



# University of New Haven

COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES

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Program of Philosophy

PHIL 2251, Section 01

## **Philosophy of Race**

Fall 2019

Mondays and Wednesdays, 1:40-2:55

103 Kaplan Hall

3 Credit Hours

Department Chair: Dr. Brett McCormick

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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 10:00-3:00

## **COURSE SYLLABUS**

### **Course Description**

An interdisciplinary but primarily philosophical inquiry into the nature of race and racism, with an emphasis on their social and political aspects. Students will learn about the major positions in race theory, and they will apply those theoretical positions to contemporary issues and problems.

### **Extended 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 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 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), focusing on the work of Michael Omi and Howard Winant, Charles W. Mills, and Michelle Alexander.

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 and Critical Whiteness Studies.

## Required Texts

The required texts for this course are available as PDFs on my website:

<http://www.douglasficek.com/teaching/phil-2251/>. Download them and always bring them with you to class, either as hard copies or as readable files on your computers or tablets. You cannot participate fully without them, and your attendance grade will suffer if you are consistently unprepared.

You also need these three books:

- *Black Skin, White Masks* by Frantz Fanon; ISBN: 0802143008
- *The Racial Contract* by Charles W. Mills; ISBN: 0801484634
- *The Future of Whiteness* by Linda Martín Alcoff; ISBN: 0745685455

Finally, to complete the review essay (more information below), you will need to get a copy of one of these books:

- *The New Jim Crow* by Michelle Alexander; ISBN: 1595586431
- *Faces At The Bottom Of The Well* by Derrick Bell; ISBN: 0465068146
- *Red Skin, White Masks* by Glen Sean Coulthard; ISBN: 9780816679652
- *The Man-Not* by Tommy J. Curry; ISBN: 1439914869
- *How to Be an Antiracist* by Ibram X. Kendi; ISBN: 0525509283
- *The Creolizing Subject* by Michael J. Monahan; ISBN: 0823234509
- *Africa, Asia, and the History of Philosophy* by Peter K.J. Park; ISBN: 143844642X
- *Good White People* by Shannon Sullivan; ISBN: 9781438451688
- *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation* by Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor; ISBN: 1608465624
- *White Privilege and Black Rights* by Naomi Zack; ISBN: 9781442250574

## 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 reading responses and papers.
- Students will be able to evaluate course readings in reading responses and papers.
- Students will be able to develop critical arguments in reading responses and papers.

## Course Requirements & Assessment

Attendance is required for this course, and I expect you to be prepared, which means that you need to read the appropriate texts carefully and bring them with you for class discussion.

To encourage critical reading and writing, I am assigning 15 one-page reading responses, the details of which are attached to this syllabus. These are extremely important, and they will constitute a plurality of your final grade.

I am also assigning a review essay, the details of which are attached to this syllabus. Basically, you will pick one book (from a selection of ten), read it, and then write a 6-8 page review essay.

Finally, I am assigning a 6-8 page final paper, the details of which are attached to this syllabus. We are covering a lot in this course, and in your final paper you will be able to explore a philosophical topic that interests you. Look through the syllabus: Which issues or problems interest you?

**Expectations**

This course will require significant in-class and out-of-class commitment from each student. The University estimates that a student should expect to spend two hours outside of class for each hour they are in a class.

**Missed Work Statement**

It is imperative that you do not fall behind in this course. Having said that, I do give partial credit for late work, so please submit everything.

**Grading**

Grades earned are based on your attendance, reading responses, and two papers.

Attendance	10%
Reading Responses	40%
Review Essay	25%
Final Paper	25%
Total	100%

Final Grades are assigned with the following scale:

<u>Undergraduate Scale</u>			
Grades		Scored	Letter Equivalent
Between			
97	to	100	A+
93	to	Less than 97	A
90	to	Less than 93	A-
87	to	Less than 90	B+
83	to	Less than 87	B
80	to	Less than 83	B-
77	to	Less than 80	C+
73	to	Less than 77	C
70	to	Less than 73	C-
67	to	Less than 70	D+
63	to	Less than 67	D
60	to	Less than 63	D-

		Less than 60	F
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## Course Outline/Schedule

August 26 – Course Introduction

### GETTING STARTED

August 28 – “The Problem of Speaking for Others” by Linda Martín Alcoff

September 2 – NO CLASS

September 4 – “Three Challenges to Race-Thinking” by Paul C. Taylor

### THE QUESTION OF RACE

September 9 – “The Conservation of Races” by W.E.B. Du Bois

September 11 – “Illusions of Race” by Kwame Anthony Appiah

September 16 – “‘Conserve’ Races? In Defense of W.E.B. Du Bois” by Lucius Outlaw

September 18 – “Latinos on Race and Ethnicity: Alcoff, Corlett, and Gracia” by Lawrence Blum

September 23 – “The Invisible Asian” by George Yancy and David Haekwon Kim

### THE PROBLEM OF RACISM

September 25 – “Of Our Spiritual Strivings” by W.E.B. Du Bois

September 30 – Film: *Frantz Fanon: His Life, His Struggle, His Work*

October 2 – *Black Skin, White Masks* by Frantz Fanon, pp. xi-63

October 7 – *Black Skin, White Masks* by Frantz Fanon, pp. 64-119

October 9 – *Black Skin, White Masks* by Frantz Fanon, pp. 120-206

October 14 – “Racism as a Form of Bad Faith” by Lewis R. Gordon

October 16 – “A Genealogy of Modern Racism” by Cornel West

October 21 – NO CLASS

### SYSTEMS AND STRUCTURES

October 23 – “Racial Formation” by Michael Omi and Howard Winant

October 28 – “The Racial State” by Michael Omi and Howard Winant

October 30 – *The Racial Contract* by Charles W. Mills, pp. 1-40

November 4 – *The Racial Contract* by Charles W. Mills, pp. 41-90

November 6 – *The Racial Contract* by Charles W. Mills, pp. 91-133

November 11 – Video: “Michelle Alexander: The 30th Annual George E. Kent Lecture”

### WHITENESS

November 13 – “White Man’s Guilt” by James Baldwin

November 18 – “Whiteness as Property” by Cheryl Harris

November 20 – *The Future of Whiteness* by Linda Martín Alcoff, pp. 1-38

November 25 – *The Future of Whiteness* by Linda Martín Alcoff, pp. 39-90

November 27 – NO CLASS

December 2 – *The Future of Whiteness* by Linda Martín Alcoff, pp. 91-204

### TO BE DETERMINED\*

December 4 – TBD

December 9 – TBD

December 16 – FINAL EXAM (10:30-12:30)\*

There will not be a final exam, but we will meet during this period.

## UNIVERSITY POLICIES & ACADEMIC REGULATIONS

The Academic Regulations are available in the [Student Handbook](#). Follow the link to view the policies. They are also available in the [Undergraduate](#) and [Graduate Catalogs](#).

### Add/Drop Policy

Tuesday, September 3 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's course withdrawal 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.

### Withdrawal from a Course

Tuesday, October 29 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 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.

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](mailto: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.

### **[Center for Student Success \(CSS\)](#)**

The Center for Student Success provides students with a multitude of resources available on campus and assists students in fulfilling their educational, social and personal goals.

### **[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 audiences. 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.