

PHILOSOPHY OF RACE & GENDER

PROFESSOR: Dr. Blake Hereth (“Dr. H”)

PRONOUNS: ze/zir or they/them

EMAIL: sbhereth@uark.edu

E-OFFICE: Collaborate Ultra Course Room

E-CLASS MEETINGS: MWF 10:45-11:35pm via Collaborate Ultra

E-STUDENT HOURS: TTh 10am-12pm via Collaborate Ultra and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

We are all taught that we have a race and a gender. We are also taught that racism and sexism are real and we should fight against them. But what *are* race and gender? Are they biological things or socially constructed things? How should we think about multiracial and intersex identities? Has human thinking about race and gender changed over time? What are the ethical and political ramifications of thinking correctly (or incorrectly) about race and gender? Students will carefully examine these questions in an exciting classroom environment and write about them.

CONTENT WARNING:

Many of the issues to be addressed in this course are potentially triggering. Some readings include discussions of sexual assault, gaslighting, racist humor, the ethics of racist and colonialist monuments, White cultural insistence on ‘civility’ from people and communities of color, transphobia, bisexual erasure, the ethics of self- and other-outing, and gender-based exploitation. Some class discussions on these topics are also potentially triggering. If you are concerned about being triggered by a particular topic or discussion, please contact me and I will excuse you from that day’s class without penalty. If there is anything I can do to make the content or classroom environment less triggering, please contact me about that, as well, and I will endeavor to make improvements. Your mental health is of prime importance to me.

COURSE GOALS:

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Identify and explain major theories of race and gender and their proponents
- Speak and write intelligently about political, ethical, and sociological problems arising in the United States, including the ethics of removing Confederate monuments and whether American worries about ‘misandry’ are justified
- Reflect cautiously and empathetically about their own experiences with race and gender, especially in light of newfound perspectives found in class readings
- Ask critical questions each week that closely engage the assigned readings
- Work closely in groups with on-campus organizations to develop targeted recommendations to improve the campus race and gender climates

- Develop original, philosophically creative arguments about race and gender

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

- **Critical Reading Questions (15%)**: All students should prepare a critical question for each reading/video/podcast. Each class, I will call upon several random students to share their critical questions for that day's reading with the rest of the class. Each critical question should be substantive and reflect strong familiarity with the reading and will serve as a starting point for class discussions. If you are called on and *don't* have a substantive critical reading question, you won't receive credit for that day. If you are called on and *do* have a substantive critical reading question, you will receive full credit for that day. If you *aren't* called on, you must submit your question by the end of that day via Blackboard.
- **Campus Awareness Group Project (15%)**: In Spring 2020, #BlackatUARK was trending. Beginning mid-2018, the #MeToo movement began, often with a focus on sexual assault on college campuses. Both movements revealed grievous inequalities in society and on our own campus at the University of Arkansas. Any number of recommendations have been put forward to improve the campus climate for students/faculty/staff of color, women, LGBTQIA students, and survivors of sexual assault. Philosophers should not only seek to *understand* the world, but also to *change* it for the better. In groups of 4-6, students will work together to identify one key problem with the current campus climate, work with relevant groups on campus (e.g., Black Students Association, Lavender Society, Al-Islam Students Association, etc.) to develop a targeted recommendation to improve the climate. Suitable recommendations will be delivered by me to university administration. The final recommendation is due Wednesday, May 5th, at 5pm via Blackboard.
- **Humility Journal (20%)**: Cultivating epistemic humility is important, especially in college (and *especially* especially in philosophy). Each week, students will write in class about something they learned about race or gender that was epistemically humbling for them. That doesn't necessarily mean 'embarrassed'. Rather, it means that the student has made an *important realization* that has changed their way of thinking about race or gender, including (possibly) about their own race or gender. Your final entry should reflect on the trajectory of your humility progress throughout the course. The entire journal portfolio is due Monday, May 3rd, at 5pm via Blackboard.
- **Undergraduate Race Paper (25%)**: Undergraduate students will write a 2,000-word (excluding footnotes and bibliographic details) argumentative paper on one of the course topics concerning race. The argument presented in the paper should be original and display philosophical creativity. This paper is due Monday, March 8th, at 5pm via Blackboard.
- **Undergraduate Gender Paper (25%)**: Undergraduate students will write a 2,000-word argumentative paper on one of the course topics concerning gender. The argument presented in the paper should be original and display philosophical creativity. This paper is due Wednesday, May 5th, at 5pm via Blackboard.
- **Graduate Paper (50%)**: Graduate students are required to write a single, 5,000-word paper (excluding notes and bibliography) on a relevant course topic. This paper is due Friday, May 7th, at 5pm via Blackboard.

GRADING SCALE:

I use a standard grading scale for this course:

- A = 90-100%
- B = 80-89.99%
- C = 70-79.99%
- D = 60-69.99%
- F = 59.99 or below

TEXTBOOK(S):

- There is no textbook for this course. (Money in the *baaaaaank!*) All the readings are on Blackboard.

