

Introduction to Philosophy of Race and Gender

PHL 327
T and Th 2-3:30

Instructor:

Briana Toole

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Office Location: WAG 410A

Office Hours (subject to change): Mondays 10-12, Wednesdays 1-3, and by appointment

Texts: All reading materials will be made available on the class website.

Course Description: Our goal in this course is to ask distinctively philosophical questions about race and gender. The subject will explore issues in metaphysics, epistemology, ethics and philosophy of language that arise for various accounts of race and gender. To set the stage, we'll first look at some pioneering figures in the philosophy of race and gender. Eventually, we'll focus on these questions:

- (i) what is race/gender?
- (ii) how do race and gender inform individual as well as group identities?
- (iii) in what ways have the concepts of race and gender been used to oppress members of certain groups?
- (iv) what is the moral status of policies like affirmative action and racial profiling?
- (v) how might our concepts of race and gender affect our ability to successfully communicate?

Course Objectives: My goal is for you to become a better writer and thinker than when you started the class. I'd like for you to have a commanding understanding of the various topics covered in this course, meaning understanding the multiple perspectives and viewpoints on these subjects, and being able to justify the position you hold.

Course Expectations: 1) Read all the material. Twice. Outline. Your first source of reference is the text. Your second is the professor. 2) Come to class with the reading materials and be prepared to talk about the topic for that day. 3) Some of the material we cover in this course may be controversial. You will undoubtedly disagree with someone else's opinion. Feel free to do so, but in a respectful, open, and understanding manner.

Communication: Important announcements and assignments will be communicated to you via email, on Canvas, or in class. It is your responsibility to make sure you are up to date with the latest news. So check your email daily and don't miss class. You are welcome to email me with any questions you have. However, please keep in mind that:

- a. I do not respond to emails after 9 PM, or after 5 PM the day before a test or a paper is due.
- b. I do not answer questions that are clearly answered on the syllabus, in announcements that have been made in class, or in an assignment.

Electronic Etiquette: Phones, tablets, laptops and other electronics are not allowed in class. Numerous studies show that students learn better without using laptops in class, even if the laptops are used exclusively for notetaking.¹ Laptops and other electronics can also be distracting for other students. If you have a disability that makes it difficult for you to take notes by hand, please let me know and I will find a note-taker for you.

Course Requirements:

1. Reading Questions and Attendance – 15%
2. Midterm Examination (3/10) – 15%
3. Research paper first draft (hard copy due in class 4/5) – 10%
4. Research paper final draft (due via Canvas 5/5) – 25%
5. Reflective essay (to be written in class on 5/5) – 10%
6. Final examination (5/10) – 25%

Grading and Evaluation: Part of your grade for this class is your participation in discussion section. The quality of what you say in class will count more than the number of times you speak. The other part of your grade is the various essays and exams you'll complete over the course. A quick note about things you can be penalized for in your work: Being off-topic or failing to complete the assignment fully, not fully or accurately summarizing the position you are considering, not defending the claims you are making, or ignoring stylistic and formatting requirements.

** I may use a rubric to grade your essays; if so, I will share and review this with you in advance.*

Reading Questions: Philosophy is a communal activity and most of the work for this class will involve preparing yourself to be a helpful and active discussant. This is a college course and so I expect you to do much of the preparing on your own, before class starts. The reading questions are designed to point you to the parts of the material that are most important or that we will be focusing on in class discussion/ There will be reading questions due on most class days. Reading questions will also serve as the basis for at least one third of the final exam, so they are worth investing time in throughout the semester.

If you haven't made a serious attempt to understand the reading, or don't have it with you, you won't be of much help to us in class. As a result, I will only give credit for attending class if you are in class, with the reading, alert, engaged, prepared, and have two hard copies of the reading questions with you: you will turn in one to me and the other you will use at various points throughout our discussions. If you don't have two hard copies of the reading questions, and a hard copy of the reading at the beginning of class you will be counted absent. I will not grade the reading questions for correctness – only for effort, and they will not be accepted late (or early). So as far as your grade for these questions goes: no news is good news. If you turned in the reading questions and you don't hear from me you can assume that you got credit for the reading questions.

¹ <http://www.newyorker.com/tech/elements/the-case-for-banning-laptops-in-the-classroom>

Examinations: Examinations will cover lectures, readings and class discussions. The format will include short answer and long answer essay questions. No books, articles, cell phones, or computers are allowed in the examinations.

Papers: Page numbered, stapled hard copies of the first draft are due at the beginning of class on the day listed on the syllabus. Grades for papers will drop by a third of a letter grade for each 24 hour period that the paper is late. (Example: If the paper is due on Tuesday 11/11 at 2pm then a paper that's handed in between 2:01 p.m. on 11/11 and 2:01 p.m. on 11/12 will have a grade reduced by one third of a letter grade). Extensions are granted only in the case of emergencies with supporting documentation.

The reason I request a first draft of your paper is that the best way to improve your writing is to work on a paper, get feedback on it, and then improve it in light of that feedback. For this reason, I expect the final drafts to be significantly better and the final paper will be graded at a significantly higher standard than the original. This means that if the paper's quality remains about the same, your grade will go down.

Grading: Some written assignments will be graded pass/fail.

