Black German Literature and Film
OLLI@Berkeley, SPRING 2020
University Hall 41B, Berkeley, CA 94720
Mondays, March 30–May 4 • 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

BONUS Screening Audre Lorde – The Berlin Years 1984 to 1992
Friday, April 3, 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

I invite you to explore spirited writing and films by, and about, Black Germans and their white allies. Inspired by Audre Lorde’s teachings in Berlin, beginning in 1984, an Afro-German movement emerged, representing this ethnic minority in a diverse and growing body of transnational work.

Our readings include excerpts from the groundbreaking book Showing Our Colors: Afro-German Women Speak Out, tracing Blacks in Germany from the Middle Ages, documenting racism in German colonies, the Weimar Republic, under National Socialism, and Afro-Germans after 1945. We’ll also focus on personal narratives which give voice to history. Excerpts from Hans J. Massaquoi’s memoir Destined to Witness, Ika Hügel-Marshall’s autobiography Invisible Woman, May Ayim’s poetry and the documentary Hope in My Heart offer insights into the lives of Black Germans. In addition, we’ll read about the work of Bühnenwatch (Stagewatch) in German theatre. In a special screening for our class, we’ll watch the award-winning documentary, Audre Lorde—The Berlin Years 1984 to 1992, and conclude the course with the film comedy Everything Will Be Fine which highlights everyday racism and resistance in Germany.

FORMAT

This seminar will be conducted in English, in which your active participation is strongly encouraged. The recommended reading in preparation for each session averages 50 pages. I’ll provide study questions and introduce (con)texts in short lectures; you will have the opportunity to discuss the material with partner(s), in small groups and in the plenum. A Course Reader will be available for purchase at Instant Copying & Laser Printing, 2138 University Ave (between Shattuck Ave. & Oxford St.), Berkeley, CA 94704, by mid-March (exact date and price TBA).

BIBLIOGRAPHY


**FILMS**

*Audre Lorde—The Berlin Years 1984 to 1992.* Dir. Dagmar Schultz. Third World Newsreel, 2012 [English and German with English, German, Spanish, French subtitles] (82 minutes)

*Hope in My Heart: The May Ayim Story* (Germany). Dir. Maria Binder and Dagmar Schultz. Third World Newsreel, 1997 [German with English Subtitles] (28 minutes)

*Alles wird gut (Everything will be Fine).* Dir. Angelina Maccarone. Hamburg: Gesellschaft für Audiovisuelle Information, 1998 [German with English Subtitles] (88 minutes)

**FIRST WEEK: Introduction (Pre-)Colonial Images of Africa in Germany and Bonus Film Screening**

March 30  Introduction to Afro-German/Black German studies (lecture)

    May Opitz et. al., “Precolonial Images of Africa, Colonialism, and Fascism” (pp. 2-17) and “The Germans in the Colonies” (pp. 19-40)


April 3  Bonus film screening *Audre Lorde—The Berlin Years 1984 to 1992.* Dir. Dagmar Schultz. Followed by discussion


SECOND WEEK: Black Germans in the Weimar Republic and under National Socialism

April 6  
May Opitz et.al., “African and Afro-German Women in the Weimar Republic and under National Socialism” (pp. 41-55)  
May Opitz et.al., *Personal Narratives, Showing Our Colors* (pp. 56-76)  

THIRD WEEK: Afro-Germans after 1945

April 13  
May Opitz et.al., “Afro-Germans after 1945: The So-Called Occupation Babies” (pp. 77-100)  
May Opitz et.al., *Personal Narratives, Showing Our Colors* (pp. 101-123)

FOURTH WEEK: (In)Visible in Germany and Africa

April 20  
Ika Hügel-Marshall, *Invisible Woman* (pp. 13-44, 144-158)  
Olumide Olutoyin Mykola Popoola (in Olumide Popoola and Beldan Sezen). Poems “Nigeria”, “lagos 1996 - a long way home?” (pp. 54-58)

FIFTH WEEK: May Ayim’s Legacy

April 27  
May Opitz (in Opitz et.al.). Poem: “Blues in Black-and-White” (pp. 232-233)  
May Ayim, *Blues in Black and White*, “White Stress/Black Nerves” (pp. 73-95) and Poems “insignificant” (pp. 96-97), “afro-german I,” “afro-german II” (pp.14-17), “autumn in germany” (pp. 109-111), “nightsong” (pp. 163-165), “departure” (p. 166)  
Film screening in class: *Hope in My Heart: The May Ayim Story*

SIXTH WEEK: Everyday Racism and Resistance

May 4  
Sharon Dodua Otoo. “Reclaiming Innocence. Unmasking Representations of Whiteness in German Theatre.” Sandrine Micossé-Aikins, Sharon Dodua Otoo, eds. *The Little Book of Big Visions: How to be an Artist and Revolutionize the World* (pp. 54-70)  
Film Screening in class: *Alles wird gut (Everything will be Fine)*. Dir. Angelina Maccarone. Discussion and Conclusion
Afro-Germans (German: Afrodeutsche) or Black Germans are defined as German citizens and members of the Black African community and diaspora in Germany. Cities such as Hamburg and Berlin, centers of occupation forces following World War II and more recent immigration, have substantial Black communities, with a relatively high percentage of ethnically mixed and multiracial families. Black German Cultural Society™. “MilkAndMocha.com” is for sale - Domain Sales Website. German 'Brown Babies™ | Black German Cultural Society™. Henriette at orphanage with bear Literature has always been considered the escape route for the emotionally exhausted. Germany, characterized by extreme political turmoil, has produced literature par excellence, over the years. German literature has undergone transformation along with the changes in their social, political, economic and religious situations. It has seen its highs and lows, and has produced some of the finest writers ever born. Be it 1999 Nobel Prize winner Günter Grass, or the famous Jean Paul of ‘Titan’ fame, works by German writers have always fascinated the world. They have been translated in all languages Jenny Erpenbeck is a contemporary German writer and film director. Born in East Berlin, she is the granddaughter of the writer Hedda Zinner. In her young adulthood she studied the art of bookbinding, and then took charge of overseeing props and wardrobe production at theaters throughout Germany. Often regarded as Germany’s Shakespeare, no discussion of German literature would be complete without mentioning Goethe. Prone to illness as a youth, he initially pursued study in law. Yet, today he is mostly known for his versatile array of poetic works, which include both epic and lyric forms, among others. He was born in the Black Forest, but spent much of his youth living in Switzerland. These multicultural experiences impacted him as a person and as a writer.