



University of New Haven

COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES

Program of Philosophy

PHIL 2251, Section 01
Philosophy of Race
Fall 2017
MW from 1:40 to 2:55 PM
203 Kaplan Hall
3 Credit Hours

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Office Hours: T from 1:00 to 3:00 PM

COURSE SYLLABUS

Course Description

What is *race*? Do races even exist? And what exactly is *racism*? Most people agree that it is wrong to be racist, but what are they referring to? Individual beliefs? Or perhaps sociopolitical structures? There is, it seems, no consensus regarding these basic questions — questions that are undeniably important given the history of the modern world, to say nothing of the reality of race and racism today. This course is an exploration of these questions, and it is premised on the observation that we are definitely *not* living in a post-racial, post-racist world, and that we need to consider these fundamental questions critically and soberly.

In the first part of this course, we will consider some of the challenges to “race-thinking,” one of which is the desire among some whites to dismiss the testimonies and analyses of people of color and to speak for them.

In the second part of this course, we will explore the complex and contested question of race, not only in terms of its existence or non-existence, but also in terms of mixed race, Latinx, and Asian identities.

In the third part of this course, we will look at the problem of racism, not only as an individual phenomenon, but also — and far more importantly — as a complex sociopolitical and historical one.

In the fourth part of this course, we will address the systems and structures of institutionalized racism (or white supremacy), many of which are explicitly cited by activists in the Black Lives Matter movement.

Finally, in the fifth part of this course, we will discuss the meaning — and future — of “whiteness” as a racial category, taking into account some of the key insights from the field of Critical Race Theory.

Required Texts

- *Black Skin, White Masks* by Frantz Fanon; ISBN: 0802143008
- *The Racial Contract* by Charles W. Mills; ISBN: 0801484634
- *The New Jim Crow* by Michelle Alexander; ISBN: 1595586431

- *The Future of Whiteness* by Linda Martín Alcoff; ISBN: 0745685455

The other required texts for this course are available for download on my website: <http://www.douglasficek.com>. Download them ASAP, and always have the appropriate texts with you in class, either as hard copies or as electronic documents.

Course Format

This is a philosophy course, and it will consist of exegetical lectures, open discussion, and some occasional group work. Please be ready *every day* to ask a question or make a comment about the assigned text, as that is how I usually begin class.

As an instructor, I am pretty easy-going. I do, however, insist upon a respectful atmosphere in the classroom. What does this mean? It means: no phone calls, no texting, no sleeping, no ridiculously long bathroom breaks, and finally no computers, unless you absolutely need them for reading or note-taking. If your phone does go off during class, you have a choice: You can either sing a song for the class, or I can assign an additional paper that *everybody* must do. This is not a joke.

Course Objectives

- Students will learn (and hopefully appreciate) what it means to do philosophy.
- Students will discover new (and possibly profound) concepts, ideas, and theories.
- Students will become better arguers (in the sense making and evaluating arguments).

Student Learning Outcomes

- Students will be able to explain course readings in pop quizzes and written papers.
- Students will be able to evaluate course readings in class discussion and written papers.
- Students will be able to develop their own arguments in class discussion and written papers.

Course Requirements & Assessment

We will cover numerous texts in this course, and it is your responsibility to read the assigned pages *before class begins*. To this end, I will be giving you several pop quizzes throughout the semester, on which you may use your notes but not the texts themselves. They cannot be made up, so do not make lateness a habit.

In addition to these pop quizzes, I will be assigning three papers. The first will be due on Monday, October 16th, and the second will be due on Monday, November 20th. The third paper, which will be more substantial, will be due during finals week.

There will *not* be a midterm exam or a final exam.

Expectations

Students are expected to spend at least two hours on academic studies outside, and in addition to, each hour of class time.

Grading

Grades earned are based on your attendance, pop quizzes, and papers.

