

PHI 200: Philosophy of Race and Gender
11am-12:15pm MW, Dominican Hall 203
Winter 2016

Professor: Jennifer Kling, PhD

Office Hours: MW 1-3pm, TuTh 11am-1pm; available by appointment (Sacred Heart Hall 312E)

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Course Description:

“That's racist!” “Look, we have a black President—racism just isn't a problem anymore.” “Ugh, what a sexist pig.” “Well, his intentions were good—give him a break.” “We're living in a post-racial, post-gender world.” “Look, I'm not a sexist, but I just don't want to date someone who's not pretty.”

Our day-to-day lives are filled with these sorts of claims; but what do they mean? Are they true, accurate, or sensible? Are they reasonable or unreasonable, justified or unjustified? What grounds claims like these? This is where philosophy comes in. In this course, we will explore and evaluate a number of important concepts related to race and gender in the United States. Specifically, we will consider competing conceptions of race, racism, gender, and sexism, whether and how reparations for slavery and anti-black racism ought to be made, whether and how gender equality ought to be attained, and whether and how the anti-racism and anti-sexism intellectual and activist movements are interrelated. We will also explore the role of African-American and feminist art in these contentious debates.

In this class, you will have to struggle with big concepts that you may not have engaged before, and you will have to work hard to succeed. Along the way you will come to better understand what social and political philosophers do, how they do it, and why. That will entail using and refining your abilities to effectively think, argue, read, and write. In other words, in this course you are going to learn how to *do* social and political philosophy, which is both difficult and rewarding.

Course Requirements:

Participation (10%): You will need to both do the readings and come to class in order to be successful in this course. If you don't do the readings, you'll be lost in class; if you don't come to class, you'll be lost in the readings and the assignments. While *excessive* participation is not required, some willingness to engage with both me and your fellow classmates is necessary—without this willingness on your part, we won't be able to have the sort of productive class discussions that will enable you to successfully engage in philosophy. So, while a lack of participation won't harm your grade very much, participation can significantly *help* your grade.

I appreciate that speaking to a classroom full of your peers can be difficult; so, there are a number of other ways to participate in class. You may speak in class, you may engage in small group work, you may visit my office hours, you may send me emails with questions, comments, and concerns, you may start online discussion threads, you may post relevant outside documents/videos/blogs, etc. to the course eCollege site, you may tweet and/or blog and/or journal about issues raised in class, etc. If you're unsure of whether some action counts as participation, please see me, and we'll discuss it.

Argument Reconstructions (5% each): You are required to submit **four** argument reconstructions throughout the semester. Argument reconstructions are due by the start of the class period on the due date. **Late argument reconstructions will not be accepted.** They should be roughly ½-1 page in length, and should reconstruct the relevant written argument. Argument reconstructions may take the form of a detailed bulleted outline or a detailed conceptual map (hand-drawn or computer-generated are both fine).

If you wish to submit an argument reconstruction in some other form, please see me, and we'll discuss it.
Collaboration is encouraged but not required.

Papers (15% each): There are **three** required papers for this course. Each paper should be 2 pages long, and should *critically engage* with some issue brought up in the course readings and class discussions. I will provide a list of topics one week in advance of each paper's due date. If you wish to write on a topic not on the list, please come see me to discuss your proposed topic. If you wish to submit a paper in some other form, please see me, and we'll discuss it.

Papers are due by the start of the class period on the due date. For every 24-hour period that a paper is late, I will take 5 points off. That said, I am aware that life happens; if you feel you need an extension, please ask me as soon as possible. The earlier you ask, the more likely I am to give you an extension. Failure to turn in any one of the papers will result in failing the course.

In-class Presentation (15%): Each student must do an in-class presentation, either by themselves or with a partner. Each presentation should be 5-10 minutes long, and should present and critically engage with the main points from the assigned reading for the day. We will pick presentation dates a few weeks into the semester, so that students have a feel for the topic/issue on which they would like to present. If you wish to present on a topic/issue that is not covered by an assigned reading, please see me, and we'll discuss it. Failure to do an in-class presentation will result in failing the course.

Final (10%): There is a required final exam for this course. The exam will consist of a series of short answers as well as one longer essay. Failure to take the final exam will result in failing the course.

Grading Scale:

A: An 'A' denotes exceptional skill and ability. An 'A' student demonstrates an excellent grasp of the material (i.e., the student understands the material enough to explain it succinctly and well), and also displays the ability to engage philosophically with both the broad issues and finer points under discussion.

B: A 'B' denotes solid-to-impressive skill and ability. A 'B' student demonstrates a good grasp of the material (i.e., the student understands the material well enough to explain it with few mistakes), and also displays the ability to engage philosophically with most, if not all, of the issues and points under discussion.

C: A 'C' denotes adequate skill and ability. A 'C' student demonstrates a fair grasp of the material (i.e., the student understands the big picture, but makes some serious errors in presentation), and also displays the ability to engage philosophically with at least some of the issues under discussion.

D: A 'D' denotes inadequate skill and ability. A 'D' student has serious problems with grasping the material, and fails to engage philosophically with any of the issues under discussion.

E: An 'E' denotes catastrophic problems in fulfilling the requirements of the course. An 'E' student neither grasps the material nor engages with it critically at any level.

