THE COLUMBIA CENTER FOR
CONTEMPORARY CRITICAL THOUGHT
AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK

PUBLIC SEMINAR:

REVOLUTION 13/13

(2021-2022)

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WEDNESDAYS 6:00 PM TO 8:00 PM
13 SESSIONS SPREAD OVER THE 2021-2022 ACADEMIC YEAR

Seminar Description

Each year, this seminar focuses on a different set of topics at the heart of contemporary critical thought. During the 2015-2016 academic year, the seminar focused on Michel Foucault’s Collège de France lectures and produced the Foucault 13/13 series. During the 2016-2017 academic year, the seminar focused on critical readings of Friedrich Nietzsche and produced the Nietzsche 13/13 series. During the 2017-2018 academic year, the seminar focused on modalities of uprisings and produced the Uprising 13/13 series. During the 2018-2019 academic year, the seminar focused on the relationship between critical theory and praxis, and produced the Praxis 13/13 series. During the 2019-2020 academic year, the seminar returned to the fundamental texts of critical theory, and produced the Critique 13/13 series. During the 2020-2021 academic year, the seminar went completely virtual due to the pandemic and focused on the history, theory, and future of abolition, and produced the Abolition Democracy 13/13 series.

The upcoming seminar for 2021-2022 will focus on the ideas and manifestos of 13 “worldly philosophers” who ignited revolutions. The new series is designed in conversation with the literary critic and cultural theorist, Professor Biodun Jeyifo, who will open the series on September 22, 2021. In a review essay on the broad project of these 13/13 seminars, published recently in the British Journal of Sociology (vol. 73, issue 3, June 2021), Biodun Jeyifo
urges us to turn our attention to these “worldly philosophers” because, by contrast to the more academic critical philosophers, “they have not been studied enough as a historic, global and comparative phenomenon.” As he rightly insists, there is a difference between returning to Sartre and Foucault, or instead turning to Kwame Nkrumah and Ho Chi Minh. How is it that some ideas and manifestos, more so than others, have ignited, animated, or galvanized people to rise in revolution? What is it about these ideas and their theoretical moves—and not others? What can they tell us about critique and praxis? These are the questions we will explore this year in Revolution 13/13.

This year’s 13/13 seminar will be a public seminar open to Columbia University faculty, students, and staff in-person and to non-CU affiliates virtually. If you are interested in signing-up for the seminar (to get all the information and readings, to participate actively in the conversation, and to write or provide resources for the blog), please sign-up on this Google form here.

We will be holding the formal 13/13 seminars on Wednesday evenings this coming year, generally from 6:00pm to 8:00pm EST, mostly at Columbia University. Tentatively, the seminars will be scheduled for:

- September 22
- October 13 and 27
- November 10
- December 15 and TBD
- January 19
- February 9
- March 2 and 23
- April 20
- May 11
- June 1 and 22

The seminars will begin with a short introduction, followed by guest presentation(s) (15-20 minutes) and a commentary, and then open discussion with participants for over an hour. The formal part of the sessions will begin promptly at 6:00pm and will end around 8:00pm.

**Books and Texts**

The texts for the course will be assigned readings, mostly available at Book Culture or on the Revolution 13/13 website. All digital materials will be posted to the Revolution 13/13 website. Books and articles will include, for instance:
C.L.R. James, *Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution* [1977].
Rosa Luxemburg, *Reform or Revolution* [1899].
Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, ed. *How We Get Free: Black Feminism and the Combahee River Collective* [2017].
Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Qu’est ce que la littérature* in *Situations* II [1948]; *What is Literature*, trans. Bernard Frechtman [1950].
TENTATIVE SEMINAR SCHEDULE AND READINGS

1/13 THE CONGRESS OF BLACK WRITERS AND ARTISTS (1956 and 1959)
Wednesday, September 22, 2021 6:00 – 8:00 pm

With Biodun Jeyifo

Please read:

James Baldwin, “Princes and Powers” [1956].
Frantz Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks (1952).
Franz Fanon, “Racism and Culture” [1956].
Franz Fanon, “Reciprocal Bases of National Culture and the Fight for Freedom” [1959].
Franz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth (1961).

Primary Resources:


Public Seminar: Revolution 13/13 (Bernard E. Harcourt)  

2021-2022


*Deuxième Congrès des écrivains et artistes noirs : Rome, 26 mars-1er avril 1959, tome 2 : Responsabilités des hommes de culture, Présence africaine, n° 27-28 (numéro spécial), 1959, 368 p.*

Additional References:


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2/13 KWAME NKRUMAH  
Wednesday, October 13, 2021 6:00-8:00 pm

With Adom Getachew

Please read:


Adom Getachew, *Worldmaking After Empire: The Rise and Fall of Self-Determination* [2019].

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3/13 ANTONIO GRAMSCI AND THE “ENGAGED” PHILOSOPHER  
Wednesday, October 27, 2021 12:00-2:00 pm

With Étienne Balibar
Please read:
Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Presentation des Temps Modernes* [1945].
Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Qu’est ce que la littérature* in *Situations II* [1948]; *What is Literature?*, trans. Bernard Frechtman [1950].

Additional References:
Weber, Max. “*Science as a Vocation*” [1922].
Weber, Max. “*Politics as a Vocation*” [1919].

**4/13 COMBAHEE RIVER COLLECTIVE**
Wednesday, November 10, 2021 6:00 – 8:00 pm

**With Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor**

Please read:
Taylor, Keeanga-Yamahtta, ed. *How We Get Free: Black Feminism and the Combahee River Collective* [2017].

Additional References:

**5/13 ROSA LUXEMBURG**
Wednesday, December 15, 2021 6:00 – 8:00 pm

**With Amy Allen**
Please read:

Luxemburg, Rosa. *Reform or Revolution* [1899].

Luxemburg, Rosa. *Accumulation of Capital* [1913].

Secondary readings:

Lenin, Vladimir. *State and Revolution* [1917].

Bernstein, Eduard. *The Preconditions of Socialism* [1899].
Revolution 13/13 Bibliography


Kaba, Mariame. We Do This ‘Til We Free Us. Chicago: Haymarket, 2021 [2021].


Lenin, Vladimir. State and Revolution [1917].


Nkrumah, Kwame. *Neo-Colonialism, the Last Stage of Imperialism*. Available from Marxists.org here. [1965].


**Additional Bibliography:**