SPOTIFY LOGIN INFORMATION:

- Email: sbhereth@uark.edu
- Password: **philosophypodcast**

SCHEDULE:

(NOTE: THIS IS A TENTATIVE SCHEDULE. I MAY ADJUST IT DEPENDING ON NEED OR CLASS PROGRESS.)

WEEK 1 (JAN 11, 13, 15): COURSE INTRODUCTION

Readings:

- Syllabus
- Ashley Atkins, “Black Lives Matter or All Lives Matter? Color-Blindness and Epistemic Injustice”
- Kristie Dotson, “How is This Paper Philosophy?”

WEEK 2 (JAN 18, 20, 22): THEORIES OF RACE

Readings:

- **There is no class Monday, January 18th (MLK Day)**
- Kwame Anthony Appiah, “How to Decide if Races Exist”
- Chike Jeffers, “Cultural Constructionism”

WEEK 3 (JAN 25, 27, 29): RACIST BELIEFS

Readings:

- Rima Basu, “The Wrongs of Racist Beliefs”
- Neil Levy, “Am I a Racist? Implicit Bias and the Ascription of Racism”
- Nora Berenstain, “‘Civility’ and the Civilizing Project”

WEEK 4 (FEB 1, 3, 5): RACIST HUMOR

Readings:

- **Listen:** Luvell Anderson, “Racist Humor”
- Robin Tapley, “Humor, Beliefs, and Prejudice”
- Henry Jackman, “Prejudice, Humor, and Alief: Comments on Robin Tapley”

WEEK 5 (FEB 8, 10, 12): RACIALIZED ATTRACTION

Readings:

- Robin Zheng, “Why Yellow Fever Isn’t Flattering: A Case Against Racial Fetishes”
- Megan Mitchell and Mark Wells, “Race, Romantic Attraction, and Dating”
- Tom O’Shea, “Sexual Desire and Structural Injustice”

WEEK 6 (FEB 15, 17, 19): RACIAL AESTHETICS

Readings:

- **Listen:** Paul C. Taylor, “On Black Aesthetics”
- Thomas F. DeFrantz, “African American Dance: Philosophy, Aesthetics, and ‘Beauty’”
- Shen-yi Liao and Bryce Huebner, “Oppressive Things”

WEEK 7 (FEB 22, 24, 26): LATINA FEMINISM

Readings:

- **There is no class Monday, February 22nd (Spring Break I)**
- Linda Martín Alcoff, “Latinos Beyond the Binary”
- Mariana Ortega, “Latina Feminism, Experience, and the Self”

WEEK 8 (MAR 1, 3, 5): RACIST MONUMENTS

Readings:

- Ten-Herng Lai, “Political Vandalism as Counter-Speech: A Defense of Defacing and Destroying Tainted Monuments”
- **Listen:** Michele Moody-Adams, “On Monuments & Memorials”
- Dan Demetriou, “Ashes of Our Fathers: Racist Monuments and the Tribal Right”

WEEK 9 (MAR 8, 10, 12): RACIAL REPARATIONS

Readings:

- **Race Paper due Monday, March 8th, at 5pm on Blackboard**
- [Ta-Nehisi Coates, “The Case for Reparations” \(available online\)](#)
- Jennifer Page, “Reparations for Police Killings”
- Jonathan Kaplan and Andrew Valls, “Housing Discrimination as a Basis for Black Reparations”

WEEK 10 (MAR 15, 17, 19): GENDER METATHEORY

Readings:

- Helen L. Daly, “Modelling Sex/Gender”
- Sally Haslanger, “Gender and Race: (What) Are They? (What) Do We Want Them to Be?”
- Mari Mikkola, “Gender Concepts and Intuitions”

WEEK 11 (MAR 22, 24, 26): THEORIES OF GENDER

Readings:

- Robin Dembroff, “Real Talk on the Metaphysics of Gender”
- Jennifer McKittrick, “A Dispositional Account of Gender”
- **Optional:** Eloy LaBrada, “Unsexing Subjects: Marie de Gournay’s Philosophy of Sex Eliminativism”
- **There is no class Friday, March 26th (Spring Break II)**

WEEK 12 (MAR 29, 31, APR 2): TRANS IDENTITIES

Readings:

- Talia Mae Bettcher, “Trans Feminism: Recent Philosophical Developments”
- Robin Dembroff, “Beyond Binary: Genderqueer as Critical Gender Kind”
- **There is no class Friday, April 2nd (Spring Break III)**

WEEK 13 (APR 5, 7, 9): SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Readings:

- Robin Dembroff, “What is Sexual Orientation?”
- William S. Wilkerson, “Is It a Choice? Sexual Orientation as Interpretation”
- Luke Brunning and Natasha McKeever, “Asexuality”

WEEK 14 (APR 12, 14, 16): SEXISM

Readings:

- Tom Digby, “Male Trouble: Are Men Victims of Sexism?”
- Regina Rini, “How to Take Offense: Responding to Microaggression”
- **Watch:** Mirjam Müller, “Women Are Just Better at This Stuff: The Exploitation of Emotional Labor”

WEEK 15 (APR 19, 21, 23): OUTING

Readings:

- Raja Halwani, “Outing and Virtue Ethics”
- Alice MacLachlan, “Closet Doors and Stage Lights: On the Goods of Out”
- Carol Hay, “The Obligation to Resist Oppression”

WEEK 16 (APR 26, 28, 30): BISEXUALITY

Readings:

- Hayley Vernallis, “Bisexual Monogamy: Twice the Temptation but Half the Fun?”
- Maren Behrensen and Samantha Brennan, “Margins Within the Marginal: Bi-Invisibility and Intersexual Passing”
- **There is no class Friday, April 30th (Dead Day)**

WEEK 17 (MAY 3, 5, 7): FINALS WEEK!

