PHI 411

Race and Identity

Fall 2023 M/W 3:45pm - 5:05 pm. Lyman 115B

Instructor: Dr. Luvell Anderson
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All information in this syllabus is subject to change based on the needs of the class. Any changes will be announced in class and communicated by email and/or on Blackboard. Students are responsible for regularly checking their email and the Blackboard site for this class.

Course description

Race and racism are prominent features of our everyday practices in both subtle and explicit ways. We draw on these notions to explain various experiences and phenomena. For instance, there are controversies in the United States, France, and Germany over *Critical Race Theory*, some believing that it exacerbates racism rather than fosters greater understanding. Race is also highlighted in campaigns like #OscarsSoWhite, which point out the lack of racial diversity at the Academy Awards ceremony. Race has also been used to explain voting habits and employment, wealth, and health disparities.

In this course, we examine the phenomena of race and racism, asking important questions like: What is race? What is racism? How does race and gender interact? Why is it bad to restrict immigration based on race? How does race impact one's ability to testify about one's knowledge? How are we to understand mixed race?

Course Objectives

At the conclusion of this course students should be able to:

- Distill the central argument of a text to its essentials, making clear its basic argumentative structure. Interpret charitably in order to understand a view in its most cogent form before subjecting it to criticism.

- Apply the critical tools of philosophical analysis, both orally and in writing, to boldly and effectively question prevailing social norms, hierarchies of power, or other traditional or current assumptions and theories about value. Identify and describe major political and philosophical critiques of racial identity
- Explain and defend a philosophical thesis in writing that is clear, concise, informed and well-organized. Assess the strengths and weaknesses of rival arguments and theories to reach an overall assessment of the comparative merits of different views.
- Explain the content of some contemporary philosophical answers to questions in race theory.

Texts

We will use a variety of texts in the course. All texts will be available on **Blackboard.** These texts are considered required reading and you are expected to read the assigned texts before class.

Assessment

Each assessment is designed to help us achieve our course objectives. Writing assignments are meant to help you form and express ideas. Exams test your ability to present basic knowledge to others. Assignments will consist of the following:

- **Short Recaps (8)**: In a few sentences, state the main question and describe what the author is trying to argue.
- **Midterm exam**: Short essay exam covering basic concepts and arguments from the first half of the course.
- **Final project**: A chance to demonstrate what you've learned from the course. Take an idea discussed in one of the readings and expand on it. You can do this by providing a new argument for a position or showing how an argument fails when considering some new art practice or artifact. **Students must meet with me to get project approval**.

Recaps = 30
Midterm = 30
Final = 40

Grading scale

A+	99-100
A	95-98
A-	90-94
B+	87-89
B	84-86
B-	80-83
C+	77-79
C	74-76
C-	70-73

D+ 65-69
D 61-64
F ≤ 60

Communication

Any important announcements, advice, changes to the class schedule, etc. will be communicated by email or on the course homepage on Blackboard. You are responsible to regularly check your SU email account as well as the Blackboard page for the class.

Academic Integrity and Student Conduct

Expectations for academic integrity and student conduct are described in detail in the Academic Integrity Policy, which can be found here: http://class.syr.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Academic-Integrity-Policy_final.pdf.

Plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct can result in an automatic failing grade for this course, or a report to the appropriate Academic Judiciary, or both. If you are feeling pressured for time or confused, don't plagiarize! Instead, come get help.

Disability Statement

Any student who anticipates physical or academic barriers based on the impact of a disability is encouraged to speak with me privately. Students with disabilities should also contact Disability Resources for Students (DRS) at disabilityservices@syr.edu or Phone: Voice: (315) 443-4498.

Ground rules

- Be respectful. Do not disrupt class by coming in late or leaving early, holding private conversations, being rude, etc.
- If you have questions about the course material, ask for clarification. Don't stay confused!
- Everyone has an equal right to be heard. Listen carefully to what your colleagues have to say and let them finish.
- Every viewpoint merits consideration, even if you disagree.
- Talk to each other, not just to the professor.
- Debate and disagree politely and respectfully. Object to arguments, but refrain from personal attacks and insults.

- Avoid racist, sexist, homophobic, or otherwise inappropriate comments. Speak up if you feel like someone is using derogatory language, but try to be charitable in your interpretation of their intentions.

Class schedule

Changes, additions, substitutions, or cancellations may be expected during the semester. They will be announced on Blackboard for this class.

Week 1 What is Race?

8/28 Introduction
8/30 Excerpt from George Schuyler, *Black No More*, (https://ekladata.com/XGzb9Wez7QFwKcXpVg90kYNPTBo/Black-no-more.pdf)

Week 2 Thinking about Race Philosophically

9/4 Labor Day. No Class.
9/6 Paul Taylor, "The Language of Race"

Week 3 The Metaphysics of Race

9/11 Ron Mallon, "'Race': Normative, Not Metaphysical or Semantic"
9/13 TBD

Week 4 Metaphysics (cont)

9/18 Immanuel Kant, "Of the Different Human Races"
9/20 Sally Haslanger, "A Social Constructionist Analysis of Race"

Week 5 Metaphysics (cont)

9/25 Adam Hochman, "Replacing Race: Interactive Constructionism about Racialized Groups"
9/27 W.E.B. Du Bois, "The Conservation of Races"

Week 6 Theories of Mixed Race

10/2 TBD
10/4 Ron Sundstrom, "Being and Being Mixed Race"

Week 7 Theories of Mixed Race (cont)

10/9 Fall Break
10/11 Linda Martín Alcoff, "Mestizo Identity"

Week 8 Theories of Racism

10/16 K. Anthony Appiah, "Racisms"
10/18 Midterm

Week 9 Theories of Racism (cont)

10/23 Jorge Garcia, "The Heart of Racism"
10/25 TBD

Week 10 Race Conscious Politics

10/30 Bernie Boxill, "Black Reparations"
11/1 Anthony Appiah, "'Group Rights' and Racial Affirmative Action"

Week 11 Race and Immigration

11/6 TBD
11/8 Sahar Akhtar, "Race beyond our borders: Is racial and ethnic immigration selection always morally wrong?"

Week 12 Race and Epistemology

11/13 Rachel McKinnon, "Epistemic Injustice"
11/15 Kristie Dotson, "Tracking Epistemic Violence, Tracking Practices of Silence"

Week 13 Thanksgiving Break

11/20 No Classes
11/22 No Classes

Week 14 Hate Speech

11/27 Project Meetings
11/29 Mark Slagle, "An ethical exploration of free expression and the problem of hate speech"

Week 15 (11/23): Workshop

12/4 Project Workshop
12/6 Project Workshop

Week 16
12/11 Last Day