

PHIL 274: African American Political Philosophy

Summer Session II 2017
MTWThF 1:15-2:45 p.m.
Caldwell 213

Instructor: Macy Salzberger

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Caldwell 206B

OH: MW, 3:00-4:00 p.m

Syllabus

Course description: This course aims to introduce students to some of the main issues in African American political philosophy. We will begin with an overview of important concepts in African American political philosophy such as race, racism, reparations, and equal opportunity. In the course of our discussion, we will ask questions such as: What is race? Is race a natural category or is it constructed? If race is constructed, who constructed race, and for what purposes? What is racism? Is racism a matter of holding particular beliefs or is racism a matter of holding certain attitudes? Is racism largely perpetuated by individuals or institutions? How ought we respond to racism? Is equal opportunity enough or are reparations morally required from the nation? In the second part of the course, we will investigate the normative and political implications of particular topics in contemporary context. Such topics include: racial profiling in policing and data surveillance, affirmative action in education, and identity politics.

The substantive goal of this course is to familiarize ourselves with the intellectual and philosophical efforts to understand and respond to the enslavement and oppression of African Americans in the United States, to carefully evaluate the arguments given, and to try to develop rationally defensible positions of our own. The course also has two more general goals. First, to develop more refined skills of philosophical reasoning so that you are better able to think critically about important political questions on your own. Second, to see the relevance of the skills you develop outside of the classroom so that you can be more thoughtful, critical, and responsible wherever you go. My hope is that you will apply the skills you develop in the course not only to those topics we discuss, but to other issues currently in the public debate as well.

Course requirements:

Reading responses (written at the beginning of every class): 10%

Reading and comprehending philosophical texts is a very difficult task requiring a specific set of skills to do it well. In order to cultivate and practice this set of skills, you will be expected to write a short response to the reading based on a prompt given at the beginning of each class. A successful reading response will demonstrate an understanding of and critical engagement with the reading assigned for the day.

Attendance and participation: 10%

Each of you is permitted one excused absence. For each additional unexcused absence, your participation grade will be lowered. Your attendance and participation grade will also reflect your participation in class

discussion. If, for whatever reason, you feel that your absence ought to be excused, please discuss that absence or foreseeable absence with me as soon as possible.

Jigsaw presentation: 5%

In addition to the developing the skills necessary to understand and comprehend philosophical texts, you will also develop the skills necessary to present the ideas from those philosophical texts verbally. For two class periods, we will have “jigsaw” presentations in order to practice those skills as well as practice in engaging in careful reflection collaboratively. Half of you will be assigned one reading for the day, the other half will be assigned another. Each group will be expected to present their assigned reading to the other group for half of the class period.

Individual presentation: 10%

During this course, you will develop skills for critically reflecting on important philosophical issues, and developing your own views with regard to those issues. Your presentation will give you an opportunity to practice articulating your view and defending it verbally. For your presentation, you will be telling your classmates about your final paper. This will involve an explanation of the relevant philosophical texts we have read

Reading summary (2-3): 15%

Writing philosophy, like reading and comprehending philosophy, requires a very particular set of skills. This assignment will give you practice reconstructing philosophical arguments before writing one yourself by requiring that you concisely summarize one of the readings from the course. Our first writing workshop will discuss the skills necessary for a successful reading summary.

Critical response paper (4-5 pages): 20%

You will build on the skills you have practiced and developed in your reading summary by critically engaging with an argument from the assigned readings for your critical response paper. This assignment requires that you isolate, reconstruct, and respond to a given argument with an evaluation. Our second writing workshop will discuss the skills necessary for a successful critical response paper.

Final paper (5-6 pages): 30%

Your final paper will further develop your ability to write critical response papers. Unlike your first response paper, however, you will be asked to present the content of your final paper with the rest of the class.

Honor Code:

Your full observance of the UNC Honor Code is expected. Please familiarize yourself with the section on Academic Dishonesty in The Instrument of Student Judicial Governance, accessible here:

<http://studentconduct.unc.edu/sites/studentconduct.unc.edu/files/documents/Instrument.pdf>

Note that it is expected that assignments for this class will include new work; work that is recycled from another class is not acceptable.

Accommodations:

The University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill facilitates the implementation of reasonable accommodations, including resources and services, for students with disabilities, chronic medical conditions, a temporary disability or pregnancy complications resulting in difficulties with accessing learning opportunities.

All accommodations are coordinated through the Accessibility Resources and Service Office. In the first instance please visit their website <http://accessibility.unc.edu>, call 919-962-8300 or email accessibility@unc.edu. Please contact ARS as early in the semester as possible. Setting up accommodations does not mean that you must use them; it is a good idea to coordinate accommodations, even if you only think you could use them.

