

PHIL 4460 CONTEMPORARY ISSUES I: METAPHYSICS OF GENDER AND RACE – FALL 2011

Time: Slot 21 (Mondays 14:30-17:30)

Place: 375 University College

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Office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 15:00-16:00, or by appointment.

COURSE INFORMATION

Course description: This course will focus on the meaning of racial and gender terms, such as 'black', 'white', 'man' and 'woman'. We will discuss the following questions, among others: What is the meaning of these terms? What is the nature of the corresponding categories? What is the best methodology to address these questions? Are race and gender human biological kinds, or social constructions? Do they exist at all? If race and gender are not real biological kinds, should we conserve or eliminate those terms? Are these terms useful in order to detect and fight sexist and racist attitudes in our society, or are those terms and classifications part of the problem?

Readings:

Required textbooks:

1. *A Theory of Race*, by Joshua Glasgow, Routledge, 2009. (Available at Bookstore)
2. *Feminist Metaphysics: Explorations in the Ontology of Sex, Gender and Self*, edited by Charlotte Witt, Springer, 2011.

(Electronic version available at the U of M Library. Link:

<http://www.springerlink.com.proxy2.lib.umanitoba.ca/content/j53374/#section=821972&page=7&locus=46>. Library number and password required).

Required Readings: See Course Contents below. Every week there will be a required reading, typically a chapter from either Glasgow's monograph or Witt's collection. Additional readings for every week are also suggested below. (Some of these readings will be available on the course website on JUMP.)

METHODS OF EVALUATION

Evaluation: EITHER three short papers (2000-3000 words), 30% each, OR one short paper plus one long paper (5000-6000 words), 30% and 60% respectively. Class participation and presentations: 10%.

Deadlines: First (short) paper is due on **October 31, 2011**. Second (long) paper (or papers two and three, if you are writing three short papers) is/are due on **December 12, 2011**.

Evaluation provided by the Voluntary Withdrawal deadline date (November 16, 2011): YES

Presentations: There will be one or two in-class presentations every week. Students are welcome to volunteer for these presentations. **Every student is required to do a presentation at least once during the course.** Additional presentations can improve but not hurt the final grade.

Recommended Paper Topics: Essay questions will be provided in the first weeks of the term, based on the course readings. Students are strongly encouraged to choose one of these questions for each essay. If you want to write on a different topic, please get permission from the instructor.

Policy on Late Assignments: Accepted with penalty (5 points less per week), if they are submitted *before* the end of classes. Otherwise, you have to apply for an incomplete grade and time extension, as follows:

Policy on Incomplete Term Work: A student who is unable to complete the term work prescribed in a course (for medical or compassionate reasons) may apply to the instructor *prior to the end of lectures* for an incomplete grade and time extension for work completion. (Further info here:

<http://crscalprod1.cc.umanitoba.ca/Catalog/ViewCatalog.aspx?pageid=viewcatalog&catalogid=60&chapterid=227&topicgroupid=4053&loaduserredits=False>)

Course Resources: There will be a course website available through **JUMP**, with useful information such as course outlines, class handouts, assignment topics and deadlines, additional readings, links, announcements, etc. This website will be updated regularly, so the students are encouraged to visit it often during the course.

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty:

Students should acquaint themselves with the University's policy on plagiarism, cheating, exam personation, and duplicate submission (see Section 8.1 of the University of Manitoba Undergraduate Calendar 2011-2012, p. 29; also available online here:

<http://crscalprod1.cc.umanitoba.ca/Catalog/ViewCatalog.aspx?pageid=viewcatalog&catalogid=60&chapterid=227&topicgroupid=4056&loaduserredits=False>)

Penalties for Academic Dishonesty

The common penalty in Arts for plagiarism on a written assignment is F on the paper and F (CW) (for Compulsory Withdrawal) for the course. For the most serious acts of plagiarism, such as the purchase of an essay and repeat violations, this penalty can also include suspension for a period of up to five years from registration in courses taught in a particular department in Arts or from all courses taught in this Faculty.

COURSE CONTENTS

PART I: METAPHYSICS OF RACE

Week 1 (September 12): *The Race Debate: The Main Questions*

Required Reading: **Glasgow**, *A Theory of Race*, Ch. 1: “The Race Debate”.

Week 2 (September 19): *Conceptual Analysis and the Concept of Race*

Required Reading: **Glasgow**, *A Theory of Race*, Ch. 2: “Dispatches from the Armchair: Thinning Out the Concept of Race”.

Additional Readings: **Hardimon**, M. (2003): “The Ordinary Concept of Race”, *Journal of Philosophy* 100(9), pp. 437-55; and **Mallon**, R. (2006): “Race: Normative, not Metaphysical or Semantic”, *Ethics* 116, pp. 525-51.

Week 3 (September 26): *The Methodology of the Race Debate*

Required Reading: **Glasgow**, *A Theory of Race*, Ch. 3: “Methodology: How Should We Figure Out the Shape of Racial Discourse?”

Additional Readings: **Glasgow**, J. (2008): “On the Methodology of the Race Debate: Conceptual Analysis and Racial Discourse”, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 76(2), pp. 333-58.

