

GETTING WOKE

Stacey Benoit – Levels B2 and higher

Woke is a slang term from African American Vernacular English (sometimes called AAVE). In AAVE, *awake* is often rendered as *woke*, as in, “I was sleeping, but now I’m woke.” *Woke* is increasingly used as a byword for social awareness.



The expression “*Stay woke*” became a watch word in parts of the black community for those who were self-aware, questioning the dominant paradigm and striving for something better. But *stay woke* and *woke* became part of a wider discussion in 2014, immediately following the shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri. The word *woke* became entwined with the Black Lives Matter movement; instead of just being a word that signaled awareness of injustice or racial tension, it became a word of action. Activists were *woke* and called on others to *stay woke*. Webster’s dictionary added *woke* in September 2017.

Coursework: Our take on getting “woke” will be to look at the social justice movement(s) including questions on gender justice, ethnic politics, climate justice, class struggles or others. We will look at historical and contemporary literature, news and film around social justice issues. We will examine current events as they unfold and add our own analysis based on our readings and research.

Autonomy research project: Students will work in groups on the creation of an awareness campaign based on a social justice issue. They can use film, posters, brochures, comics, etc to get their message out. They will present their campaign to the group and they will become part of the Journées DLC at the end of the semester.

Evaluation: Active participation in class discussion and debates – 30%, Presentation – 20% Awareness campaign – content, form, references – 50%,