

Syllabus

Title of the Course:	Sociological Investigation of the University	Course Breakdown:	42 h. Online teaching in 14 weeks
Name of the Instructor:	Asli Vatansever İsmet Akça	Weekly class time:	Tuesdays 9:00 - 12:00 (CET)
Language:	English	Credit:	8 ECTS / 4 U.S. Credit
Hosted by:	Bard College Berlin	Certificate issued by:	Bard College Berlin

Description of the course

The goal of this course is to (re)think the meaning and function of the “modern university” by following its transformation from its (re)configuration in the era of Enlightenment to today, the “Information Age”, “post-modern”, “post-truth” society, characterized by fast flows of knowledge and financial capital. After a brief introduction to the conceptualization of the university by the Enlightenment philosophers such as Kant and idealists such as Fichte, we will follow how the perception and function of the university changed with the consolidation of the nation-states, enhancement of social-democracy and welfare states, and then with their demise in the era of globalization and ascendancy of finance. What kind of discussions have taken place within the universities between public intellectuals and academics in each era? How did the public perception of the university change? What re(formations) and re(formulations) of policies took place at the political and policy-making level? How did the citizens of the nation-state come to see the university as the regime characterized by social democratic values left its place to neoliberal values? Through a close look at several countries such as the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, Germany and Turkey, the readings and discussions in this course will try to answer these and similar questions. The US, UK and Germany are cases that stand for the conceptualization and materialization of the “modern university”, therefore investigation of the transformation in these countries is crucial. The Turkish case represents the transformation in question in a Southern country in which not only the economic developments but also the hegemonic political and economic paradigms emulate those of the Northern ones. The final session(s) of the course will be devoted to thinking and discussing what the transformations in question mean about the value of knowledge and freedom of thought.

Learning Aims

To provide a general understanding about:

- The relationship between the transformation of the modern university since its inception in the first half of the 19th century and the broader context of the changing capitalist nation-state system.
- The changing functions and perceptions of the university in the capitalist society since the early 19th century
- The problems and the losses that we academics and students encounter as a consequence of the transformations in question
- The new management and discipline technologies employed in current universities

Upon the successful completion of the course students will be able to:

- Have informed discussions on the complex and dialectical relationship between the political economy of different capitalist accumulation strategies and the perception and role of the modern university in society in different historical periods.
- Question the role and function of the university in their individual lives and relate these with the general political and economic context we live in.
- Tell a short history of the foundation and transformation of the modern university and of the perception of the knowledge produced within the university in the broader political economic context
- Critically evaluate the new business management strategies employed in the universities, which have taken the place of traditional logic of administration and discuss its advantages and disadvantages with regard to accountability as well as knowledge production and intellectual development.

Course requirements

Course components include:

- Lectures (attendance and participation expected)
- Readings
- Student presentations
- Midterm examination
- Final paper

The final grade for the course will be based on the following:

- Attendance and participation (%30)
- Student presentations (%20)
- Midterm examination (%25)

- Final paper (%25)

The final paper will be a 1500 -2000 word essay, reflecting critically on the university as institution in historical continuity. The analysis must have a thematic focus, inspired by the topics discussed in class (be it related to the history of the university or the current state of academia), and be informed by at least two readings we have covered throughout the semester.

The midterm exam will consist of several essay-type questions. Students need to refer to the related readings assigned for the class when answering the questions.

Readings

On a weekly basis, you will be expected to devote 2-3 hours to complete the readings. Most of the texts you will be required to read are included in the syllabus. However, due to the highly topical nature of this course the instructors may spontaneously send around up-to-date articles, essays, and videos to enrich in-class discussions. Students are encouraged to do the same.

Policy on Late Submission of Papers

Essays that are up to 24 hours late can be downgraded up to one full grade (from B+ to C+, for example). Instructors are not obliged to accept essays that are more than 24 hours late. Where an instructor agrees to accept a late essay, it must be submitted within four weeks of the deadline. Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment. Grades and comments will be returned to students in a timely fashion. Students are also entitled to make an appointment to discuss essay assignments and feedback during instructors' office hours. Students receive mid- and end-of-semester grades for their seminar work. Students are entitled to make an appointment with an instructor to discuss seminar participation, or may be asked to meet with the instructor at any stage in the semester regarding class progress.

Outline of the Course Schedule

Class 1, WEEK OF JAN 31-FEB 4	Introduction, no reading
Class 2, WEEK OF FEB 7-11	Start thinking about the topic of your presentation
Class 3, Week of Feb 14-18	
Class 4, WEEK OF FEB 21-25	
Class 5, WEEK OF FEB 28-MAR 4	Student presentations (each 10-15 min.)
WEEK OF MAR 7-11	No class this week, March 8th
Class 6, WEEK OF MAR 14-18	

Class 7, WEEK OF MAR 21-25	Midterm Exam – March 22
Class 8, WEEK OF MAR 28-APR 1	Start thinking about the topic of your final paper
Class 9, WEEK OF APR 4-8	
WEEK OF APR 11-18	SPRING BREAK, no class
CLASS 10, WEEK OF APR 18-22	
Class 11, WEEK OF APR 25-29	
Class 12, WEEK OF MAY 2-6	
Class 13, WEEK OF MAY 9-13	
Class 14, WEEK OF MAY 16-20	
MAY 27, 2021	Final Paper due on the Midnight of May 27

Reading List

Class 1: Introduction: aims, course content, requirements, goals. Overview on main themes and concepts. No readings are required for the first week.