Week 4 (October 3): *Some Empirical Data on the Concept of Race*

Required Reading: **Glasgow**, *A Theory of Race*, Ch. 4: “The Contours of Racial Discourse”.

Additional Readings: **Glasgow**, J., Shulman, J. and Covarrubias, E. (2009): “The Ordinary Conception of Race in the United States and its Relation to Racial Attitudes: A New Approach”, *Journal of Cognition and Culture* 9(1/2), pp. 15-38; **Machery**, E. and Faucher, L. (2005): “Social Construction and the Concept of Race”, *Philosophy of Science* 72, pp. 1208-19.

Week 5: (October 10): Thanksgivings. No class

Week 6 (October 17): *Race as a Biological Kind*

Required Reading: **Glasgow**, *A Theory of Race*, Ch. 5: “Breaking Nature’s Bones”.

Additional readings: **Andreasen**, R. (2005) “The Meaning of ‘Race’: Folk Conceptions and the New Biology of Race”, *Journal of Philosophy* 102(2), pp. 94-106; **Kitcher**, P. (2007) “Does ‘Race’ Have a Future?”, *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 35(4), pp. 293-317; and **Spencer**, Q. (forthcoming), “What ‘biological racial realism’ should mean”, *Philosophical Studies* (published online on 12 January 2011).

Week 7 (October 24): *Constructionism, Revisionism and Anti-Realism about Race*

Required Reading: **Glasgow**, *A Theory of Race*, Ch. 6: “Constructionism, Revisionism, and Anti-Realism”.

Additional readings: **Haslanger**, S. (2006): “Philosophical Analysis and Social Kinds I: What Good Are Our Intuitions?” *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 80 (Sup. Vol), pp. 89-118; **Saul**, J. (2006): “Philosophical Analysis and Social Kinds II: Gender and Race”, *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 80 (Sup. Vol), pp. 119-43; **Mallon**, R. (2004): “Passing, Travelling and Reality: Social Constructionism and the Metaphysics of Race”, *Nous* 38(4), pp. 644-73; and **Glasgow**, J. (2007): “Three Things Realist Constructionism about Race—or Anything Else—Can Do”, *Journal of Social Philosophy* 38(4), pp. 554-68.

Week 8 (October 31): *Reconstructionism about Race*

Required Reading: **Glasgow**, *A Theory of Race*, Ch. 7: “Reconstructionism”.

Additional Readings: **Glasgow**, J. (2006): “A Third Way in the Race Debate”, *Journal of Political Philosophy* 14(2), pp. 163-85.

(First deadline: October 31)

PART II: METAPHYSICS OF GENDER

Week 9 (November 7): *Gender Essentialism*

Required Reading: **Witt**, C. (2011): “What is Gender Essentialism?”, in *Feminist Metaphysics*, Ch. 2, pp. 11-25.

Additional Readings: **Stoljar**, N. (1995): “Essence, Identity, and the Concept of Woman”, *Philosophical Topics* 23(2), pp. 261-94; **Witt**, C. (1995): “Anti-Essentialism in Feminist Theory”, *Philosophical Topics* 23(2), pp. 321-45; **Stone**, A. (2004): “Essentialism and Anti-Essentialism in Feminist Philosophy”, *Journal of Moral Philosophy* 1(2), pp. 135-53.

Week 10 (November 14): *Gender Realism and Gender Nominalism*

Required Reading: **Stoljar**, N. (2011): “Different Women. Gender and the Realism-Nominalism Debate”, in *Feminist Metaphysics*, Ch. 3, pp. 27-46.

Additional Readings: **Mikkola**, M. (2006): “Elizabeth Spelman, Gender Realism, and Women”, *Hypatia* 21, pp. 79-96; **Mallon**, R. (2007): “Human Categories Beyond Non-essentialism”, *Journal of Political Philosophy* 15(2), pp. 146-68.

Week 11 (November 21): *The Sex-Gender Distinction I*

Required Reading: **Sveindottir**, A. K. (2011): “The Metaphysics of Sex and Gender”, in *Feminist Metaphysics*, Ch. 4, pp. 47-65.

Additional Readings: **Sveindottir**, A. K. (2008): “Essentiality Conferred”, *Philosophical Studies* 140(1), 135-48.

Week 12 (November 28): *The Sex-Gender Distinction II*

Required Reading: **Mikkola**, M. (2011): “Ontological Commitments, Sex and Gender”, in *Feminist Metaphysics*, Ch. 5, pp. 67-83.

Additional Readings: **Haslanger**, S. (2000): “Gender and Race: (What) Are They? (What) Do We Want Them to Be?”, *Nous* 34(1), pp. 31-55; **Mikkola**, M. (2009): “Gender Concepts and Intuitions”, *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 39(4), pp. 559–83.

Week 13 (December 5): *Social Knowledge and Ideology Critique*

Required Reading: **Haslanger**, S. (2011): “Ideology, Generics, and Common Ground”, in *Feminist Metaphysics*, Ch. 11, pp. 179-207.

Additional Readings: **Haslanger**, S. (2007): “But Mom, crop-tops are cute! Social Knowledge, Social Structure, and Ideology Critique”, *Philosophical Issues* 17, pp. 70-91.

(Final deadline: December 12)