Attendance	10%
Pop Quizzes	20%
First Paper	20%
Second Paper	20%
Third Paper	30%
Total*	100%

*Final Grades are assigned with the following scale:

<u>Undergraduate Scale</u>			
Grades		Scored	Letter Equivalent
Between			
97	to	100	A+
94	to	Less than 97	A
90	to	Less than 94	A-
87	to	Less than 90	B+
84	to	Less than 87	B
80	to	Less than 84	B-
77	to	Less than 80	C+
74	to	Less than 77	C
70	to	Less than 74	C-
67	to	Less than 70	D+
63	to	Less than 67	D
60	to	Less than 63	D-
		Less than 60	F

Course Outline

- August 28 – Course Introduction

GETTING STARTED

- August 30 – “The Problem of Speaking for Others” by Linda Martín Alcoff
- September 4 – NO CLASS
- September 6 – “Three Challenges to Race-Thinking” by Paul C. Taylor

THE QUESTION OF RACE

- September 11 – “The Conservation of Races” by W.E.B. Du Bois
- September 13 – “Illusions of Race” by Kwame Anthony Appiah
- September 18 – “Mixed Black and White Race and Public Policy” by Naomi Zack
- September 20 – “Race, Biraciality, and Mixed Race — In Theory” by Lewis R. Gordon
- September 25 – “Latinos on Race and Ethnicity: Alcoff, Corlett, and Gracia” by Lawrence Blum
- September 27 – “The Invisible Asian” by George Yancy and David Haekwon Kim

THE PROBLEM OF RACISM

- October 2 – “Of Our Spiritual Strivings” by W.E.B. Du Bois
- October 4 – *Black Skin, White Masks* by Frantz Fanon, pp. xi-63
- October 9 – *Black Skin, White Masks* by Frantz Fanon, pp. 64-119

- October 11 – *Black Skin, White Masks* by Frantz Fanon, pp. 120-206
- October 16 – “Racism as a Form of Bad Faith” by Lewis R. Gordon; FIRST PAPER DUE
- October 18 – “A Genealogy of Modern Racism” by Cornel West
- October 23 – NO CLASS

SYSTEMS & STRUCTURES

- October 25 – *The Racial Contract* by Charles W. Mills, pp. 1-40
- October 30 – *The Racial Contract* by Charles W. Mills, pp. 41-90
- November 1 – *The Racial Contract* by Charles W. Mills, pp. 91-133
- November 6 – *The New Jim Crow* by Michelle Alexander, pp. 1-58
- November 8 – *The New Jim Crow* by Michelle Alexander, pp. 59-139
- November 13 – *The New Jim Crow* by Michelle Alexander, pp. 140-220
- November 15 – *The New Jim Crow* by Michelle Alexander, pp. 221-261

WHITENESS

- November 20 – “The Souls of White Folk” by W.E.B. Du Bois; SECOND PAPER DUE
- November 22 – NO CLASS
- November 27 – “White Man's Guilt” by James Baldwin
- November 29 – “Whiteness as Property” by Cheryl I. Harris
- December 4 – *The Future of Whiteness* by Linda Martín Alcoff, pp. 1-38
- December 6 – *The Future of Whiteness* by Linda Martín Alcoff, pp. 39-90
- December 11 – *The Future of Whiteness* by Linda Martín Alcoff, pp. 91-204

UNIVERSITY POLICIES & ACADEMIC REGULATIONS

The following policy excerpts have been taken from the [Student Handbook](#). Follow the link to view the policy in its entirety.

Add/Drop Policy

Tuesday, September 5th is the final day to drop this course so that it does not appear on your transcript. After the first week of class, self-service registration will not be enabled for students to directly add or drop classes. Students should contact the registrar’s office directly or the Academic Success Center for assistance with adding and dropping courses during this time.

Attendance Policies

Students are expected to attend regularly and promptly all their classes, appointments, and exercises. The instructor has the right to dismiss from class any student who has been absent more than two weeks (pro-rated for terms different from that of the semester). A dismissed student will receive a withdrawal (**W**) from the course if they are still eligible for a withdrawal per the university *Withdrawal from a Course* policy, or a failure (**F**) if not. A student who is not officially registered in the course is not permitted to attend classes or take part in any other course activities. Students absent from any class meeting are responsible for making up missed assignments and examinations at the discretion of the instructor.

Religious Observance Policy for Students

The University of New Haven respects the right of its students to observe religious holidays that may necessitate their absence from class or from other required university-sponsored activities.

Students who wish to observe such holidays should not be penalized for their absence, although in academic courses they are responsible for making up missed work.

Note: Instructors should try to avoid scheduling exams or quizzes on religious holidays, but where such conflicts occur should provide reasonable accommodations for missed assignment deadlines or exams. If a class, an assignment due date, or exam interferes with the observance of such a religious holiday, it is the student's responsibility to notify his or her instructor, preferably at the beginning of the term, but otherwise at least two weeks before the holiday.