Class 2: University in the “early modern era” and the age of Enlightenment.

- Transformation of the university from its theological underpinnings to “scientific” and “research-based” orientation.

Reading materials:

- William Clark, Chapter 1 (until page 14 “Academic Charisma”, then from page 21 “the empirical base” onwards until page 29 “structure of the book”)
- Stefan Collini, Introduction until page 18 + Chapter 1
- Bill Readings, Introduction + Chapter 4

Class 3: Transformation of the university during the “modern era”.

- The effects of Romanticism on the university.
- The emergence of the German “research university” and the Oxbridge traditions.

Reading materials:

- 1. Bill Readings, Chapter 5
- 2. William Clark, Epilogue (p. 435ff.)

Class 4: The political and economic context of the university under the impact of the consolidated nation-state system and the rise of Keynesian social democracy.

- Background on “embedded liberalism” and Keynesian social democracy

Reading materials:

- 1. Held & McGrew, pp. 8 -19, (from “Political power and civil society” until “Towards a global economy”)
- 2. Thomas Oatley. 2012. International Political Economy. Routledge. pp. 15-20 (the period until the Bretton Woods)
- 3. John Ravenhill. The Global Political Economy. Oxford University Press. pp. 10-18 (From “The world economy pre-1914” until the end of “the world economy post-1945”)

Class 5: Student presentations (each 10-15 minutes)

March 8 - National Holiday - since our class is on Tuesdays, we'll have no class this week

Class 6: The university during the Cold War era

- The rise of the public university
- The consolidation of university's role as a democratizing institution

Reading materials:

- 1. Tian Lee, Chapter 2
- 2. Mary Evans, Chapter 1 (Through the looking glass) (Recommended)

Class 7: Midterm exam

Class 8: Globalization and the neoliberal restructuring of the university

Reading materials:

- 1. Harvey, chapter 1
- 2. Slaughter and Leslie, chapter 1 (pp. 11-24) and chapter 2.
- 3. (Recommended): Slaughter and Leslie, chapter 3

Class 9: Commodification of academic labor

Reading materials:

- 1. Slaughter and Leslie, chapter 6
- 2. Jessop 2018

- 3. Smith, Sausage Factory
- 4. Vatansever 2020, Chapter 1 (part 1.1.) (recommended)

Apr 11 - 18: SPRING BREAK

Class 10: Academic freedom between authoritarianism in the Periphery and precarization in the Core

Reading materials:

- 1. Aronowitz, chapter 1, Knowledge Factories
- 2. Wallach Scott “Academic Freedom: The Tension Between the University and the State”, pp. 11-26
- 3. Özatalay 2021
- 4. Vatansever 2020 (part 1.2.)

Class 11: Labor Struggles in the 21st-Century Academia

Reading materials:

- 1. Telli-Aydemir 2020
- 2. Flood, Martin, Dreher 2013

Class 12: Political Struggles at Campuses

- Cases of contemporary struggles from the core: US, UK, Germany?
- Cases of contemporary struggle from the non-core: Turkey, India, Russia

Reading materials:

- TBA

Class 13: Making a Living in Academia - GUEST LECTURE

*Readings can be suggested by the guest lecturer.

Class 14: The Future of the University / The University of the Future

Reading materials:

- 1. Stanley Aronowitz, “Dismantling the Corporate University”
- 2. Toward a Global Autonomous University, Introduction: “All Power to Self-Education”, pp. 0-15 and “Global Autonomous University”, Vidya Ashram, pp. 165-171)

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- Clark W (2006) *Academic Charisma and the Origins of the Research University*. Chicago University Press.
- Collini, S (2017) *Speaking of Universities*. Verso
- Evans M (2004) *Killing Thinking: Death of the University*. Continuum
- Flood M, Martin B, Dreher t (2013) "Combining academia and activism. Common obstacles and useful tools". *Australian Universities Review* vol. 55, no. 1.
- Harvey D (2005) *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford University Press
- Held D, McGrew A et.al. (2000) *Global Transformations - Politics, Economics, and Culture*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
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- Özatalay C (2020) "Purge, Exile, and Resistance: Rethinking the Conflict of the Faculties through the Case of Academics for Peace in Turkey". *European Journal of Turkish Studies* [Online], 30 | 2020, Online since 15 December 2020, connection on 22 May 2021. URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/ejts/6746> ; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/ejts.6746>
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- Readings B (1997) *The University in Ruins*. Harvard University Press
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- Smith N (2000) "Afterword: Who Rules this Sausage Factory?". *Antipode* 32(3), pp. 330-339.
- Telli-Aydemir A (2020) "Dissent in Higher Education. an International Overview at Pandemic Times and Beyond". *Forum Wissenschaft* 3/20, pp. 53-56.
- The Edu-Factory Collective (2009) *Toward a Global Autonomous University: Cognitive Labor, the Production of Knowledge, and Exodus from the Education Factory*. Autonomedia.
- Tian Lee S (2018) *Rethinking the University: Structure, Critique, Vocation*. Oxford: Counterpress.

Vatansever A (2020) *At the Margins of Academia. Exile, Precariousness, and Subjectivity*. Leiden: Brill.

Wallach Scott J (2018) “Academic Freedom: The Tension Between the University and the State”. In *The Global Challenge*, pp. 11-26