

Humanities 3330-001
Philosophy of Race & Gender
SPRING 2019

Instructor: Daniel Skibra

Time and Location: Tuesday 9:00AM - 12:00PM, Lakeview 203

Contact: email: dskibra@saiu.edu

Office Hours: T 12:30 - 1:30 Lakeview building # 1008, or by appointment

Course Description

In this class we will ask fundamental questions about race and gender, investigating the kinds of arguments philosophers have made about these categories, and the kinds of answers they have given. A good portion of the class will be dedicated to the metaphysics of race and gender, asking questions concerning what race and gender concepts mean, whether races and genders exist, and what kinds of things they are. Answering these questions will quickly get us into thorny territory. To use race as an example, it is not uncommon for philosophers and theorists to deny that race has a biological basis. But does denying this mean that races don't exist? Race and race-talk certainly seem like they cause a wide range of effects in the world, so denying that it exists seems wrong. But what kind of thing is it? Exploring these metaphysical questions will inevitably run us into ethical and political questions as well. In particular, we will ask how some answers to the above questions affect how we theorize about questions of political identity and of justice.

Course Objectives

Students will:

- learn to understand philosophical arguments
- develop their own informed views on the topics of study
- present the arguments of the philosophers and theorists as well their own views in clear prose
- subject both the views studied as well as their own to critical scrutiny.

Course Requirements

Assignments

- Mid Term Exam (**March 12**): 15%
- Final Exam (**May 7**): 15%
- First paper (2-3 pages) **due March 5**: 10%
- Second paper (2-3 pages) **due April 23**: 10%
- Final Paper (approx. 5 pages) **due May 10**: 20%
- Weekly Reading Responses (at least 10): 10%
- Presentation on an Assigned Essay: 10%
- Class discussion/ participation: 10%

You need at least a 75%/ to get credit for this course. There are no extra credit opportunities associated with this course. All assignments for course credit are required as stated in this syllabus, and students should fully utilize all these assignments in order to successfully complete the course. Students requesting individual extra credit opportunities will be referred back to their copy of the syllabus and this course policy.

Notes on assignments

Resources for writing a philosophy paper:

- <http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>
- <http://www.public.asu.edu/~dportmor/tips.pdf>
- https://prezi.com/z4h1_fwilbxj/a-sample-philosophy-paper/

Course Policies

Attendance

You are required to attend the class meetings; attendance will be taken. However, I understand that emergencies arise, people get sick, and other factors may legitimately prevent you from coming to a particular class. Therefore, I will adopt the following attendance policy. Your grade will not be affected by up to **2** absences. You do not need to provide any kind of written excuse or justification for these absences (although you are welcome to provide them). However, more than two absences will begin to have an effect on your final grade, bringing your final average down by a third of a grade (approx. 5%) for each additional day missed. Since this class only meets once a week, and one meeting is 3 classroom hours, this is a very generous attendance policy, so it will be enforced. *If at some point in the term you expect to miss more than this (due to a serious illness, for example), let me know as soon as you can, **before** you accumulate the absences!* It will be your responsibility to distribute your absences however you see fit. My advice: try not to use them. You never know when something comes up.

Importantly, you are responsible for the material covered in class. Any slides presented in class will be made available on Canvas, but class time will often not be devoted to lecture, and material will not always be on the slides. There is simply no substitute for being in class.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

SAIC is committed to full compliance with all laws regarding equal opportunities for students with disabilities. Students with known or suspected disabilities, such as a Reading/Writing Disorder, ADD/ADHD, and/or a mental health condition who think they would benefit from assistance or accommodations should first contact the Disability and Learning Resource Center (DLRC) to schedule an appointment. DLRC staff will review your disability documentation and work with you to determine reasonable accommodations. They will then provide you with a letter outlining the approved accommodations for you to deliver to your instructors. This letter must be presented before any accommodations will be implemented. You should contact the DLRC as early in the semester as possible. The DLRC is located within the Wellness Center on the 13th floor of 116 S Michigan Ave. and can be reached via phone at 312.499.4278 or email at dlrc@saic.edu.

Writing Center Resources

Writing Center

Lakeview Building, 116 S. Michigan Ave., 10th Floor

writingcenter@saic.edu

312.499.4138

<http://www.saic.edu/academics/academicresources/writingcenter/>

Appointments

Schedule in advance: <https://www.supersaas.com/schedule/saic/WritingCenter>

Short-notice: Call 312.499.4138 to see if there are any openings

Hours

Monday - Thursday: 9:00 AM - 7:15 PM

Friday: 9:00 AM - 5:15 PM

Walk-in hours: Monday - Thursday: 4:15 - 7:15 PM

Auditing (Non-Credit Enrollment) Policy

All students participating in this course must be enrolled as credit-seeking students. Given the nature of the course, requests to enroll in the course as a non-credit (audit) student will not be approved. Participation in class activities by non-enrolled students is prohibited without advance, specific consent from the instructor.

Email/ Communication

The best way to reach me outside class is via email. However, give me 24 hours to respond during the week. If you email me after 5pm on Friday, don't expect a response until Monday morning. Most of the time, I will be able to respond to you sooner than this, but When there is a paper due, get all of your questions to be 48 hours before the due date.

I will answer *simple, specific* questions over email pertaining to the course material or the logistics of the course. I can also address simple interpretive questions you have with the material, or arguments you are trying out for your papers. To address anything more involved, you'll need to meet with me in office hours. (I highly encourage you to come to office hours in any event.)

