

## PHL 337: Philosophy of Race

Professor Jeremy Fischer

SP2016: Mondays and Wednesdays, 2:20pm-3:40pm

Morton Hall 337

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Office Hours: M-Th, 12:30-1:15pm

### Course Description

"In order to get beyond racism, we must first take account of race. There is no other way. And in order to treat some persons equally, we must treat them differently."

U.S. Supreme Court Justice Harry Blackmun, *Bakke* (1978)

"The way to stop discrimination on the basis of race is to stop discriminating on the basis of race."

U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts, *Parents v. Seattle* (2007)

In the last 30 years there has been an explosion of philosophical work on race. During the same period, however, many Americans have turned against proposals to take race into consideration in forming public policy, and have turned towards the ideal of color-blindness. (Consider how different are Blackmun's and Roberts's views.) The purpose of this class is to make sense of and to critically examine moral and political ideals of color-blindness, and to see what practical implications these ideals might have in our non-ideal world. To test these color-blind ideals, we will consider arguments for paying attention to race in our personal and political lives.

We will discuss all of the following (time permitting): topics in metaphysics (e.g., is race real? what is it?), philosophy of language (e.g., what do we mean by "race," and how do discover what we mean?), ethics (e.g., what is racism, and what makes it distinctively wrong?), moral psychology (e.g., what is racial identity, and should we care about cultivating it?), and social philosophy (e.g., is affirmative action permissible? Is racial integration morally required?).

In addition to helping you to think more carefully about race, the course is designed to enhance your general ability to read and critically evaluate abstract arguments, and to improve your philosophical writing skills.

### Required Texts

Elizabeth Anderson, *The Imperative of Integration* (Princeton University Press, 2010)

Paul Taylor, *Race: A Philosophical Introduction* (Polity, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, 2013)

Other texts can be downloaded from the course's Canvas website.

## Evaluation

1. Two essays (15% + 15% = 30% of the course grade)

These essays—due via Canvas on February 12<sup>th</sup>, and April 15<sup>th</sup>—will consist of your responses to questions that will be distributed to you at least two weeks before the essays are due. Each essay should be about three pages long.

2. Two in-class quizzes (15% and 15% = 30% of the course grade)

The quizzes—which will take place on March 16<sup>th</sup>, and April 25<sup>th</sup> (during Final Exams Week)—will consist of short concept identification questions and short essay questions.

3. Eight critical reading assignments (8 x 4% = 32% of the course grade)

These assignments are designed to help you to develop your critical reading skills, and to help you to prepare for class discussion.

a. Assignments should each be about one page long.

b. Each critical reading assignment has three parts:

(i) identify the main thesis of the text assigned for that day,

(ii) sketch the author's argument for this thesis, and

(iii) pose one critical question or challenge to the argument.

c. *Each month* two critical reading assignments must be submitted, and you may choose which two assigned texts to write about.

d. Assignments are due, printed out, at the beginning of the class for which the text you discuss is scheduled.

4. Class participation (8% of the course grade)

Informed participation in class is strongly encouraged. Students may also earn participation credit by asking questions about the course topics during office hours.

## Grading Scale

A+ = 96%

B+ = 87-89%

C+ = 77-79%

D+ = 67-69%

A = 93-95%

B = 83-86%

C = 73-76%

D = 63-66%

A- = 90-92%

B- = 80-82%

C- = 70-72%

D- = 60-62%

Students on the borderline of two grades will be bumped up only if they have completed all assignments and if the final exam reflects the higher score.

## Policy on Late Assignments

Quizzes cannot be taken late, and critical reading assignments cannot be submitted late. Paper assignments will be penalized by five percentage points for each day they are late. Exceptions can be made in the event of a UAH-sponsored activity or a personal emergency.

## Disability Accommodations

Students with disabilities should contact UAH's Disability Support Services at 256.824.1997, 256.824.6672 (Fax), or [dssproctor@uah.edu](mailto:dssproctor@uah.edu). (Website: <http://www.uah.edu/health-and-wellness/disability-support>) If you have a letter from the Disability Services Office indicating you have a disability that requires academic accommodations, please present the letter to me so we can discuss accommodations for the class.

## Plagiarism

Instances of suspected plagiarism will be reported to the Director of Student Conduct at UAH for investigation. If an investigation confirms that plagiarism took place, then the assignment will receive a score of zero and the student will be subject to University penalties.

