

# KINDS, CLASSIFICATION, AND ONTOLOGY

SoSe 2020

Tues. 10 (c.t.) – 12h

Instructor: Dr. Catherine Stinson

Office hours: Fri. 12 (c.t.) – 13h

## **Outline:**

This course begins with the ancient question, “What are the natural kinds?” and covers historical work on kinds and classification, as well as criticism of that work. Most of the course will focus on contemporary questions about how to classify people into social and biopolitical kinds like woman, Black, neurotypical, mad, or healthy.

The aim of the course is for students to develop their research skills: following leads in readings, searching for sources, reading closely, documenting research, and writing abstracts.

## **Main Readings:**

Dupré, *The Disorder of Things*

Bowker & Star, *Sorting Things Out*

Kendig, *Natural Kinds and Classification in Scientific Practice*

Kinkaid & Sullivan, *Classifying Psychopathology: Mental Kinds and Natural Kinds*

## **Assessment:**

### *Engagement:*

Class time will be split between a Zoom video discussion, and active discussion on Slack. Students will be expected to do the week’s main reading before class, and participate in discussions (not necessarily during class time). Please post questions about the readings on Slack well before class, to help guide the conversation. Students will also be expected to help each other with their research and writing by replying to other students’ posts on Slack.

### *Annotated Bibliography:*

As early as possible, choose a research topic within the scope of the course. Your additional reading and independent research should be focused on that topic. At least 6 times during the course, post a summary of an additional reading (not necessarily listed on the syllabus) to Slack. The summary should outline the main ideas in the reading, with a focus on how it is relevant to your research topic. Raising unanswered questions and relating the reading to other texts are good additions. Full bibliographic information about the source should appear at the top of the file. Summaries should be posted in pdf format, in the #bibliography Slack channel.

### *Paper Abstract*

The end point of your independent research is an 800-900 word abstract, like what you might submit to a conference or put at the beginning of a published paper. In the abstract, outline in detail an idea for a paper based on your research.

## **Accessibility:**

If the course delivery, readings, or assessment methods aren’t working for you because of linguistic, disability, health, financial or other barriers, please do consult with the instructor. Reasonable accommodations will be made wherever possible.

## Schedule of Topics & Readings:

April 21	Getting started	
April 28	History of Natural Kinds	Hacking, "A Tradition of Natural Kinds"  Additional Reading: Khalidi, "Natural Kinds and Crosscutting Categories" Mill, <i>A System of Logic</i> Hacking, "Working in a New World: The Taxonomic Solution" Hennig, <i>Phylogenetic Systematics</i>
May 5, 12, 19	Kinds in Philosophy of Science	Dupré, <i>The Disorder of Things</i>  Additional Reading: Khalidi, <i>Natural Categories and Human Kinds</i> Franklin-Hall, "Natural Kinds as Categorical Bottlenecks" Boyd, "Kinds, complexity and multiple realization"
May 26, June 9	Kinds in Science and Technology Studies	Bowker & Star, <i>Sorting Things Out</i>  Additional Reading: Foucault, <i>Society Must be Defended</i> "17 March, 1976"
June 16, 23	Psychiatric Kinds	Haslam chapter in Kinkaid & Sullivan Poland chapter in Kinkaid & Sullivan  Additional Reading: Kendler & Parnas, <i>Philosophical Issues in Psychiatry IV</i> Cooper, "Natural Kinds" Potter chapter in Kinkaid & Sullivan
June 30	Social Kinds	Haslanger chapter in Kendig Spencer chapter in Kendig  Additional Reading: Taylor, <i>Race: A Philosophical Introduction</i> Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color" Bettcher, "When Tables Speak" <a href="http://dailynous.com/2018/05/30/tables-speak-existence-trans-philosophy-guest-talia-mae-bettcher/">http://dailynous.com/2018/05/30/tables-speak-existence-trans-philosophy-guest-talia-mae-bettcher/</a>
July 7, 14	Eugenics	Mbembe, "Necropolitics"  Additional Reading: <a href="https://www.propublica.org/article/people-with-intellectual-disabilities-may-be-denied-lifesaving-care-under-these-plans-as-coronavirus-spreads">https://www.propublica.org/article/people-with-intellectual-disabilities-may-be-denied-lifesaving-care-under-these-plans-as-coronavirus-spreads</a> <a href="https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2020/03/eugenics-isnt-going-to-save-you-from-coronavirus.html">https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2020/03/eugenics-isnt-going-to-save-you-from-coronavirus.html</a> <a href="https://roarmag.org/essays/policing-the-pandemic-security-for-whomed/">https://roarmag.org/essays/policing-the-pandemic-security-for-whomed/</a> Mbembe, <i>On the Postcolony</i>