

SAMPLE SYLLABUS

SEX, GENDER, AND RACE

Course Description:

This course will explore metaphysical, conceptual, political and ethical questions about sex, gender, and race. Are races and genders real or made up? Are they natural or socially constructed? What is the relationship between sex and gender? Should we conceive of races and genders as social kinds that exist because of the subordination of people of colour and of female human beings? To do away with sexism or racism, do we need to do away with gender and race? Does a just future have gender or race in it? Are race and gender the kind of thing that people can change? If so, is it ethical to endeavor to change one's race? What about one's gender or sex? Should trans people resist passing as a member of their gender of choice? What about light-skinned people of colour passing as white? Are there morally significant differences between passing for another race versus passing for another gender or sex? How should we understand sexism and racism? Are they essentially the same? Are sexism and racism primarily the result of social structures that distribute power unjustly or of individual agents who misuse their power? Are parents, or prospective parents, morally obligated not to choose their child's sex? Are they morally obligated to instill certain gender identities in their children? Do parents, or prospective parents, who have the opportunity to choose their child's race have an obligation to choose in a particular way? Are parents morally obligated to instill certain racial identities in their children?

Assessment:

9 Reading Responses	45%
Media Assignment	35%
Peer Commentaries	5%
In-Class Exercises	15%

Reading Responses:

Write a brief response to the week's readings, to be handed in before class begins. Responses should express what you learned from the readings, any disagreements you may have, additional questions you might want to ask, and/or corroborating evidence from your own experience.

Media Assignment:

In groups of 4 – 5 students, choose a media target (magazine or newspaper article, TV broadcast, podcast, blog post, music video, ...) to respond to. Your target should relate directly to one of the course readings. Produce a thoughtful, well-researched reply in your choice of medium (article, video, podcast, blog post, song, ...) that expresses your response to the target. Present your assignment to the class. Students not presenting will provide feedback in the form of brief written commentaries.

In-class Exercises:

Each class with no media presentation will feature a structured discussion exercise. We will try several formats, including Debate, Talk Show, Panel of Experts, Redistributing Voices, and Fishbowl. Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the readings, and to participate in these exercises. Students will nominate Discussion Stars after each activity.

SCHEDULE

Week 1: Introduction

Reading:

James, Michael. "Race," Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/race/>.

Mikkola, Mari, "Feminist Perspectives on Sex and Gender," Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL: <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2012/entries/feminism-gender/>.

Recommended:

Bettcher, Talia, "Feminist Perspectives on Trans Issues," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL: <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2014/entries/feminism-trans/>.

Hacking, Ian. "Making Up People." In *Reconstructing Individualism: Autonomy, Individuality, and the Self in Western Thought*. Ed. T.C. Heller, M. Sosna, and D.E. Wellbery. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1986.

Week 2: Metaphysics of Race

Readings:

Taylor, Paul C. *Race: A Philosophical Introduction*, Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2004. Chapter 2

Mills, Charles W. "But What Are You Really? The Metaphysics of Race." In *Blackness Visible: Essays on Philosophy and Race*. Ithaca NY: Cornell UP, 1998. Pp. 41-66.

Recommended:

Appiah, K. Anthony. "Race, Culture, Identity: Misunderstood Connections, Part I." In *Color Conscious: The Political Morality of Race*. K. A. Appiah & A. Gutmann. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996. Pp. 30-74.

Week 3: Metaphysics of Gender

Readings:

Sveinsdóttir, Ásta Kristjana. "The Metaphysics of Sex and Gender." In *Feminist Metaphysics: Explorations in the Ontology of Sex, Gender and the Self*. Ed. C. Witt. New York: Springer 2011. Pp. 47-65.

de Beauvoir, Simone. "Introduction from *The Second Sex*." In *Feminist Theory: A Philosophical Anthology*. Ed. A. Cudd & R. Andreasen. Malden, MA: Blackwell 2005. 27-36.

Recommended:

Butler, Judith. "Subjects of Sex/Gender/Desire." In her *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge, 2006. Pp. 1-46.

Spelman, Elizabeth. "Woman: The One and the Many." In her *Inessential Woman: Problems of Exclusion in Feminist Thought*. Boston, MA: Beacon, 1988. Pp. 133-159.

Week 4: Concepts of Race and Gender

Readings:

Haslanger, Sally. "Gender and Race: (What) Are They? (What) Do We Want Them To Be?" *Noûs* 34(1), 2000: 31-55.

Saul, Jennifer. "Philosophical Analysis and Social Kinds: Gender and Race." *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* Supplementary 80, 2006: 119–143.

Recommended:

Alcoff, Linda M. "The Phenomenology of Racial Embodiment." In her *Visible Identities: Race, Gender, and the Self*. New York: Oxford UP, 2006. Chapter 7.

