

Theorizing Care in an Uneven World

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Rationale: This course covers theories and practices of care in the 21st century and considers their relationship to contemporary social and political crises. This course belongs to category C, given its topical focus on the concept of care and its survey of a range of theorists engaging with the aesthetics, politics, ethics, and cultures of care. We focus primarily on contemporary theory with some brief forays into modern and pre-modern philosophies of care, such as Foucault's 'care of the self.' We study a range of conceptual frameworks, from liberal humanist to Marxist feminist, and their engagement with different care-related concepts, including human rights, justice, social reproduction, and redress.

Description: Care is (back) on the global agenda. This seminar engages (the return to) care from a variety of disciplinary and theoretical vantage points to examine the ways in which it serves as a hermeneutic for contemporary social and political life. We are particularly interested in the how the concept of care is leveraged as a tool for social and political change. Accordingly, we heed Fernando's critique of Latour (2019), examining the relationship between care and critique. In this regard, we ask not only what critical work the concept of care can do – socially, politically, ethically – but also how care might emerge in the practice of critique. In this spirit, we place recent meditations on the relationship between care and economy (Tronto 2013; Bauhardt and Harcourt 2019) in conversation with feminist critiques of social reproduction (Federici 2019) to interrogate care's redressive capacities. We situate our study within the contemporary 'crisis of care' (Fraser 2016; Dowling 2020) to highlight the uneven material effects of care work across different fields of social experience, including the home, the clinic, and the workplace. Recognizing, though, how care has been theorized primarily from the perspective of whiteness, we complicate feminist critiques using the framework of intersectionality (Crenshaw 1991). Accordingly, we examine the effects of slavery and colonialism on the racialization of both theories and practices of care (Noxolo, Raghuram and Madge 2008; Barker and Feiner 2009; Raghuram 2019). Finally, we consider treatments of care after the relational turn, by placing infrastructures of intimacy (Wilson 2016) alongside the aesthetics and politics of care in a more-than-human world (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017; Parreñas 2018) to challenge conventional, anthropocentric notions of care and its normative outcomes. Our aim in this course is to investigate the radically transformative possibilities of theorizing and materializing care in an increasingly hostile and uneven world.

Potential Texts:

Care Collective. 2020. *The Care Manifesto: The Politics of Inter-dependence*. London: Verso Books.

Held, Virginia. 2006. *The Ethics of Care: Personal, Political, Global*. London, UK: Oxford University Press.

Lefebvre, Alexandre. 2018. *Human Rights and the Care of the Self*. Duke University Press.

Parreñas, Juno Salazar. 2018. *Decolonizing Extinction: The Work of Care in Orangutan Rehabilitation*. Duke University Press.

- Piepzna-Samarasinha, Leah Lakshmi. 2018. *Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice*. Vancouver, BC: Arsenal Pulp Press
- Puig de la Bellacasa, Maria. 2017. *Matters of Care: Speculative Ethics in More than Human Worlds*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Samaran, Nora. 2019. *Turn this World Inside Out: The Emergence of Nurturance Culture*. Chico, CA: AK Press.
- Sharpe, Christina. 2016. *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being*. Durham, NC: Duke University.
- Tronto, Joan. 2013. *Caring Democracy: Markets, Equality and Justice*. New York, NY: NYU Press.