

# PHIL 333: Philosophy of Race and Gender

Simon Fraser University

Summer 2019

## Course Information:

Instructor: Fatema Amijee

email: famijee@gmail.com

Office Hours and Location: By appointment, in WMC 5605

Class Meeting Time and Location: Mondays and Wednesdays 9:30am-12:20pm in WMC 3535

## 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 (no longer than 800 words): 35%. Due May 31st
2. Term paper (no longer than 1000 words): 45%. Due June 17th
3. Active engagement: 20%. Short assignments due every week.

Every class students will be required to submit answers to a 'reading question' pertaining to a particular assigned reading. Answers to these questions will constitute the 'active engagement' portion of the grade.

## Course Schedule

*Reading Guide:*

1. Course Introduction
2. Oppression

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

3. Social Constructionism

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

4. 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?”

5. Gender and Knowledge

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

6. Gender and Politics

*Reading:* Martha Nussbaum, “The Feminist Critique of Liberalism”; Martha Nussbaum, “Religion and Women’s Human Rights”

7. What is Racism?

*Reading:* Anthony Appiah, “Racisms”; Rima Basu, “The Wrongs of Racist Beliefs”

8. Epistemic Injustice I

*Reading:* Miranda Fricker, “Epistemic oppression and epistemic privilege”; Miranda Fricker, “Epistemic injustice and a role for virtue in the politics of knowing”

9. Epistemic Injustice II

*Reading:* Linda Martin Alcoff, “The problem of speaking for others.”; Linda Martin Alcoff, “Epistemic Identities”

10. Adaptive Preferences I

*Reading:* Elizabeth Anderson, “Epistemic justice as a virtue of social institutions”; Martha Nussbaum, “Adaptive Preferences and Women’s Options”

11. Adaptive Preferences II

*Reading:* Serene Khader, “Must Theorising about Adaptive Preferences Deny Women’s Agency?”; Elizabeth Barnes, “Disability and Adaptive Preference”

12. Moral Encroachment

*Reading:* Sarah Moss, “Moral Encroachment”; Georgi Gardiner, “Evidentialism and Moral Encroachment”

## Course Business

1. *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>
2. *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.
3. *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.
4. *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.
5. *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>.
6. *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.