

PHIL 333: Philosophy of Race and Gender

Simon Fraser University

Fall 2017

Course Information:

Instructor: Fatema Amijee

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Office Hours and Location: Mondays 2-4pm, or by appointment, in WMC 5605

Class Meeting Time and Location: Wednesdays 9:30am-12:20pm in BLU 10031

Course Description

The course will investigate philosophical questions that concern race and gender. We will start by asking what *oppression*, a key notion in discussions of race and gender, consists in. We will then move onto discussing questions that arise in the metaphysics, epistemology and ethics of race and gender. These questions will include: What is race? What is gender? What are trans identities? When is a belief a racist belief? What grounds the wrongness of racism? Of sexism? What is a feminist epistemology? Is there a close parallel between treatments of race/racism and gender/sexism?

Course Texts

Weekly readings will be made available on Canvas, and lecture handouts will be distributed in class.

Evaluation

Grading: I adhere to a blind grading policy, so when you submit your assignments, please only include your student number. Essay questions and instructions will be made available in class. Your final grade in the course will be calculated as follows.

1. Midterm paper (about 1500 words): 30%. Due October 18th
2. Term paper (about 2000 words): 45%. Due December 4th
3. Active engagement: 15%. Short assignments due every week.

Every week students will be required to submit answers to a 'reading question' pertaining to a particular assigned reading. Answers to these questions will be graded and constitute the 'active engagement' portion of the grade. Bring two hard-copies of your answer to the reading question to class: I will collect one at the beginning of class, and you can hold onto the other one for class discussion.

- These assignments will be graded very leniently: you will get full marks (1/1) if you complete the assignment accurately, half marks (0.5/1) if you complete the assignment, but get the wrong answer, and 0 marks if you don't complete it on time. The point of these assignments is to encourage active engagement with readings, and in the classroom. They will also serve as a useful tool for developing your arguments for the midterm and final papers.
- Late submissions will not be accepted. I will drop your two lowest grades.

4. Attendance: 10%

- Attendance in class is not just a physical achievement, but an intellectual one. As such, the following will negatively affect your attendance grade:
 - Tardiness (two instances of tardiness will count as one absence)
 - Checking your phone in class
 - Wearing headphones/earphones in class
 - Falling asleep
 - Being disruptive (this includes leaving class early without giving the instructor prior notice)
 - Using your laptop (Laptops are not permitted in this class. Research has also shown that note-taking by hand is much more effective for both comprehension and memory.¹ Finally, this is not the sort of class that will require a lot of notetaking: it will be much more important to think and engage in class discussion). If you have a disability which makes it difficult for you to take notes by hand, please let me know and I will find a note-taker for you.

Course Schedule

Reading Guide:

1. Course Introduction

2. Oppression I

Reading: Marilyn Frye, “Oppression”; Marilyn Frye, “Sexism”

3. Oppression II

Reading: Iris Young, “Throwing Like a Girl: A Phenomenology of Feminine Body Comportment Motility and Spatiality”; Iris Young, “Five Faces of Oppression”

4. Sex and Gender

Reading: Anne Fausto-Sterling, “The Five Sexes”; Anne Fausto-Sterling, “The Five Sexes Revisited”

5. Social Constructionism

Reading: Sally Haslanger, “Gender and Race: What are they? What do we want them to be?”; Sally Haslanger, “Future Genders, Future Races”

6. Trans-identities

Reading: Talia Bettcher, “Trans Woman and the Meaning of “Woman””; Rachel Williams, “Against the Sex/Gender Distinction”; Elinor Burkett, “What Makes a Woman?”

7. Gender and Knowledge

Reading: Elizabeth Anderson, “Feminist Epistemology: An Interpretation and a Defense”; Helen Longino, “Can there be a Feminist Science?”

8. False Consciousness

Reading: Sally Haslanger, “But Mom, Crop Tops are Cute!”; Martha Nussbaum, “Women and Cultural Universals”

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

9. Racial Categories

Reading: Michal Hardimon, “The Ordinary Concept of Race”; Linda Martin-Alcoff, “Latino/as, Asian Americans, and Black-White Bias”

10. What is Racism?

Reading: Anthony Appiah, “Racisms”; Joshua Glasgow, “Racism as Disrespect”

11. The Wrongness of Racism

Reading: Endre Begby, “The Epistemology of Prejudice”; Sarah Jane Leslie, “The Original Sin of Cognition”

12. Implicit Bias

Reading: Kelly and Roedder, “Racial Cognition and the Ethics of Implicit Bias”; Jules Holroyd, “Implicit Bias, Self-Defence, and the Reasonable Person”

13. Stereotype Threat

Reading: Claude M. Steele, “Thin Ice: Stereotype Threat and Black College Students”; Bryce Huebner, “Troubles with Stereotypes for Spinozan Minds”

Course Business

1. *Attendance.* You will not be penalized for missing class on religious holidays or due to illness (a doctor’s note will be required). A student who misses classes for the observance of a religious holiday should inform the instructor, in writing, at least one week before the absence, so that alternative arrangements can be made to complete work. If you know you will have to miss class(es) for this reason, provide your instructor with the date(s) as early as possible. Please note that the University specifies very few other excused absences (e.g. jury duty). When you must miss a class, you are responsible for getting notes and assignments from a classmate.
2. *Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct.* Simon Fraser University takes plagiarism (and academic misconduct more generally) very seriously. You are responsible for knowing what plagiarism is, and also for knowing the particular plagiarism penalties. Plagiarism includes (but is not limited to) the use of a thinker’s ideas or words without proper citation; the purchase of assignments; the use of internet resources without proper citation; and the submission of work written (in whole or in part) by another. Penalties for plagiarism range from a zero on the assignment to suspension from the university. You can acquaint yourself with SFU’s policies over plagiarism on this website: <http://www.sfu.ca/students/academicintegrity/resources.html>
3. *How to Avoid Plagiarising:* Most students plagiarise because they believe themselves to be without options. But no student will ever be without options in this course. If you find yourself in trouble, and tempted to cheat, contact me *immediately*. If you haven’t *yet* cheated, a solution can always be found.
4. *Late Penalties.* This will be a challenging and fast-paced course. It is highly recommended that you attend every class meeting and get your work in on time. The late penalty on the mid-term and final papers is set at 1/3 of a letter grade per day, to a maximum of three days (this includes weekends/holidays), unless accompanied by a documented medical explanation. Any work outstanding beyond this point will receive a grade of 0.
5. *Your Course Contact.* I am your primary contact for this course. Course-related emails must have “PHIL333” somewhere in the subject line. I will not answer emails that ask for information readily available through on either Canvas or the course syllabus, so it is always a good idea to begin by checking those two places. Also, I recommend that if you have a substantive philosophical question, you come to my office hours or set up an appointment rather than send me an email. I will respond to all other emails within two working days.

6. *Special Accommodations.* I am more than happy to assist with special accommodations for students registered with accessibility services. If you are registered with accessibility services, please don't hesitate to have your accessibility services representative get in touch with me. Any student with a documented disability who requires academic accommodation should contact the Centre for Students with Disabilities as soon as possible. More information is available at <http://www.sfu.ca/students/disabilityaccess.html>.
7. *Sensitive Material.* We will be talking about some sensitive issues in the class. If you feel like you might have difficulty discussing these topics, or other topics listed on the syllabus, please talk to me at the beginning of the semester. As a group, we will strive to create a discussion space that is safe, polite, respectful and open to diverse perspectives. Listen closely and respectfully, and refrain from ridiculing or interrupting your peers.