Glasgow, Joshua. *A Theory of Race*. Routledge: New York, 2009. Chapter 6.

Week 5: Future Genders, Future Races

Readings:

Haslanger, Sally. "Future Genders, Future Races," *Philosophic Exchange* 34, 2003-4: 4-27.

Serano, Julia. *Whipping Girl: A Transsexual Woman on Sexism and the Scapegoating of Femininity*. Emeryville, CA: Seal Press, 2007. Introduction and chapter 19.

Recommended:

Allen, Anita L. "Forgetting Yourself." In *Feminist Rethink the Self*. Ed. D. T. Meyers. Boulder, CO: Westview, 1997. Pp. 104-123.

Appiah, K. Anthony. "Race, Culture, Identity: Misunderstood Connections, Part II." In *Color Conscious: The Political Morality of Race*. K. A. Appiah & A. Gutmann. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996. Pp. 74-105.

Week 6: Changing Race, Changing Gender or Sex

Readings:

Overall, Christine. "Transsexualism and 'Transracialism'," *Social Philosophy Today* 20 (3), 2004: 183-193.

Heyes, Cressida J. "Changing Race, Changing Sex: The Ethics of Self-Transformation," *Journal of Social Philosophy* 37(2), 2006: 266-282.

Recommended:

Scheman, Naomi. "Queering the Center by Centering the Queer: Reflections on Transsexuals and Secular Jews." In *Feminists Rethink the Self*. Ed. D. T. Meyers. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997. Pp. 124-162.

Week 7: Passing For Another Race or Sex/Gender

Readings:

Mallon, R., 2004, "Passing, Traveling and Reality: Social Constructionism and the Metaphysics of Race," *Nous* 38 (4): 644–673.

Green, Jamison. "Look! No, Don't! The Visibility Dilemma for Transsexual Men." In *The Transgender Studies Reader*. Ed. S. Stryker and S. Whittle. New York: Routledge, 2006. Pp. 499-508.

Recommended:

Piper, Adrian. "Passing for White, Passing for Black," *Transition* 58, 1992: 4–32.

Stone, Sandy. "The Empire Strikes Back: a Posttranssexual Manifesto." In *The Transgender Studies Reader*. Ed. S. Stryker and S. Whittle. New York: Routledge, 2006. Pp. 221-235.

Shelley, C.A. "Narratives of Trans Repudiation and Transphobia: The Conundrum of Passing." In *Transpeople: Repudiation, Trauma, Healing*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008. Pp. 47-57.

Week 8: Sexism and Racism

Readings:

- Thomas, Laurence M. "Sexism and Racism: Some Conceptual Differences," *Ethics* 90(2), 1980: 239-250.
- Crenshaw, Kimberle. "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 1989: 139-167.

Recommended:

- Juang, R. "Transgendering the Politics of Recognition." In *The Transgender Studies Reader*. Ed. S. Stryker and S. Whittle. New York: Routledge, 2006. Pp. 706-719.

Week 9: Sexism and Racism

Readings:

- Frye, Marilyn. "Sexism." In her *Politics of Reality: Essays in Feminist Theory*. Berkeley, CA: Crossing Press, 1983. Pp. 17-40.
- Garcia, J. L. A. "Three Sites for Racism: Social Structures, Valuing, and Vice." In *Racism, Philosophy and Mind*. Ed. M. P. Levine and T. Pataki. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004. Pp. 35-55.

Recommended:

- Frye, Marilyn. "Oppression." In her *Politics of Reality: Essays in Feminist Theory*. Berkeley, CA: Crossing Press, 1983. Pp. 1-16.

Week 10: Procreation and Parenthood—Gender and Sex

Readings:

- Seavilleklein, Victoria, and Susan Sherwin. "The Myth of the Gendered Chromosome: Sex Selection and the Social Interest," *Cambridge Quarterly of Healthcare Ethics* 16, 2007: 7-19.
- Fine, Cordelia. *Delusions of Gender: How our Minds, Society, and Neurosexism Create Difference*. Chapters 17 – 21.
- Poisson, Jayme. "Parents Keep Child's Gender Secret," *The Toronto Star* May 21, 2011. Available at: <http://www.thestar.com/article/995112>.

Recommended:

- Bartholet, "Abuse and Neglect, Foster Drift, and the Adoption Alternative." In *Adoption Matters*: 223-233.

Week 11: Procreation and Parenthood—Race

Readings:

- Fogg-Davis, Hawley. "Navigating Race in the Market for Human Gametes," *Hastings Center Report* 31(5), 2001: 13-21.
- Haslanger, Sally. "You Mixed? Racial Identity without Racial Biology." In *Adoption Matters* (see Fogg-Davis): 265-289.
- Allen, Anita. "Do Children Have a Right to a Certain Identity?" *Rechtstheorie*, 15 (1993): 109-19.