While hard work is correlated with success, it is not sufficient for success. To get a good grade in this course, you need to not only understand and engage with the material, but also communicate your understanding and engagement to me via your participation, reconstructions, papers, and exam. If you sense that you are heading towards a grade you do not want, please come see me as soon as possible (if you wait until the end of the semester, it will be too late).

Assignments:

All assignments (or links thereto) can be found on this course's eCollege site.

Date	Topic	Assignment
1/11	Introduction to the Course	
1/13	Why Race and Gender? Or, Getting on Board with the Overall Problem	“Why Feminism is Relevant and Important Today” <i>and</i> “On Being Black in America”
1/18 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day – No Class	No Class	
1/20	What is Race? What is Gender?	W.E.B. DuBois, “The Conservation of Races”
1/25		
1/27		Anthony Appiah, “The Uncompleted Argument: DuBois and the Illusion of Race”
2/1 Argument Reconstruction #1 Due		Sally Haslanger, “Gender and Social Construction: Who? What? When? Where? How?”
2/3		West and Zimmerman, “Doing Gender”
2/8		Marilyn Frye, “On Being White”
2/10 Paper #1 Due	What is Racism? What is Sexism?	Iris Marion Young, “The Five Faces of Oppression”
2/15		Marilyn Frye, “Oppression”
2/17		Cudd and Jones, “Sexism”
2/22 Argument Reconstruction #2 Due		Tatum, “Defining Racism”
2/24		Joshua Glasgow, “Racism as Disrespect”
2/29		Jorge Garcia, “The Heart of Racism”
3/2 Paper #2 Due	Striving for Equality: Reparations for Slavery	Ta-Nehisi Coates, “The Case for Reparations”
3/7 Winter Break – No Class	No Class	
3/9 Winter Break – No Class	No Class	
3/14		Bernard Boxill, “A Lockean Argument for Black Reparations”
3/16 Argument Reconstruction #3 Due	Striving for Equality: Liberalism	Mill, “On the Subjection of Women”
3/21		Beauvoir, “Introduction,” <i>The Second Sex</i>
3/23		Appiah, “Race, Culture, Identity: Misunderstood Connections” (selections)

3/28 Paper #3 Due	Striving for Equality: Radicalism and Solidarity	MacKinnon, “Difference and Domination: On Sex Discrimination”
3/30		Tommie Shelby, <i>We Who Are Dark</i> (selections)
4/4		Audre Lorde, “Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference”
4/6		Clare Foran, “A Year of Black Lives Matter”
4/11 Argument Reconstruction #4 Due	Activism: The Role and Power of Art	Frederick Douglass, <i>Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass</i> (selections)
4/13		“The Power of African-American Art,” State of the Re:Union podcast
4/18		Carmen Rios, “You Call It Professionalism; I Call It Oppression in a Three-Piece Suit”
4/20 Scholarship Symposium – No Class	No Class	
4/25		Rebecca Solnit, “Men Explain Lolita to Me”
4/27		Jack Myers, “ <i>Will & Grace</i> : The TV Series that Changed America” and Rachel Fudge, “The Buffy Effect”
Finals Week 5/2-5/6	Final Exam	<i>In-Class Final Exam</i>

Code of Student Conduct:

All students at Siena Heights University are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. For more information, please see the [Code of Student Conduct](#). Please obey the spirit as well as the law of SHU's Code of Student Conduct. If you think that something is in violation of the Code, it probably is, so check before doing it. Please remember that unintentional plagiarism is still plagiarism, and that **you must cite all of your sources** for papers!

Please note: every assignment turned in for this class must be your own original work, produced specifically *for this class*. You may not turn in an assignment written for a previous and/or different class. To do so would constitute (self) plagiarism, and will be treated as such.

The Writing Center:

The Writing Center at Siena Heights University is a free resource available to all CAS students. Students are encouraged to visit the writing center for writing feedback at any stage in the writing process. For information regarding their tutors, hours, location, or to utilize their online links and resources, please visit writingcenter.sienaheights.edu. **PLEASE NOTE:** Beginning Fall 2015, the Writing Center will be located on the main floor of the library. For more information, please contact Karin Barbee at kbarbee@sienaheights.edu.

Diversity and Disability Statement:

Our institution values diversity and inclusion; we are committed to a climate of mutual respect and full participation. Our goal is to create learning environments that are usable, equitable, inclusive and welcoming. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in barriers to your inclusion or accurate assessment or achievement, please notify the instructor as soon as possible. Students

with disabilities are also welcome to contact the Office of Disabilities Resources (517) 264-7683 or Laura Lyall (coordinator) at llyall@sienaheights.edu to discuss a range of options to removing barriers in the course, including accommodations. This process is initiated and driven by the student. It is to your advantage to begin the process in a timely manner, since accommodations are not retroactive. Grades earned before verification of a disability by the ODR will not be changed.

Academic Engagement Policy:

In response to federal regulations governing financial aid, faculty will report students who are absent from class for one week without explanation. These students will be contacted to determine their current status. Students who are disengaged from a class for two weeks will be administratively withdrawn from that class and given a withdrawal grade equivalent to an E in grade point calculations. In order to avoid an administrative withdrawal, students can initiate a withdrawal themselves before the deadline (March 21) and avoid negative consequences to their grade points.

Syllabus Changes:

I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus as appropriate. The odds that I'll do so during the semester are small, but if I do, I will inform you as soon as possible.