

PHIL_OX 382R/WGSS_OX 385R, Spring 2014

Topics in Philosophy/Topics in WGSS: Philosophy of Gender and Race

Dr. Erin C. Tarver, Instructor

e.c.tarver@emory.edu

Office: Humanities Hall 204

Office Hours: MWF 9:00 – 10:00; TTH 3:30 – 5:00 (and by apt.)

Course Description: This course is an introduction to the philosophical literature on Gender and race that will investigate the metaphysics, ethics, and politics of gender and race. Questions we will address include: What does it mean to have a gender, or to be a particular race? Is race even real? And if so, has it always existed? Are sex and gender different things, or not? Can we have “races” without “racism,” or “gender” without “sexism”? Should our goal be to eliminate race and gender? What practices reinforce oppression, and which work toward justice? Our inquiry into these questions will be guided by contemporary and historical philosophical writings on gender and race, and by attention to the concrete consequences of various theoretical approaches for our selves, our societies, and our world.

Required Texts

Fine, Cordelia. *Delusions of Gender*. W.W. Norton, 2010.

Mills, Charles. *The Racial Contract*. Cornell, 1997.

Taylor, Paul C. *Race: A Philosophical Introduction*, 2nd ed. Polity, 2013.

Warnke, Georgia. *Debating Sex and Gender*. Oxford, 2011.

[Other readings will be available on Blackboard; these will be marked “BB”]

Learning Outcomes

- Students will articulate an understanding of the major developments and debates in philosophical approaches to questions of gender, race, and identity.
- Students will articulate an understanding of the unique contributions of philosophers of gender and race to the broader discipline of Philosophy.
- Students will conduct upper-level academic research related to gender and/or race.
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between philosophical views about gender and race and gender/race activism.

Grading

Critical Reading Reflection Papers	15%
Reading Quizzes	10%
Seminar Facilitation	10%
Participation	5%
Midterm Exam	15%
Final Exam	20%
Philosophical Essay	25%

Assignments

Critical Reading Reflection Papers

You must submit six (6) reflection papers before the end of the semester. I will post questions for reflection on each reading every Sunday. You may submit responses to the questions of your choosing, but note that **you must submit at least 3 responses before the midterm exam**. You may only submit one response per class period.

Responses should be 1-2 pages typed, double-spaced, Times New Roman 12-point font with 1-inch margins all the way around. Reflection papers will be graded on a scale from 1-10. Note that papers with grammatical, syntax, or spelling errors will *never* be awarded a 10. I will drop the lowest Reflection Paper score from your overall average.

Reading Quizzes

You will have assigned readings for each class, which you should complete before coming to class. Quizzes on these readings will be unannounced, and will typically happen during the first 5 minutes of class. If you are late to class, you will miss the quiz. Quizzes may also cover material from the previous class, so you will be wise to re-read your notes from the previous day as you prepare for each class. There will be approximately 10 quizzes over the course of the semester. I will drop the lowest quiz grade. Please note that I do not make up missed quizzes except in the case of a documented illness or an official college absence (athletics, debate, etc.). In the case of planned absences, you must provide documentation within the first two weeks of class that such absences are scheduled in order to be eligible to make up quizzes.

Seminar Facilitation

Once during the semester, each student in the course will be responsible for giving a 15-20 minute presentation and taking a leadership role in that day's seminar discussion. This means that there are **two** parts to this assignment: the **first** is to give a brief, semi-formal presentation on the thinker/text we are reading that introduces some outside material to the class (in the form of relevant background, discussion of a problem to which the text is responding, etc.); the **second** is to serve as that day's discussion leader. To ensure that this second component runs smoothly, you'll need to create a Blackboard forum post at least one day prior to your presentation day that indicates 1) the guiding questions you'd like us all to think about for your presentation day and 2) some analytical and/or critical comments of your own that you'd like us to discuss together (does the author or text you're discussing have a more or less satisfactory answer to some question we've seen before during the semester? Is there an unresolved philosophical tension in some central claims of the text? Does the text throw some particularly interesting or useful light on an external or real-world concern?) **Please make sure to sign up for a seminar facilitation date by 1/21.**

Participation

Philosophy is best done conversationally—so it's incredibly important that everyone in this class think of themselves as semester-long conversation partners, rather than simply as students who come to sit in (or, heaven forbid, hide in the back of) class. It's also important to note that the best conversations happen when we all take care to prepare for them—which means that your job in this class is not just to speak up, but to come prepared (i.e., having done the reading) to contribute helpfully to our general classroom experience. Thus, to get good marks in this component, you'll need to do the following things:

- Come to class regularly, and **do not miss more than 2 classes**. (more absences than this will result in a reduction of your overall participation grade by half a letter grade per additional absence)
- Contribute positively to the general class discussion in a way that demonstrates critical engagement (i.e., specifically references the reading and classmate contributions).
- Come prepared, having done the reading and brought it with you to class.
- Participate actively in small group work and in-class assignments.
- Abide by the Classroom Conduct policy (see below)

Note that students who never speak up in our large group discussions will not receive higher than a C grade in this category.

Midterm Exam

The midterm in this class will cover all material from the first half of the semester. I will not schedule makeup exams except in the case of documented illness or official college business.

Final Exam

The final in this class is cumulative of all material covered during the semester. I do not reschedule final exams, period. All schedule change requests must be submitted through the office of Academic Affairs. Please note the following Academic Affairs policy: "Leaving early for rides or flights, vacations, relatives' or friends' weddings or graduation, jobs, or having more than one exam on one day, are not considered valid reasons to request an earlier or later exam."