- **Humility Journal due Monday, May 3rd, by 5pm on Blackboard**
- **Undergraduate Gender Paper due Wednesday, May 5th, by 5pm on Blackboard**
- **Graduate Paper due Friday, May 7th, by 5pm on Blackboard**

POLICIES:

- Academic Integrity: As a core part of its mission, the University of Arkansas provides students with the opportunity to further their educational goals through programs of study and research in an environment that promotes freedom of inquiry and academic responsibility. Accomplishing this mission is only possible when intellectual honesty and individual integrity prevail. Each University of Arkansas student is required to be familiar with and abide by the University’s ‘Academic Integrity Policy’ which may be found at provost.uark.edu Students with questions about how these policies apply to a particular course or assignment should immediately contact their instructor.
- Selling Notes: There are companies that will try to lure you into selling the notes you take in this class. Don’t let these companies take advantage of you. Selling my notes to

any commercial service I will consider a violation of my intellectual property rights and/or copyright law as well as a violation of the U of A's academic integrity policy. Continued enrollment in this class signifies intent to abide by the policy. Any violation will be reported to the Office of Academic Initiatives and Integrity.

- Respect of Self and Others: As a (mostly) consistent Kantian, I expect everyone in this course to maintain a certain level of self-respect. This means taking yourself seriously (although not *too* seriously) and avoiding excessive self-deprecation. You are valuable and an important part of the philosophical community. I also expect everyone in this course to maintain respect for others. Philosophical engagement is often aggressive and it's easy to see why: Sometimes you develop a devastating objection to someone's argument and you want to deliver it in epic fashion. But we won't indulge those impulses here. It's okay to care about the material and to discuss it passionately, but *don't* interrupt others, *do* be equitable with your speaking time (and be aware that we're often bad judges of when we've exceeded our equitable speaking time), *do* aim to help someone identify any flaws in their view *and* make suggestions for how they might improve it, and *do* respect others' pronouns.
- Attendance: Education at the university level requires active involvement in the learning process. Therefore, students have the responsibility to attend classes and to actively engage in all learning assignments or opportunities provided in their classes. Instructors have the responsibility to provide a written policy on student attendance that is tied to course objectives and included in a course syllabus. There may be times, however, when illness, family crisis, or university-sponsored activities make full attendance or participation impossible. In these situations, students are responsible for making timely arrangements with the instructor to make up work missed. Such arrangements should be made in writing and prior to the absence when possible. Examples of absences that should be considered excusable include those resulting from the following: (1) illness of the student, (2) serious illness or death of a member of the student's immediate family or other family crisis, (3) University-sponsored activities for which the student's attendance is required by virtue of scholarship or leadership/participation responsibilities, (4) religious observances (see Students' Religious Observances policy below), (5) jury duty or subpoena for court appearance, and (6) military duty. The instructor has the right to require that the student provide appropriate documentation for any absence for which the student wishes to be excused.
- Weather: When the University of Arkansas declares that the inclement weather policy is in effect, we won't meet for seminar. In such cases, and in any other case when class is cancelled, you will be notified via email or Blackboard. In cases of questionable whether, please check the university website.
- Disability Related Accommodation: University of Arkansas Academic Policy Series 1520.10 requires that students with disabilities are provided reasonable accommodations to ensure their equal access to course content. If you have a documented disability and require accommodations, please contact me privately at the beginning of the semester to make arrangements for necessary classroom adjustments. Please note, you must first verify your eligibility for these through the Center for Educational Access (contact 479-575-3104 or visit cea.uark.edu for more information on registration procedures).
- Reminder About Concealed Carry on Campus: Handguns are only allowed on campus (including all classrooms) to the extent specifically authorized by state law. Each individual who lawfully possesses a handgun and an enhanced carry permit is required to keep the handgun concealed from public view at all times and is responsible for carrying

the handgun in a safe manner. If an individual carries a concealed handgun in a personal carrier such as a backpack, purse, or handbag, the carrier must remain within the individual's immediate vicinity (within arm's reach). During this course, you may be required to engage in activities that may require you to separate from your belongings such as taking a quiz or examination, and thus you should plan accordingly. Any student who violates the concealed carry laws while on campus may be subject to criminal prosecution and/or discipline by the University, up to and including dismissal. If you observe someone displaying a handgun or other weapon on campus, it should be reported to the University of Arkansas Police Department. For more information, please go to safety.uark.edu.

- Problems with the Course: If you have concerns or suggestions regarding this course, I encourage you to speak to me directly about them. If you would prefer to speak with someone else, however, you may contact:

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