The following information summarizes UAH's understanding of plagiarism (from <http://libguides.uah.edu/plagiarism>):

"Plagiarism - failing to acknowledge our debts to others - is using others' ideas and words without clearly acknowledging the source of that information....

"Give credit whenever you use

- another person's idea, opinion, or theory.
- any facts, statistics, graphs, drawings - any pieces of information - that are not common knowledge.
- quotations of another person's actual spoken or written words.
- a paraphrase of another person's spoken or written words.

"Common types of plagiarism include

- quoting material from another source without making citation.
- citing only one source while combining materials from several.
- citing fake sources to hide the amount of quoting/paraphrasing or to shortcut finding all the sources used.
- changing the content of sources to make it sound more relevant.
- copying the general structure, argument, or techniques of a source without attribution."

For more information, see:

[http://thevisualcommunicationguy.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Infographic\\_Did-I-Plagiarize.jpg](http://thevisualcommunicationguy.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Infographic_Did-I-Plagiarize.jpg)

## SCHEDULE OF READING ASSIGNMENTS

### WEEK 1

1.6: Introduction.

### WEEK 2

1.11: Taylor, *Race*, Chapter 1, "What Race-Thinking Is"

1.13: Taylor, *Race* §§2.1-2.4.1

### WEEK 3

1.18: No Class—Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

1.20: Ned Block, "How Heritability Misleads About Race"

### WEEK 4

1.25: (1) Taylor, *Race* §§2.5-2.5.1

(2) Linda Martin Alcoff, "Is Latina/-o Identity Racial Identity?"

1.27: Hilary Weaver, "Indigenous Identity: What Is It, and Who Really Has It?"

### WEEK 5

2.1: (1) Taylor, *Race* §§2.5.2-2.5.3

(2) Eric Liu, "The Accidental Asian"

2.3: (1) Taylor, *Race* §§2.5.4

(2) Adrian Piper, "Passing for White, Passing for Black"

### WEEK 6

2.8: (1) Taylor, *Race* §§2.5.5-2.6

(2) Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics"

2.10: Marilyn Frye, "On Being White: Thinking Toward a Feminist Understanding of Race and Race Supremacy"

\*Friday, 2.12, by the end of the day: Essay #1 Due\*

### WEEK 7

2.15: Taylor, *Race* §§3.1-3.5.1 [22]

2.17: Taylor, *Race* §§3.5.2-3.6 [20]

Recommended: Joshua Glasgow, "A Third Way in the Race Debate"

Friday, February 19<sup>th</sup>: Special Visiting Lecture, Kristie Dotson  
"Black Feminism and the Critical Philosophy of Race"

## WEEK 8

- 2.22: (1) Taylor, *Race* §§4.1-4.3.3  
(2) W.E.B. DuBois, from *The Souls of Black Folk*
- 2.24: (1) Taylor, *Race* §§4.3.4.-4.3.5  
(2) Linda Martin Alcoff, "What Should White People Do?"

## WEEK 9

- 2.29: Taylor, *Race* §§4.4.-4.6
- 3.2: Taylor, *Race*, §§5-5.2.2  
Recommended: Carl Cohen, "Race Preference is Morally Wrong"

## WEEK 10

- 3.7: Taylor, *Race*, §§5.3-5.4
- 3.9: Michael Levin, "Responses to Race Differences in Crime"

## WEEK 11

- 3.14: Taylor, *Race*, Chapter 6
- 3.16: **Quiz #1**

## WEEK 12

- 3.28: Anderson, Chapter 1, "Segregation and Social Inequality"
- 3.30: Anderson, Chapter 2, "Racial Segregation and Material Inequality in the United States"

## WEEK 13

- 4.4: Anderson, Chapter 3, "Segregation, Racial Stigma, and Discrimination"
- 4.6: Anderson, Chapter 4, "Racial Segregation Today: A Normative Assessment"

Thursday, April 7<sup>th</sup>: Special Visiting Lecture, Robert Bernasconi

## WEEK 14

- 4.11: Anderson, Chapter 5, "Democratic Ideals and Segregation"
- 4.13: Anderson, Chapter 6, "The Imperative of Integration"

\*Friday, 4.15, by the end of the day: Essay #2 Due\*

## WEEK 15

- 4.18: Anderson, Chapter 7, "Understanding Affirmative Action"
- 4.20: Anderson, Chapter 8, "The Folly and Incoherence of Color Blindness"

## FINALS WEEK

Monday, April 25<sup>th</sup>, 3:00pm-5:30pm: **Quiz #2**