

PHIL 216: PHILOSOPHY AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Fall 2019
TR 16-1750
Room: 254 STB
Instructor: Martina Ferrari

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Course Description:

The goal of this class is to think critically about the idea of cultural diversity and the complex theoretical and practical tensions involved in this topic, and the challenges it poses to liberal democracies. It seems that in today's European and U.S. context, cultural diversity is taken as both a fact (i.e. there are a lot of cultures) and as a moral value (i.e. different cultures have a right to exist and to be respected). Yet, by attending to what critics call racial liberalism, we will see that the current US political system and the mainstream approach to political theory—which takes the form of ideal theory—may not be equipped to concretely take into account and respect cultural *diversity*. After a brief introduction in which we will contextualize the history of our modern concept of cultural diversity, as well as notions such as culture, difference, race, racism, and (white) privilege, in the first part of the course we will focus on structural problems tied to cultural diversity. Additionally, we will reflect on the ways in which recognition or misrecognition of one's cultural identity/difference can have deleterious effects—in terms of both material welfare and the development of positive conceptions of self-identity. We will conclude the first part by engaging with current literature on epistemic oppression and ignorance, which will position us well to ask, in the second part of the course, questions about *how* cultural difference matters—to personal identity, political arrangements, and philosophical inquiry.

We begin part two by grappling with what scholars call standpoint epistemology, paying attention to the ways in which one social positionality matters when it comes to the development of knowledge (both in terms of content and processes of knowledge validation). At this juncture, we will read several first-person accounts about life at the margins. We will read non-Eurocentric philosophies, like Latinx American, Native American, and decolonial philosophy. Through these testimonials we will make sense of concepts like “diversity,” “identity,” or “recognition” anew, leaving behind some of the problematic norms (autonomy, abstract rationality, justification, transparency, separation, etc.) grounding cultural diversity as a value.

Course Objectives:

Because philosophy can be quite difficult and challenging, a few critical tools and intellectual virtues are needed to aid the thinker. Our critical toolkit will include questions that call for clarification, examples, counter-examples, reasons and justifications, and implications of what we are discussing. Intellectual virtues include generosity and openness, thoroughness and rigor, curiosity, courage, and responsive listening. It is hoped that by the end of this course, the student will incorporate these critical tools and virtues in addition to demonstrating:

- Critical thinking, reading, and writing skills through use of a wide range of research methods, including written reflections, collaborative discussions, and scholarly essays.
- An understanding of authors and concepts from various philosophical traditions and historical periods.
- An engagement with philosophical inquiry on a variety of topics related to the theme of the course, including identity, power, ethics, knowledge, and community.
- An ability to present and evaluate views that differ your own, especially as these relate to gender, race, class, and culture, with the aim of creating an inclusive classroom environment.

Course Materials

Charles Mills, *Black Rights/ White Wrongs*. ISBN: 9780190245412.

Glen Sean Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks*. ISBN: 9780816679652.
All additional materials will be available on canvas.

Grade Breakdown

Reading checks/quizzes: 20%
Reflection Papers: 30%
Final: 30%

Participation and Attendance: 15%
Critical Conversations: 5%

Requirements:

Reading checks/quizzes (5x4%=20%): Bring readings to class with markings and questions to indicate you are reading. There will be 5 random reading checks throughout the quarter. The reading checks will take one of two forms:

- I will check the texts you have brought to class to make sure that you have highlighted, taken notes, written questions, and otherwise engaged in the material you've read. You will lose points if you do not bring readings, or if they are not marked up. Or
- an in-class graded quiz which covers the reading material.

Each will be worth 4% of your final grade.

Note: You *cannot make up these quizzes*. If you are not in class, for any reason, and there is a quiz that day, you will lose those 4% points.

Reflection Papers (2x15%=30%): The reflection papers should be 750-1000 words in length. Your RP #1 is due on 10/31, no later than 11:59 pm. Your RP #2 is due on 11/24, no later than 11:59 pm. Papers should be submitted on Canvas via VeriCite. The RPs will be prompt based.

Late Reflection Papers will be penalized one letter grade/day past deadline.

Final Paper (30%): The final paper will be 1000-1300 words in length. Due 12/9/2019 (of finals week), no later than 11:59 pm. Papers should be submitted on Canvas via VeriCite. **Late Final Papers will be penalized one letter grade/day past deadline.**

Guidelines for your written work:

Clarity: the paper should have a clearly defined topic and thesis.

Accuracy: the paper should present an author's position in a fair way.

Assessment/argument: the paper should evaluate the author's position, and bring to bear on the text or issue your own view; you must defend your view. See below for more details.

Critical Conversations (5%): Throughout the course, you are expected to critically engage not only with the texts, but also with the world around you and your classmates. To this end, you are expected to post **2 thoughtful and well-articulated comments** prompted by the material assigned for the week on Canvas, under "Discussion." The comments must be informed by the assigned readings, NOT express your personal belief or opinion. This means that your comments should be presented in a thoughtful manner that engages the argument presented by the authors. The comment should raise a point in response to the reading. You may refer to events that are taking place in the world that relate to the material we are reading.

At the beginning of the term, we will choose together when you will be in charge of posting the two comments. The week you are in charge of posting the comment, you will also be expected to read and comment on one of your classmates' posts. To ensure that these discussion posts are completed in a timely fashion, it is required that all students have completed the first post (that is, the post in response to

the readings), the day before class, no later than 7 pm. This should give enough time for other students to comment on your post.

The posts must be roughly a paragraph long between 3 and 6 sentences.

While the posts are not graded, to receive full credit the posts must be thoughtful and in coherent and grammatically correct English with complete sentences and proper punctuation.

In addition to posting your comments on Canvas, **before the end of the term on 12/9, send me a word document in which you compile your two weekly comments.** The document should include the date and time you posted the 2 weekly comments. Failure to post the 2 comments and the 2 responses or meet the above-mentioned criteria will result in a 0 for the assignment. The final grade for the assignment is determined proportionally based on how many posts you have completed.

Attendance and Participation (15%): You may **miss no more than 2 classes** per term (no explanation necessary) in order to receive the grade C- or higher. Any additional absences will need to be approved by the instructor based on a legitimate reason (such as illness, family emergency, schedule conflict).

Notes on Speaking: We will be doing philosophy together. So it is imperative that you come to class prepared to actively and vocally engage the material in class discussions, and listen carefully to your classroom comrades. If you are someone who does not feel comfortable speaking up, know that I welcome other means of participation: you can write your comments and questions on a piece of paper and turn them in to me at the beginning, during, or end of class. Rather than raising your hand, you may also knock on your desk when you need clarification about an idea or a concept; you are also ALWAYS welcome to my office hours to discuss ideas, argument, and points of interests or confusion.

Philosophical discussion requires an atmosphere of mutual respect and intellectual curiosity. In this class, we will discuss matters that can be very charged and personal. In the context of discussing race and cultural difference, students often disclose very personal information about their lives. It is imperative that we handle such disclosures with respect, sensitivity, generosity, and care. As a group, we will strive to view encounters with different beliefs as opportunities for learning and enrichment. Please refrain from sleeping, chatting, and texting during class. If you have questions about the readings or our discussions, please feel free to raise them during class – this will spur further discussion and clarify difficulties that other students may also be facing.

Notes on Reading: The classroom is a two-way street. My commitment is to show up prepared to lecture and guide us through these materials and questions. Part of your commitment to is to read the readings each week, and come to class ready to raise all your questions and think critically. Nobody expects you to understand each reading the first run through. But putting in the effort is a minimum requirement for this class. Note the university policy is that *for every hour a student spends in class, she is expected to spend two hours on coursework outside of class.* That's a good bar for thinking through the time it will take to do these readings.

Notes on Written Work (which includes both your RPs and your final paper):

In answering the prompts, make sure to 1) have a clear position/thesis and 2) include textual references. This means providing direct quotes (cited appropriately) that support the answer you are providing or position you are defending. A strong answer to the questions is one that 3) draws from the readings to include the theories and arguments that the authors discuss and use them to support the position/answer you provide. You should include possible objections to the position you are presenting/defending and how you would answer these objections. A strong answer is also 4) conceptually clear and well organized. This means that you should think about how to organize and present your thoughts in the most convincing manner before writing your answer. To do so, you may have to edit, reword, or write some of the answers. So do not leave writing the final to the last minute! Start as soon as possible. Lastly, good essays

5) are free of typos and grammatically correct. This means writing in complete sentences—sentences that have a subject, a verb, and a complement—not in fragments. Please, proofread before turning in your work!

Grading Criteria:

A = Excellent. No mistakes, well-written, and distinctive in some way or other.

B = Good. No significant mistakes, well-written, but not distinctive in any way.

C = OK. Some errors, but a basic grasp of the material.

D = Poor. Several errors. A tenuous grasp of the material.

F = Failing. Problematic on all fronts indicating either no real grasp of the material or a complete lack of effort.

A handout that details expectations for writing for this course, the policy on rewritten work, and grading guidelines will be available on Canvas.

Additional Course Policies:

- Writing Assistance: The University of Oregon has a Writing Lab available for students. They offer drop-in tutoring services on weekdays from 9am-4pm in 72 PLC. You can also make appointments. See <http://tlc.uoregon.edu/subjects/writing/>.
- Accommodations & Accessibility: Please notify me if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation. You are also encouraged to contact the Accessible Education Center in 164 Oregon Hall at 541-346- 1155 or uoac@uoregon.edu. If you have a documented disability, please contact me in advance. If you need accommodations in this class, I will work with the Accessible Education Center to find a solution for you.
- Parents/Caretakers: If you are a parent or a care taker (for a child, family member, or animal), and you run in to conflicting obligations outside of your control (doctors appointments, vet appointments, etc.), please come see me. I strive to make this an inclusive classroom for students, and will do my best to accommodate you if you have young children or other responsibilities.
- Houselessness/Hunger: Did you know that 39% of college kids report being food insecure? Did you know that 10% report being houseless (sleeping in a car, staying on a friends sofa, etc)? This can dramatically impact your success in the classroom, impacting your ability to concentrate, your self-esteem, etc. But there is no shame in being in these positions, and I am here to help. If you would like to come talk to me, I can pass along resources and help get you connected. If you would like to let me know about food insecurity, there are several ways you can do this: write me an email (this will not be anonymous), write a note without your name and leave it in my department mailbox (nobody checks it but me, and I promise you will not run into me, or probably anyone else you know, while dropping it off), or leave a note up front during one of our class breaks. I will happily begin bringing granola bars or other substantial treats to class for you and whoever else might need them.
- Incompletes and extensions will be given only in the event of documented emergencies.
- No Electronics. If I warn you to put an electronic device away, expect it to reflect on your grade. If I have to warn you a second time, I will ask for you to leave and/or you will be marked absent for the day.
- Emergencies: In the event of a major campus emergency, course requirements, deadlines, and grading percentages are subject to changes that may be necessitated by a revised semester calendar or other circumstances.
- Sexual Violence: The UO is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic and dating violence, and

gender-based stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or experiences gender-based violence (intimate partner violence, attempted or completed sexual assault, harassment, coercion, stalking, etc.), know that you are not alone. UO has staff members trained to support survivors in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more.

Since September 2018, graduate students are **no longer** considered **mandatory reporters**, but “Student-Directed Employees.” This means that, if desired, you can seek resources, information, and support without the obligation, on the part of the graduate student, to report the incident. Note that although I am the instructor of record, as a graduate student, I am not a mandatory reporter.

If you wish to speak to someone confidentially, you can call 541-346-SAFE, UO’s 24h hotline, to be connected to a confidential counselor to discuss your options, visit the SAFE website at www.safe.uoregon.edu, or visit the UO Counseling Center.

If you wish to report an incident of hate or discrimination, you can call 541-346-5555, the UO’s 24h Non-Emergency Hate and Discrimination Report Line. You may find more information at <https://respect.uoregon.edu>.

- **Academic Honesty:** There will be zero tolerance for plagiarism in this course. Plagiarized papers will receive a 0, the student will automatically fail the course, and their name will be given to the university authorities. For more on the University of Oregon policy on plagiarism, see the following website: <http://libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students/>
In order to avoid plagiarizing from a source, both direct quotations and paraphrases or summaries of material found in traditional print media or on the internet must be acknowledged. If you have any questions about how this definition will be interpreted, please do not hesitate to discuss the matter with me.

*** I will do my best to create a productive environment and inspire free thinking throughout the course. I will treat everyone fairly and with respect. In return, I expect you to do your best and treat everyone with respect. I want all of us to hold each other accountable. For this, communication is the key. Please come and talk to me if anything is bothering you. The subject matter will at times be sensitive and the discussions may be heated – and this is quite alright, as long as we don’t stop communicating. We shall build our classroom community together and contribute in our own unique way. ***

Readings and Assignment Schedule

Class schedule and readings are subject to revision. You will be notified ahead of time if and when this happens. (If there is anything you find pertinent to this class or the topics we discuss – readings, videos, images, etc. - contact me about including it in our schedule).

Week	Topic	Readings	Assignments	Notes and due dates
Week 1	Introduction: What is cultural? What is cultural diversity? Why does cultural	10/1: Welcomes and Course Overview; Taylor, “The Politics of Recognition,” 25-27, 32-44 <u>Recommended:</u> Nussbaum, “The Feminist Critique of Liberalism,” 1-6	15 pages 5 pages	10/5: Last day to drop classes w/o ‘W’

	diversity matter (epistemically and in terms of social and political ontology)?	10/3: Mills, <i>Black Rights/White Wrongs</i> , “New Left Project”; McIntosh, “White Privilege and Male Privilege” Listen to Hannah-Jones, “Episode 1: The Fight for a True Democracy,” <i>The 1619 Project – The New York Times</i> <u>Recommended:</u> Pateman, “Preface,” <i>The Sexual Contract</i> ; Hannah-Jones, “Our Democracy’s founding ideals were false when they were written,” <i>The New York Times</i> , https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/08/14/magazine/black-history-american-democracy.html	7 pages 9 pages 45 min podcast 2 pages	
Week 2	Part I – Structural Problems tied to cultural diversity Notes on Racial Liberalism	10/8: Mills, from <i>Black Rights/White Wrongs</i> , “Racial Liberalism”; Watch Netflix documentary, <i>13th</i> <u>Recommended:</u> Mills, selections from <i>The Racial Contract</i> 10/10: Said, from <i>Orientalism</i> , “Introduction,” pp. 9-36	18 pages 27 pages	10/7: Last day to register/add classes
Week 3	Notes on Internalized Oppression & Struggle vis-à-vis self-identity	10/15: Mona Fayad, “The Arab Woman and I”; Taylor, “The Beast of Burden”; Abu-Lughod, “Do Muslim Women Need Saving?,” <i>Time</i> , http://ideas.time.com/2013/11/01/do-muslim-women-need-saving/ <u>Recommended:</u> Okin, “Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women” 10/17: Fanon, from <i>Black Skin, White Masks</i> , “The Lived Experience of the Black Man”	 30 pages	
Week 4	Notes on Epistemic Injustice & White Ignorance	10/22: Anzaldúa, from <i>Borderlands</i> , “How to Tame a Wild Tongue” <u>Recommended:</u> Dotson, “Conceptualizing Epistemic Oppression” 10/24: Dotson, “How is this Paper Philosophy?,” 1-19, 22-26; Listen to Kristie Dotson discusses epistemic oppression, <i>Elucidations</i> , https://assets.pippa.io/shows/57b498490b5f3f772a76004a/61326a3ce4a302864e60fc6de81a1e64.mp3 <u>Recommended:</u> Salamon, “Justification or Queer Method, or Leaving Philosophy”	11 pages 23 pages 24 pages 45 min podcast 5 pages	
Week 5	Continued	10/29: Mills, <i>Black Rights/White Wrongs</i> , “White Ignorance” 10/31: Class is cancelled – Martina is at a conference.	22 pages	10/31: First RP due
Week 6	Part II – Resistance	11/5: Baldwin, “My Dungeon Shook”; DuBois, from <i>The Souls of Black Folk</i> , “The Forethought” and “Of Our Spiritual Strivings”	7 pages 8 pages	

	Notes on Double Consciousness and Standpoint Epistemology	11/7: Patricia Hills Collins, “The Social Construction of Black Feminist Thought”	28 pages	
Week 7	Cultural difference from the standpoint of Lived Experience	11/12: Deloria, from <i>Custer Died for Your Sins</i> , “Indians Today, The Real and the Unreal” 11/14: Lugones, “Purity, Impurity, and Separation”; Anzaldúa, from <i>Borderlands</i> , selections on mestiza identity <u>Recommended:</u> Narayan, <i>Dislocating Cultures</i> , “Contesting Cultures”	27 pages 25 pages 13 pages	11/17: Last day to withdraw from classes
Week 8	Notes on Social Justice, Cross-cultural communication and self-care	11/19: Coulthard, Red Skin/White Masks, selections 11/21: Coulthard, Red Skin/White Mask, selections	TBA TBA	11/24: Second RP due
Week 9	Continued	11/26: Coulthard, Red Skin/White Masks, selections 11/28: No class – Thanksgiving.	TBA Start Writing your final papers!	11/26: Final Paper prompts
Week 10	Continued	12/3: Mills, <i>Black Rights/White Wrongs</i> , “Epilogue”; Listen or read Coates, “The Case for Reparations,” <i>The Atlantic</i> , https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/the-case-for-reparations/361631/ <u>Recommended:</u> Coates, “Reparations Are Not Just About Slavery...,” <i>DemocracyNow!</i> , https://www.democracynow.org/2019/6/20/ta_nehisi_coates_reparations_america_slavery 12/5: Lugones, “Playfulness, ‘World’ - Travelling, and Loving Perception”; Ortega, “Home Tactics” <u>Recommended:</u> Spellman and Lugones, “Have We Got a Theory for You!”	16 pages 90 min podcast	10/6: Last day of classes
Week 11				12/9: Final Paper Due