A	(93%-100%)	C	(73%-76%)
A-	(90%-92%)	C-	(70%-72%)
B+	(87%-89%)	D+	(67%-69%)
B	(83%-86%)	D	(63%-66%)
B-	(80%-82%)	D-	(60-62)
C+	(77%-79%)	F	(below 60%)

University Dates: Check the Academic Calendar for key dates.
<http://registrar.utexas.edu/calendars>

Religious Holidays: By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, you will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

Policy on Scholastic Dishonesty: Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For further information, please visit the Student Judicial Services web site: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs>.

Plagiarism: If you use words or ideas that are not your own you must cite your sources. Otherwise you will be guilty of plagiarism. To learn more go to the following URL:
http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/scholdis_plagiarism.php.

Students with Disabilities: Any student with a documented disability (physical or cognitive) who requires academic accommodations, should contact the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Office of the Dean of Students at 512-471-6259 (voice) or 512-471-4641 (TTY for users who are deaf or hard of hearing), as soon as possible to request an official letter outlining authorized accommodations.

Emergency Evacuation The following recommendations regarding emergency evacuation come from the Office of Campus Safety and Security, 512-471-5767, <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/>:

Occupants of buildings on The University of Texas at Austin campus are required to evacuate buildings when a fire alarm is activated. Alarm activation or announcement requires exiting and assembling outside. Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of each classroom and building you may occupy. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when entering the building.

Students requiring assistance in evacuation shall inform their instructor in writing during the first week of class.

In the event of an evacuation, follow the instruction of faculty or class instructors. Do not re-enter a building unless given instructions by the following: Austin Fire Department, The University of Texas at Austin Police Department, or Fire Prevention Services office.

Useful offices on campus

Philosophy Undergrad Advisor: scs@austin.utexas.edu

Center for Teaching & Learning: <http://ctl.utexas.edu/>

Undergraduate Writing Center: <http://uwc.utexas.edu/>

Counseling & Mental Health: <http://cmhc.utexas.edu/>

Division of Student Affairs: <http://www.utexas.edu/students/>

SCHEDULE

Date	Topics and Readings	Assignments
1/19	Part 1 - Metaphysics: What are Races and Genders? Introduction	
1/22	“How is this paper philosophy?” – Kristie Dotson	
1/26	“Natural Kinds” – Alexander Bird and Emma Tobin, Introduction, Section 1, and Section 2.4 “Feminist Metaphysics” - Sally Haslanger and Ásta Kristjana Sveinsdóttir, Introduction, Sections 1 and 2 “Race” – Michael James, Introduction, Sections 2 and 3	
1/29	“Gender and Race: What are they and what do we want them to be?” – Sally Haslanger	
2/2	“Racial Classifications” – Glorinda Marshall	
2/4	“Racisms” – Anthony Kwame Appiah	
2/9	<i>Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity</i> – Judith Butler, excerpts	
2/11	“Romancing the transgender native: Rethinking the use of the ‘third gender’ concept” - Evan B. Towle and Lynn M. Morgan	
2/16	“Transsexualism and ‘Transracialism’” - Christine Overall	
2/18	Part 2 – Epistemology: What impact do race and gender have on our epistemic practices? “Feminist Epistemology and Philosophy of Science” – Elizabeth Anderson, Introduction, Sections 1 and 2	
2/23	“Objectivity and Perspective in Empirical Knowledge” – Rebecca Kukla	
2/25	“Truth and Method: Feminist Standpoint Theory Revisited” – Susan Hekman	
3/1	“Epistemic Oppression and Epistemic Privilege” – Miranda Fricker	
3/3	<i>Blackness Visible</i> , Charles Mills, Preface and Chapter 1 <i>Invisible Man</i> , Ralph Ellison, Chapter 1 Watch: “Color film was built for white people...”	
3/8	Mills + Ellison continued Exam Review	
3/10	Midterm Exam	Exam
3/15	No Class - Spring Break	
3/17		
3/22	Part 3 – Ethics: What role do race and gender play in shaping/evaluating our existing moral practices? <i>Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong</i> – J.L. Mackie, Chapter 1	
3/29	“Why Affirmative Action is Immoral” – Louis Pojman	
3/31	“Affirmative Action and Fairness” – Robert Fullinwider	
4/5	“Racial Cognition and the Ethics of Implicit Bias” - Daniel Kelly and Erica Roedder	First Draft Due

	Homework: Take Harvard IAT (<i>print results for Thursday discussion</i>)	
4/7	“Thin Ice: Stereotype Threat and Black College Students” – Claude Steele “See no Bias” – Shankar Vedantam <i>Discussion based on IAT outcomes</i>	
4/12	“Experiencing ownership over a dark-skinned body reduces implicit racial bias” – Sebanz Maister and Tsakiris Knoblich	
4/14	“What are the Gender Differences? Male Priming Boosts Spatial Skills in Women” – Ortner and Sieverding	
4/19	Part 4 – Philosophy of Language: Race, Gender, and (Un)Successful Communication “Speech Acts and Unspeakable Acts” – Rae Langton	
4/21	“Ideology, Generics and Common Ground” – Sally Haslanger	
4/26	“On Slurs” – Lepore	
4/28	“The Black Man and Language”- Frantz Fanon	
5/3	Reflective Essay	Reflective Essay
5/5	Final Exam Review	Final Draft Due
5/10	Final Exam 2:00-5:00	Exam