Withdrawal from a Course

Friday, November 3rd is the final date to request a withdrawal for this term. Students wishing to withdraw from a course **MUST** officially do so by completing the [online](#) form or by submitting a [course withdrawal form](#) to the registrar's office. This request must be submitted to the Office of the University Registrar (and signed by the International Services Office if you are an international student). The grade of **W** will be recorded, but the course will not affect the GPA.

Incomplete (INC) Grade Policy

A grade of Incomplete (**INC**) is given only in special circumstances and indicates that the student has been given permission by the instructor to complete required course work (with the same instructor) after the end of the term. In the absence of the instructor a student should contact the Department Chair.

Academic Integrity Policy and Procedures

The University of New Haven expects its students to maintain the highest standards of academic conduct. Academic dishonesty is not tolerated at the University. To know what it is expected of them, students are responsible for reading and understanding the statement regarding academic honesty in the [Student Handbook](#). Please ask me about my expectations regarding permissible or encouraged forms of student collaboration if there is any confusion about this topic. Please ask me about my expectations regarding permissible or encouraged forms of student collaboration if there is any confusion about this topic.

The [Dean of Students Office](#) offers a range of support to students. It answers questions; provides information about and referrals to campus resources; assists in students' adjustment to the University; promotes programs which address student needs, concerns and interests; and helps students in resolving problems of any type.

Commitment to Positive Learning Environment

The University adheres to the philosophy that all community members should enjoy an environment free of any form of harassment, sexual misconduct, discrimination, or intimate partner violence. If you have been the victim of sexual misconduct, we encourage you to report this. If you report this to a faculty/staff member, they must notify our college's Title IX coordinator about the basic facts of the incident (you may choose to request confidentiality from the University). If you encounter sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, sexual assault, or discrimination based on race, color, religion, age, national origin, ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability please contact the Title IX Coordinator, Caroline Koziatek, at 203-932-7479 or ckoziatek@newhaven.edu. For more information visit [Title IX at the University of New Haven](#).

Reporting Bias Incidents

At the University of New Haven, there is an expectation that all community members are committed to creating and supporting a climate which promotes civility, mutual respect, and open-mindedness. There also exists an understanding that with the freedom of expression comes the responsibility to support community members' right to live and work in an environment free from harassment and fear. It is expected that all members of the University community will engage in anti-bias behavior and refrain from actions that intimidate, humiliate, or demean persons or groups or that undermine their security or self-esteem. ([Reporting Options](#))

UNIVERSITY SUPPORT SERVICES

The University recognizes that students can often use some help outside of class and offers academic assistance through several offices.

[Centers for Academic Success and Advising \(CASA\)](#)

The Academic Success Center provides a wide range of academic support to day and evening undergraduate students beyond their first year of college.

[University Writing Center](#)

The mission of the Writing Center (an expansion of the Writer to Writer peer-tutoring program) is to provide high-quality tutoring to undergraduate and graduate students as they write for a wide range of purposes and audience. Tutors are undergraduate and graduate students studying Biology, Communications, Criminal Justice, National Security, Engineering, English, Environmental Science, Finance, Forensic Science, Legal Studies, Marine Biology, Music, Nutrition, and Psychology. We are here to work with you at any stage in the writing process; just bring in your assignment, your ideas, and any writing you've done so far. To make an appointment, you can register for an account with our scheduling site at <https://newhaven.mywconline.com> or visit us in person at our desk on the first floor of Peterson Library (just to the left after you enter the library).

[Center for Learning Resources \(CLR\)](#)

The Center for Learning Resources (CLR), located in the Peterson Library, provides academic content support to the students of the University of New Haven using metacognitive strategies that help students become aware of and learn to apply optimal learning processes in the pursuit of creating independent learners CLR tutors focus sessions on discussions of concepts and processes and typically use external examples to help students grasp and apply the material.

[Accessibility Resources Center](#)

Students with disabilities are encouraged to share, in confidence, information about needed specific course accommodations. The Accessibility Resources Center, located in Sheffield Hall, is responsible for and committed to providing services and support that serve to promote educational equity and ensure that students are able to participate in the opportunities available at the University of New Haven. Accommodations cannot be made without written documentation from the Accessibility Resources Center.

Counseling & Psychological Services

The Counseling Center offers a variety of services aimed at helping students resolve personal difficulties and acquire the balance, skills, and knowledge that will enable them to take full advantage of their experience at the University of New Haven.