Faculty Name: Anna Sofie Bach
Credits: 3
Major Disciplines: Gender Studies, Sociology, Anthropology

Course Description
This course examines the political activism of contemporary social movements on matters of gender, sexuality and race in Scandinavia. The course has two aims: first it offers theoretical and empirical insights into the concept of activism and identity politics as well as an introduction to gender, sexuality and race movements in the Scandinavian context. Secondly, as the social movements of contemporary identity politics are so closely connected with activism, this class further engages the students in the organizing of an activist event in corporation with a Stockholm based LGBTQ organization. Not only does participating in activism strengthen personals skills in community organizing and leadership, it simultaneously take the theoretical understanding of social movements to a practical level. By evaluating the hands-on experience of organizing an activist event, you will be able to reflect critically on how social movements affect our lives and what role collective action play in social change.

By the end of the semester, you will be able to:

- Critically examine the ideas and histories of social movements dealing with gender, sexuality and race issues as ‘identity politics’.
- Understand the history and context of contemporary social movements (gender, sexuality and race) in Scandinavia.
- Design, organize and evaluate an activist LGBTQ event.

This class is for everyone, whether you are new to gender and sexuality studies or not. If you are at a more advanced level, talk to me and we will design you projects accordingly.

INSTRUCTOR

Anna Sofie Bach. PhD in Sociology from Ph.D (Sociology, University of Copenhagen 2016), MA in Sociology (2008-2011, University of Copenhagen) with a focus on gender, in particular masculinities, family practices and intimacy. Her PhD dissertation explores changing family practices and gender identities through the examination of the experiences of Danish men who are intimate partners of career-oriented women. Visiting scholar at The Center of Studies of Men and Masculinities, Department of Sociology, Stony Brook University, New York (2014). Member of the Danish think tank Knowledge about Men. Editor and founder of Danish feminist magazine Friktion - magazine for gender, bodies and culture. With DIS since 2015.

Consultation:

I will normally be available for consultation before/after class, and feel free to email me anytime you have questions/comments about the course.

Teaching Methods

This course will be taught through a combination of lectures, class discussions, group work, guest lectures and films. As hands on experience with organizing an activist event is a central part of the learning outcome of this class, there will be a strong emphasis on participation and discussion. Overall, the aim is to create a classroom space characterized by respect and willingness to listen/consider others’ perspectives, where it is safe to explore ideas together and individually.

Safe space/brave space:

Please note the class is discussion-based and it is very important we all contribute to creating and maintaining a safe space throughout the semester. Your peers will come from a variety of backgrounds which we seek to use as an added value – be open, curious and respectful during your own and other’s learning process. Remember to challenge ideas, not people. You are also challenged to be brave in this space and challenge yourself and your own preconceived ideas about the world.

Evaluation

- Participation (25%)
- Concept dictionary (20%)
- Event log (35%)
- Evaluation report (20%)

DIS Policies
Disability and Resource Statement
Any student who has a need for accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the Office of Academic Support (acadsupp@dis.dk) to coordinate this. In order to receive accommodations, students should inform the instructor of approved DIS accommodations within the first two weeks of classes.

DIS Policies Attendance:
You are expected to attend all DIS classes when scheduled. If you miss multiple classes, the Director of Teaching and Learning, and the Director of Student Affairs, will be notified and they will follow-up with you to make sure that all is well. Absences will jeopardize your grade and your standing at DIS. Allowances will be made in cases of illness, but in the case of multiple absences you will need to provide a doctor’s note. According to DIS policy, two consecutive unexcused absences will result in a report to the Academic Registrar. Three or more absences will have a negative effect your academic standing at DIS; your home university will be notified.

Academic Honesty:
Plagiarism and Violating the Rules of an Assignment DIS expects that students abide by the highest standards of intellectual honesty in all academic work. DIS assumes that all students do their own work and credit all work or thought taken from others. Academic dishonesty will result in a final course grade of “F” and can result in dismissal. The students’ home university will be notified. DIS reserves the right to request that written student assignments be turned in electronic form for submission to plagiarism detection software. See the Academic Handbook for more information, or ask your instructor if you have questions.

Readings:
All readings will be available through Canvas or handed out in class.