Technology & Digital Devices

In this class, we will regularly engage in small group instruction and activities, as well as discussions with the whole class. Technology such as cell phones, tablets, and laptops easily become a distraction and create an obstacle to engagement during class time. For this reason, the policy of the class will be as follows. Do not use these devices during class time. Any lecture slides will be made available on the online course site, and any notes you might need to make should be taken by hand. There are two exceptions. First, if you have the need for such a device as an accommodation. (If you have a need for such a device, please consult the instructor.) Second, for class time that is dedicated to revising, editing, or peer reviewing assignments for this class, laptops and such devices will be allowed. I will make clear in advance when class time will be devoted to such tasks.

Participation

Participation in class discussion constitutes a significant part of your grade. You will be expected to attend class having done the readings and thought about them enough to discuss the arguments they make, to ask informed questions about them, and to engage with the other members of the class on these matters. Two expectations in service of these aims are worth making explicit. First, you'll need to be well-prepared, having read and thought about the assigned readings before class. Secondly, we will all need to foster a respectful, open environment where we can clarify, interpret and critically engage the philosophical issues dealt with in readings. Maintaining a respectful classroom atmosphere is crucial, and part of your responsibility.

Academic Misconduct

From the SAIC Student Handbook: "Academic misconduct includes both plagiarism and cheating, and may consist of: the submission of the work of another as one's own; unauthorized assistance on a test or assignment; submission of the same work for more than one class without the knowledge and consent of all instructors; or the failure to properly cite texts or ideas from other sources. Academic misconduct extends to all spaces on campus, including

satellite locations and online education. Academic integrity is expected in all coursework, including online learning. It is assumed that the person receiving the credit for the course is the person completing the work. SAIC has processes in place that protect student privacy and uses LDAP authentication to verify student identity.”

Specific procedures for faculty to follow in the case of academic misconduct are detailed in the Student Handbook.

Additional resources for students:

- Read “Plagiarism: How to Recognize It and Avoid It” - a short guide prepared by the Faculty Senate Student Life Subcommittee in 2004.
- Read the Flaxman Library’s quick guide titled “AVOID PLAGIARISM.”

Required Texts

There is one required book for this course:

- Paul C. Taylor - *Race: A Philosophical Introduction, Second Edition*, Polity Press, 2013 (ISBN: 978-0-7456-4966-5)

All other readings will be posted on the course’s Canvas site as pdf files.

Course Outline

*Readings are due on the dates they are listed for.

Tuesday, January 29 COURSE INTRO; RACE CONCEPTS AND RACE-THINKING

- **Readings:** Taylor- Chapter 1 *What Race-Thinking Is?*

Tuesday, February 5 CLASSICAL RACIALISM

- **Readings:** Taylor- Chapter 2 *Three Challenges to Race-Thinking* (read pp. 27-47)
Bernier- *A New Division of the Earth*
Kant- *Of the Different Human Races*
Jefferson- *Notes on the State of Virginia* (excerpts)

Tuesday, February 12 RACE ELIMINATIVISM

- **Readings:** Taylor- Chapter 2 *Three Challenges to Race-Thinking* (read pp. 47-67)
Appiah- *Illusions of Race*
Zack- *Race, Life, Death, Identity, Tragedy, and Good Faith*
Koslicki- *Natural Kinds and Natural Kind Terms*

Tuesday, February 19 RACIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM

- **Readings:** Mills- *But What Are You Really?*
Alcoff- *Latinos and the Category of Race*
Mallon- *A Field Guide to Social Construction*

Tuesday, February 26 MORE ON SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONISM

- **Readings:** Taylor- Chapter 3 *What Races Are*
Hacking- *Making People Up*
Ásta- *Social Kinds*
- **Draft of First Paper Due:** in class

Tuesday, March 5 RACED EXISTENCE

- **Readings:** Taylor- Chapter 4 *Existence, Experience, Elisions*
Fanon- *the Lived Experience of the Black Man*
Du Bois- reading TBA
- **First Paper Due:** on Canvas

Tuesday, March 12 CRITIQUES OF BIOLOGICAL ESSENTIALISM

- **Readings:** Beauvoir- *Introduction to the Second Sex*
Moi- *What is a Woman?* (excerpt)
- **Mid-Term:** in class exam; second half of class

Tuesday, March 19 THE SEX-GENDER SYSTEM

- **Readings:** Rubin- *The Traffic in Women: Notes on the "Political Economy" of Sex*
Mackinnon- *Sex Equality: On Difference and Dominance*

Tuesday, March 26

- **Critique Week:** no class

Tuesday, April 2 SEX BINARISM

- Readings:** Fausto-Sterling- *the Five Sexes: Why Male and Female Are Not Enough*
Fausto-Sterling- *the Five Sexes Revisited*
Antony- *"Human Nature" and its Role in Feminist Theory*

Tuesday, April 9 GENDER ANTI-ESSENTIALISM

- **Readings:** Butler- *Subjects of Gender/ Sex/ Desire*
Spelman- *Woman: the One and the Many*

Tuesday, April 16 GENDER & THE “AMELIORATIVE PROJECT”

- **Readings:** Haslanger- *Gender and Race: (What) are They? (What) do We Want Them to Be?*
Jenkins- *Amelioration and Inclusion: Gender Identity and the Concept of Woman*
Diaz-Leon- *Social Kinds, Conceptual Analysis, and the Operative Concept*
- **Draft of Second Paper Due:** in class

Tuesday, April 23 GENDER CONCEPTS AND TRANS WOMEN

- **Readings:** Bettcher- *Trans Women and the Meaning of “Woman”*
Watson- *the Woman Question*
- **Second Paper Due:** on Canvas

Tuesday, April 30 TRANSRACIALISM??

- **Readings:** Overall- *Transsexualism and “Transracialism”*
Tuvel- *In Defense of Transracialism*
Botts- *In Black and White: A Hermeneutic Argument Against “Transracialism”*

Tuesday, May 7

- **Final Exam:** in class

Friday, May 10

- **No Class:** Final Paper due on Canvas