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:

Recommended:

Week 2: Metaphysics of Race
Readings:

Recommended:

Week 3: Metaphysics of Gender
Readings:

Recommended:

Week 4: Concepts of Race and Gender
Readings:

**Recommended:**

**Week 5: Future Genders, Future Races**

**Readings:**

**Recommended:**

**Week 6: Changing Race, Changing Gender or Sex**

**Readings:**

**Recommended:**

**Week 7: Passing For Another Race or Sex/Gender**

**Readings:**

**Recommended:**
Week 8: Sexism and Racism
Readings:
Recommended:

Week 9: Sexism and Racism
Readings:
Recommended:

Week 10: Procreation and Parenthood—Gender and Sex
Readings:
Recommended:

Week 11: Procreation and Parenthood—Race
Readings: