

# PHILOS 3T03: Philosophy & Race

## Winter 2022

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Office hours: Mondays 10:30-12pm, or by appointment

### Course Objectives

#### Course Description

This course is a philosophical exploration of what race is, both from a metaphysical standpoint – is it biological, or social, or something else altogether – and the implications of how we understand race and racialization on both our social and political lives and on the discipline of philosophy itself. This course is aimed at investigating three main questions: (1) What is race? (2) What is the relationship of philosophy (the discipline) to discussions of race? (3) How do race, racialization, and racism shape our day-to-day lives?

We will begin with a critical examination of race and racism in the history of philosophy. We will then examine four philosophical perspectives on race so as to develop our understanding of the metaphysics of race. In the second half of the course, we will look at how race, racialization, and racism inflect the everyday practices of human life in both moral and political realms. We will close the course with some considerations for how we might carry these lessons forward.

#### Course Learning Outcomes

Through this course, students will:

- Critically analyze and assess arguments in and about the philosophy of race;
- Discuss philosophy of race in a respectful, engaging, and constructive way;
- Engage in substantial reflection on oneself and one's role in society;
- Construct clear and persuasive arguments about topics in philosophy of race

#### Textbooks, Materials, & Fees

- *What is Race? Four Philosophical Views* by Joshua Glasgow, Sally Haslanger, Chike Jeffers, and Quayshawn Spencer (OUP).
- *Look, a White!* by George Yancy (Temple University Press)

Other readings will be provided, in keeping with McMaster Copyright policy, via e-reserve on the Avenue course website.

## Method of Assessment

### Course Requirements and Grading

Your grade in this course will be determined by the following:

#### 1. Participation: 15% Due: ongoing

To obtain full marks, students must **either** attend and participate in lecture/discussions/group activities in 10 out of the 12 weeks of material, **or, in lieu of a week/in the case of needing to stay home re: illness**, submit a 2-page (double-spaced) reflection on the week's readings indicating a) a brief summary of the most interesting element(s), and b) a question, comment, or concern about that element. Students can mix up these two ways of obtaining participation marks (i.e., attend/participate in 8 weeks and submit reflections for remaining 2).

#### 2. Mini-assignment: 15%

Part 1: 5% Due: Week 2

Part 2: 10% Due: Week 12

This assignment is about critical self-reflection. In week 2, you will submit approx. 500 words describing your answers to two questions on physical paper in class. I will then return these to you in week 11, at which point you will answer those same questions again (approx. 500-750 words), albeit in light of the discussions and material from the course. How have your views changed, if at all? What have you learned?

#### 3. Philosophical papers: 70%

Mini-paper: 10% Due: 25 Jan 11:59pm

First paper: 25% Due: 1 March 11:59pm

Second Paper: 35% Due: 20 April 11:59pm

The mini-paper will be an exercise in interpretive summary – an exegesis. The aim of this assignment is to assess the students' abilities to understand and communicate their understanding of someone else's view. There is no need for critical engagement (i.e., don't argue for a response to that view) in this assignment. The papers will be of standard philosophical form, requiring interpretive summary (exegesis) and then a critical engagement via argumentation. See Avenue for detailed instructions and the rubrics for these assignments.

Should you wish to do a creative assignment in lieu of the formal philosophical paper for the second paper (slam poetry, creative writing, sculpture, etc.) please contact the instructor to discuss.

## Policy on Missed Work, Extensions, and Late Penalties

### *Extensions:*

Extensions can be granted only by the instructor, not the TAs, and will be granted at the instructor's discretion. To request one, email the instructor more than 24 hours in advance of the deadline. SAS accommodations operate independently of extensions.

If you want to use an MSAF, recall that they apply only to work under 25% and must be filed within three days of the deadline.

#### *Late penalties:*

When uploading assignments to Avenue, make sure to allow a couple of minutes before the deadline in case of internet/Avenue issues. **Everyone receives a five-minute grace period after the deadline**, i.e., if the deadline is 11:59pm, no late penalty will be applied up to 12:04am, though 12:05am and after will be subject to the late penalty. If it looks like there's going to be a technical issue, email it to me before the deadline to ensure that your submission isn't late.

Otherwise, every 24 hrs after the deadline you will lose 10% off the top of the final grade of the paper. So, if you turn in a paper that scores an 83% two days late, it becomes a 63% paper. There is no upper limit on this penalty.

#### *Missed work:*

Any work which does not have an extension obtained in writing (via email)/SAS-approved accommodation, and which remains unsubmitted more than 96 hrs after the deadline, will receive a zero.

#### *Behaviour*

It is deeply important that we maintain an attitude of respect for one another and for the subjects we cover in this class, especially because many of them are quite personal/sensitive/important. Philosophy is, at its core, a practice of critical thinking. This often consists in making arguments and responding to one's interlocutors in ways that interrogate their positions and claims; we will consider reasons for and against views in a way that incorporates an underlying commitment to trust, empathy, and cooperative inquiry. Throughout our discussions of some sensitive issues and concerns, we will maintain an attitude of respect even – especially – when we disagree with the views at hand. We will discuss specific practices of class conduct in the first class.

#### *Email*

I will communicate with you via email and Avenue, particularly if something changes in the course – unexpected cancellation, new or additional readings, etc. Please ensure that you are receiving these notifications. My general policy is to respond to emails within 48 hours of receiving them (minus weekends); however, I will not discuss grades over email, and would prefer that longer questions about assignments are addressed in office hours. **Please check the syllabus and the (forthcoming) detailed instructions on assignments, etc. before emailing me about them.**

#### *Grades*

I am committed to a fair and unbiased grading process. As such, all assignments must be submitted with no identifying information other than your student number. This allows the teaching team to grade anonymously. If you have concerns about this process, please contact me and we will discuss possible solutions. If you are unsatisfied with your grade and would like to appeal it, the process is as follows. Between 24 and 72 hours after the grades are posted, explain in writing – in a way that responds to each of the comments – how you think the grade/comments are inappropriate for your assignment. I promise to consider these requests for appeals and, if the appeal is accepted, to re-examine your assignment. Please note, however, that a successful request for regrading can result in your mark going up or down.

### *Accessibility and Support Services*

I want all of you to succeed and flourish philosophically. Please feel free to contact me via email or in office hours to discuss your circumstances.

Students with disabilities or relevant diagnoses are strongly encouraged to make use of services here at the University. If you require any accommodations in light of any diagnoses or disabilities, please contact Student Accessibility Services.

## **Topics and Readings**

### **Module: Race & Racism in the History of Western Philosophy**

Week 1: Introductions & the history of philosophy

- Jan 10: **No reading**
- **OPTIONAL:** Malinda Smith, Kimberly Gamarro, and Mansharn Toor, “A Dirty Dozen: Unconscious Race and Gender Biases in the Academy”
- Jan 13: Peter K. J. Park, excerpt from *Africa, Asia, and the History of Philosophy: Racism in the Formation of the Philosophical Canon 1780-1830*
- Jan. 13: Excerpts from David Hume and Immanuel Kant on race

### **Module: What is Race?**

Week 2:

- Jan. 17: Chapter 1 (Sally Haslanger), *What is Race?*
- Jan. 20: Chapter 2 (Chike Jeffers), *What is Race?*

Week 3:

- Jan. 24: Chapter 3 (Quayshawn Spencer), *What is Race?*
- Jan. 27: Chapter 4 (Joshua Glasgow), *What is Race?*

Week 4:

- Jan. 31: Chapter 5, Haslanger’s response, *What is Race?*
- Feb. 3: Chapter 6, Jeffers’ response, *What is Race?*

Week 5:

- Feb. 7: Chapter 7, Spencer’s response, *What is Race?*
- Feb. 10: Chapter 8, Glasgow’s response, *What is Race?*

Week 6: Indigenous identity and race

- Feb. 14: Thomas King, excerpts from *The Inconvenient Indian* and *The Truth About Stories*
- Feb. 17: Bonita Lawrence, “Gender, Race, and the Regulation of Native Identity in Canada and the United States: An Overview”
- Feb 17: Gloria Anzaldúa, “Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza”