Expectations for Instructor:

Email:

I check my email frequently. During normal business times, I will generally respond promptly (within 24 hours). If you do not receive a reply within 24 hours, please talk to me in class or office hours to make sure I didn't miss your email. In some cases, such as when you email to discuss substantive philosophical points, I might respond to emails by inviting you to set up a meeting to discuss the issue in person.

A Note about Office Hours:

I know that my office hours will not be convenient for everyone. Please feel free to contact me to schedule appointments to meet at different times.

Grading:

Because this is a philosophy course, you will all be expected to come to your own conclusions and defend them. You will not be graded on what your opinion is, but you *will* be graded on your ability to reason through, argue for, defend, and express your ideas clearly, carefully, and cogently. What constitutes good writing for a philosophy course may be unlike writing for many other kinds of disciplines. Given this, I will dedicate class time to making sure that you have a good sense of what it is that I will be looking for in your papers.

I adhere to a strict policy of blind grading. This means that (with a few announced exceptions), the work that you hand in should have only your PID number.

I rely on the standards set by the registrar in assigning letter grades to work. You can find the explanation of letter grades here: <http://registrar.unc.edu/academic-services/grades/explanation-of-grading-system/>

Scale:

F	D-	D	D+	C-	C	C+	B-	B	B+	A-	A	A+
≤59	60	64	68	70	74	78	80	84	88	90	94	98

Non-Discrimination Policy:

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is committed to equality of educational opportunity. The University does not discriminate in offering access to its educational programs and activities on the basis of race, color, gender, age, national origin, religion, creed, genetic information, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

Syllabus Changes:

I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus as appropriate, with the expectation that I will notify you via Sakai as soon as is possible.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

Week 1: What is race?

Monday, June 26

Introductions and philosophical orientation

Tuesday, June 27

DuBois, W.E.B., “The Conservation of the Races,” and “Spiritual Strivings”

Wednesday, June 28

Appiah, Anthony, “The Uncompleted Argument: DuBois and the Illusion of Race.”

Thursday, June 29

Outlaw, Lucius. “Conserve Races? In Defense of W.E.B. Dubois.”

Friday, June 30:

Concluding thoughts; writing workshop I (read Laden handout *before* class)

Week 2: What is racism?

(THIS IS A LONG READING WEEK. BUDGET ENOUGH TIME OVER THE WEEKEND)

Monday, July 3

Garcia, Jorge. “The heart of racism”

Tuesday, July 4

NO CLASS

Wednesday, July 5*** **SUMMARY DUE IN CLASS**

Mills, Charles W. “Heart Attack: A Critique of Jorge Garcia’s Volitional Conception of Racism”

Thursday, July 6

Mills, Charles W. “White Ignorance”

Friday, July 7

Steele, Claude. “Race and the Schooling of Black Americans”; Lebron, Chris. “I’m Fine How I Am”

Week 3: Identity Politics and Race-Based Policy

Monday, July 10

JIGSAW

Collins, Patricia Hill. “Black Feminist Epistemology,”; Grillo, Trina. “Anti-Essentialism and Intersectionality”

Tuesday, July 11

Anderson, Elizabeth. “The Future of Integration.”

Wednesday, July 12

Shelby, Tommie, “Foundations of Black Solidarity: Collective Identity or Common Oppression?”

Thursday, July 13

Valls, Andrew. “A Liberal Defense of Black Nationalism.”

Friday, July 14

Concluding thoughts; writing workshop II

Week 4: Race-Based Policy continued

Monday, July 17*** **CRITICAL RESPONSE PAPER DUE IN CLASS**

Boxill, Bernard. "Compensation for Past Injustice"

Tuesday, July 18

Horowitz, David. "Ten Reasons Why Reparations for Blacks is a Bad Idea for Blacks -
and

Racist Too"

Wednesday, July 19

Moses, selections from *Moral Disagreement*

Thursday, July 20

Policing the Police- Movie (no readings assigned)

Friday, July 21

JIGSAW Risse, Mathias, and Richard Zeckhauser. "Racial profiling"

Lippert-Rasmussen, Kasper, "Racial profiling versus community"

Week 5: Politics, ethics, and emotion

Monday, July 24

Boxill, Self-respect and protest

Tuesday, July 25

Lebron "Black Rage"

Wednesday, July 26

Lebron ctd; PRESENTATIONS

Thursday, July 27

PRESENTATIONS

LAST DAY OF CLASS

Tuesday August 1, final exam: 11:30-2:30 (final papers due)