Philosophical Essay

This is the major final project that you will complete this semester, which will take the form of a significant argumentative term/research paper that articulates and defends a position on the value of a specific theoretical text or texts that we have encountered this semester. Completed papers will be 6-8 pages typed, double-spaced, Times New Roman 12 point font with 1-inch margins all the way around. Although the paper will be thesis-driven and display significant independent thought, it should also engage with and cite at least 5 secondary sources. Papers should be formatted according to the Chicago manual of style. More detailed instructions forthcoming.

Schedule

Laying the Groundwork

1/14: Introduction, Thinking Philosophically about Gender and Race, Taylor 1-16

1/16: Taylor, 1 – 1.2.2, Haslanger, “Gender and Race: (What) Are They? (What) Do We Want Them to Be?” (BB)

Where We’re Coming From: Gender and Race in the History of Philosophy

1/21: Taylor, 1.3 – 1.5; Kant, “Of the Different Human Races” (BB)

1/23: Aristotle, *On the Generation of Animals*; Rousseau, *Emile* (BB)

1/28: Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (BB), Mill, *On the Subjection of Women* (BB)

1/30: Cooper, “Woman Versus the Indian” (BB)

Thinking and Talking about Race and Gender Today

2/4: Taylor, 2 – 2.5

2/6: DR TARVER OUT OF TOWN, ONLINE CLASS: Taylor, 2.5 – 2.6; Alcoff, “The Problem of Speaking for Others” (BB)

2/11: Warnke, Introduction; Witt, “Gender Essentialism” (BB)

2/13: Fine, Introduction and Chapter 1

The Metaphysics of Gender and Race

2/18: Beauvoir, “Introduction to The Second Sex” (BB)

2/20: Warnke, Chapter 1

2/25: Warnke, Chapter 2

2/27: MIDTERM

3/4: Fine, Chapter 4 and 16

3/6: Warnke, Chapter 3; Butler, *Gender Trouble* (BB)

3/10 – 3/15: SPRING BREAK, NO CLASS

3/18: Taylor, Chapter 3, pp. 68-86, **PAPER PROPOSALS DUE***

3/20: Taylor, Chapter 3, pp. 86-116

3/25: Warnke, Chapter 4*

3/27: Anzaldúa, selection from *Borderlands/La Frontera* (BB)

The Ethics and Politics of Gender and Race

4/1: Mills, Introduction and Chapter 1 (particularly pp. 1-19, 31-40)

4/3: **PAPER WORKSHOP: BRING DRAFTS**

4/8: Mills, Chapter 2 (particularly pp. 41-53, 72-89)

4/10: Mills, Chapter 3 (particularly pp. 91-102, 120-133)

4/15: Taylor, Chapter 5, 155-170

4/17: Taylor, Chapter 5, 170-180, **FINAL PAPERS DUE BY 1:00 PM ON BLACKBOARD**

4/22: Taylor, Chapter 6

4/24: Fine, Chapter 19 & 20

5/2: Final Exam, 9 AM – 12 PM

* Students interested in participating in the Oxford WGSS symposium may turn in drafts of their papers early. The deadline for the submission of abstracts to Prof. Del Ray is 3/21, and a full draft must be prepared for presentation by 3/25. The symposium will be held on campus on 4/4. I will read full drafts turned in by 3/25 and provide comments (papers submitted by this early deadline may be revised for final submission to me on 4/17). Students who participate in the symposium will be awarded 5 bonus points on their final paper grade.

Classroom Conduct

We're going to talk quite a bit about arguments in this class—and we'll definitely have a few of our own!—but that doesn't mean that we don't have ground rules. In fact, being respectful of one another, even when we disagree, is absolutely crucial to making this an environment in which everyone can learn. There are several ways we can show one another respect; the following are the ones I insist upon:

- We may attack ideas, but never people.
- Listen to others when they're talking.
- Don't use cell phones, computers, or other personal electronic devices in the classroom UNLESS you are using them to read an electronic copy of a course text. Note that I will give ONE warning to put your cell phone or other electronic device away. After this warning, your individual grade for the group project will be lowered by two points each time I have to ask you to put your device away.
- No sleeping. It's rude. Sleepers will be marked absent.
- Any other ground rules we agree upon as a group

Persistent violations of the classroom conduct policy will result in penalties to your participation grade.

Academic Honesty

Academic Honesty is extremely important, and so violations of the Oxford College Honor Code will not be tolerated. I will not hesitate to report any such violations to the Honor Council. Infractions of the Honor Code include plagiarism, cheating, seeking or giving unauthorized assistance, and lying related to academic matters. Further information on Honor Code infractions and procedures are available in the Oxford College Student Handbook, and online: http://oxford.emory.edu/audiences/current_students/Academic/academic-success/student-honor-code/index.dot

Disability Access

I encourage any students with disabilities that may impact their access to or performance in any component of this course to register with Oxford College's Office of Disability Services, and to let me know about necessary accommodations as soon as possible. The ODS is located in the Student Health/Counseling Center.

Additionally, please be aware that my office is located on the second floor of a building without disability access. I will, accordingly, be happy to make arrangements to meet with any student on the first floor of Humanities Hall, should this be necessary.

Email Policy

I strive to stay in touch with you outside of class hours, and will generally attempt to answer messages within 24 hours. Please note, however, that I will not answer messages sent after 9 PM until the following day. Additionally, I will not respond to questions sent the evening before a scheduled test or exam. Finally, I **do not discuss grades via email**. Please make an appointment to see me if you would like to discuss any course grades.