## ***READING WEEK***

### **Module: Race, racialization, and racism in practice**

#### Week 7: Whiteness

- Feb. 28: George Yancy, Chapter 1 of *Look, a White!*: Looking at Whiteness: Finding Myself Much like a Mugger at a Boardwalk's End"
- March 3: Peggy McIntosh, "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack"
- March 3: Mamta Motwani Accapadi, "When White Women Cry: How White Women's Tears Oppress Women of Colour"

#### Week 8: Medicine & Race

- March 7: Adam Hochman, "Against the Reification of Race in Bioethics: Anti-Racism without Racial Realism"
- March 7: Michael Yudell et al, "Taking Race out of Human Genetics"
- March 10: Michael Hardimon, Ch. 8, *Rethinking Race*
- **March 10: Special guest speaker, Ian Peebles (University of Pennsylvania)**

#### Week 9: Anticolonial perspectives

- March 14: Linda Martín Alcoff, "Beyond the Black/White Binary"
- March 17: Elena Ruíz, "Cultural Gaslighting"

#### Week 10: Reparations

- March 21:
  - Ronald Gamblin, "Land Back! What do we mean?" <http://4rsyouth.ca/land-back-what-do-we-mean/>
  - Pamela Palmater, "Canada, it's time for Land Back" <https://breachmedia.ca/land-back/>
  - Bradford W. Morse, "Indigenous Peoples of Canada and Their Efforts to Achieve True Reparations"
- March 24:
  - Ta-Nehisi Coates, "The Case for Reparations" (*The Atlantic*)
  - **OPTIONAL** Bernard R. Boxill, "A Lockean Argument for Black Reparations"

#### Week 11: Racism, pt. 1

- March 28: Jorge Garcia, "The Heart of Racism"
- March 31: David Haekwon Kim, "Contempt and Ordinary Inequality"

#### Week 12: Racism, pt. 2

- April 4: Grant J. Silva, "Racism as Self-love"
- April 7: George Yancy, Chapter 6 of *Look, a White!*: "Looking at Whiteness: Tarrying with the Embedded and Opaque White Racist Self"

#### **Module: Where Do We Go From Here?**

##### Week 13: *Strategies and Pitfalls*

- April 11: Sara Ahmed, "You end up doing the document instead of doing the doing: Diversity, race equality, and the politics of documentation"

- **OPTIONAL:** Barbara Applebaum, “Comforting Discomfort as Complicity: White Fragility and the Pursuit of Invulnerability”

## **Academic Integrity**

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, located at <https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

- plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which other credit has been obtained.
- improper collaboration in group work.
- copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

## **Authenticity / Plagiarism Detection**

Some courses may use a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. For courses using such software, students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via Avenue to Learn (A2L) plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish to submit their work through A2L and/or Turnitin.com must still submit an electronic and/or hardcopy to the instructor. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to Turnitin.com or A2L. All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). To see the Turnitin.com Policy, please go to [www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity).

## **Courses with an On-Line Element**

Some courses use on-line elements (e.g. e-mail, Avenue to Learn (A2L), LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used.

Continuation in a course that uses on-line elements will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

## **Online Proctoring**

Some courses may use online proctoring software for tests and exams. This software may require students to turn on their video camera, present identification, monitor and record their computer activities, and/or lockdown their browser during tests or exams. This software may be required to be installed before the exam begins.

## **Conduct Expectations**

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities (the "Code"). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, whether in person or online.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students' access to these platforms.

## **Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or [sas@mcmaster.ca](mailto:sas@mcmaster.ca) e-mail to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University's Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities policy.

## **Email correspondence policy**

It is the policy of the Faculty of Humanities that all email communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from each student's own McMaster University email account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. Instructors will delete emails that do not originate from a McMaster email account.

## **Modification of course outlines**

The University reserves the right to change dates and/or deadlines etc. for any or all courses in the case of an emergency situation or labour disruption or civil unrest/disobedience, etc. If a modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with an explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. Any significant changes should be made in consultation with the Department Chair.

### **Request for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF)**

In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar "Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work".

### **Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous and Spiritual Observances (RISO)**

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the RISO policy. Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office normally within 10 working days of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

### **Copyright and Recording**

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, including lectures by University instructors.

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

### **Extreme Circumstances**

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through



regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.