- Staunæs, Dorte & Dorte Marie Søndergaard: Intersectionality. A Theoretical Adjustment. (Chapter from Theories and Methodologies in Postgraduate Feminist Research (p. 45-59))
- Michael Nebeling: Celebrating Gayness as Danishness
- Hansen, Janne Hedegaard: limits to inclusion (journal article – p 89-98)

Course summary:

DAY 1: INTRODUCTION: IDENTITY POLITICS, SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND ACTIVISM
Part one:
This session will introduce what we are doing in this course. We will explore the concept of identity politics and how this is connected to contemporary social movements and activism in the Scandinavian context. We will also get to know each other a bit by exploring what activism means to you.

Part two:
As an introduction to gender and sexuality in the Scandinavian context we will watch the Danish documentary ‘The Road is Long’ from 2016 about the Danish women’s and feminist movement.

Readings:

DAY 2: FEMINIST POLITICS AND ACTIVISM

Part one: before lunch
We will follow up on the movie from last session and explore the concept of feminism in more depth. We will also discuss what feminist politics and activism are. What does it mean to be feminist and do feminist activism?

Readings:

Part 2: After lunch
Working together workshop with Kevin Bradshaw.

DAY 3: TRANSFORMATION: WORKING THE NORMS OF GENDER, SEXUALITY AND RACE

Part one: before lunch
How do we work to change the world? How do we transform organizations and social structures? Today we will explore important elements of putting feminist ideals into diversity work.

Readings:
Ahmed, Sara: Living a Feminist Life. Part II: Diversity work Cap. 4 and 5 (page 89-134)

Part two: after lunch
Meeting with the Swedish LGBTQ organization we are going to work with to learn more about them and the context of what they do.
DAY 4: LGBTQ issues in Sweden

Part one:

The first session today is a panel discussion in which you will meet Swedish activists working with aspects of gender, sexuality and race. What are the burning issues in the Scandinavian context?

Readings:

Ahmed, Sara: Living a Feminist Life. Part III: Chapter 7: Fragile Connections (p. 186)

Part two: after lunch

Brainstorming on the activist event we are going to organize – more info in class.

DAY 5: INTERSECTIONALITY

Intersectionality is one of the most central concepts of contemporary identity politics. In this session we will explore the concept both theoretically and empirically.

Readings:

- Ahmed, Sara: Living a Feminist Life. Chapter 6 (page 135-160)
- Staunæs, Dorte & Dorte Marie Søndergaard: Intersectionality. A Theoretical Adjustment. (Chapter from Theories and Methodologies in Postgraduate Feminist Research (p. 45-59))

DAY 6: EVENT WORKSHOP

We will work on and decide the event we will be organizing.

Readings:

Ahmed, Sara: Living a Feminist Life: Conclusions (p. 235-268)

Day 7: LIMITS TO INCLUSION?

Part one: before lunch

What does it mean to be inclusive? How do we work to become more inclusive? What if inclusion is always linked to processes of exclusion? In this first session we will discuss what it means to be inclusive. Can inclusion be limitless?

Readings:

Hansen, Janne Hedegaard: limits to inclusion (journal article – p 89-98)

Part two: after lunch
We will continue working on our own event.

**Day 8: ALLYSHIP, ACCOUNTABILITY AND SOLIDARITY**

Part one:

What does it mean to be an ally? How do you work with your own privileges when trying to be a good ally? Today we will discuss what solidarity is and how to practice it. We will also look into some of the struggles and conflicts in contemporary Scandinavian movements, e.g. transphobia amongst feminists.

**Readings: TBA**

Part two: after lunch

We will continue working on our own event and discuss how we can hold ourselves accountable to the concepts and values discussed in class.

**DAY 9: HOMONATIONALISM AND PINK WASHING**

Today we will explore intersections between sexual orientation, race, ethnicity and nations to discuss some of the pitfalls that are connected to ‘politics of inclusion’. Through an article about how "gay friendliness" and Danishness intersect in debates about the pride parade in Copenhagen, we will discuss the concept of homonationalism and "pink washing". We will discuss how inclusion of (white) homosexuality can be part of nation building and even a nationalist agenda while simultaneously being part of an exclusion process of other (non-white) minority groups.

**Readings:**

- Michael Nebeling: Celebrating Gayness as Danishness
- Watch the short video on pink washing

After lunch: if needed we will work on our own event.

**DAY 10: GETTING READY FOR THE EVENT**

*We will work on getting ready for the event on Wednesday*

Day 11: Getting ready for the event

*We will work on getting ready for the event on Wednesday*

Day 12: THE EVENT

Day 13: Work on evaluations + social event in the evening.

Day 14: Evaluation seminar, Wrap up, goodbyes and hej då