

## PHIL 372: Philosophy of Race

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Winter Term 2021-22/ SGW Campus (3 credits)

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**Telephone:** (514) 848-2424 x 5103  
**Office hours:** Thurs. 2:00-4:00pm in person or by Zoom (accessed through Moodle), and by appointment. Note: there will be no office hours during our first week of class.

\*Office hours will be held in person (I will physically be in my office if people wish to come by) and on Zoom simultaneously; this will make it possible to reduce the number of students assembled in the building. Please get in touch by email to let me know you are planning to drop in in person. If you find yourself navigating scheduling conflicts, you can also email me to schedule meetings outside of office hours.

**Class schedule:** W 2:45-5:30pm, FB S113

**Calendar description:** This course introduces philosophical approaches to concepts of race and racism. The course may explore metaphysical, epistemological, moral, social, political, scientific, or historical topics concerning race.

**Course description:** We will treat questions surrounding the ontology of race in the first week of the course. We will subsequently and for the most part focus on how race is lived and a number of political themes. What are the different forces and forms of violence which constitute racist forms of violence and shape the lived experience of race? What is the relation between different forms of philosophical discourse and the thinking of race? How might subjects marginalized by dominant discourses and institutions by virtue of race exercise agency within these discourses and institutions as well as more generally? The course will be an exercise in collective thinking. Students are required to keep a journal which they will submit on the final day of class.

**Required texts:** Scans and electronic versions of most of the readings for the course have been created/provided through Course Reserves. Students will be able to access links to these through Moodle. Some texts must be purchased through [Concordia Book Stop](#):

Toni Morrison: *The Bluest Eye* (Penguin Random House, 2007)

Claudia Rankine: *Citizen: An American Lyric* (Graywolf, 2014)

Angela Davis: *Are Prisons Obsolete?* (Seven Stories Press, 2003)

**Course objectives:** The course will introduce students to the philosophy of race. Students will have opportunities to practice working with philosophical texts to defend theses of a philosophical nature. They will also have the chance to practice revising their writing in light of feedback they receive on it. Most importantly, they will be given tools for thinking about some of the most pressing issues of our time.

**How the course will run and expectations:**

Our first two lectures (Jan. 12 & Jan. 19) will be held in real time on Zoom. You will be able to find the Zoom link for the relevant lecture in the announcements section of the Moodle page for the course. Once we are allowed to return to campus (tentatively: after Jan. 19), we will meet in person, in the room that has been booked for us, at our scheduled times. These lectures will be recorded using Yuja; in the event that you must miss class, you will be able to access these recordings through Moodle as well. All students are expected to wear procedure masks in the classroom and to refrain from coming to class if experiencing symptoms of COVID-19. If I ever find myself having to cancel lecture because I am experiencing symptoms of the virus, I will create a replacement video lecture for the class which will be available through Moodle.

\*If, due to the pandemic, we must change the mode of delivery for the course from in-person to fully online, we will use Zoom for our lectures. I'll keep you updated. Make sure to pay attention to our announcement section in Moodle for important updates.

Although there is no participation requirement for this course, I will invite questions, comments, and discussion during my lectures. Some students may choose to share personal anecdotes when this helps us engage more deeply with the course material or helps us bridge gaps between theory and reality. Because some students may be voluntarily making themselves vulnerable in this way, it is essential for all students to comport themselves respectfully. Treat anecdotes and other personal information shared in the classroom as confidential.

The weekly lectures will be more enriching if students complete the readings for the week in advance of the lecture, and I highly encourage this practice. It will not be possible to complete the journal assignment, moreover, without keeping up with the course readings. There will likely be times when you do not have time to pay meticulous attention to the readings for the week, but you should at least expose yourself to them, even if only in an imperfect way (look through the text, read passages, etc.). You will not be required to write on all of our course readings, so it will be okay if your grasp of certain texts is not as thoroughgoing as your grasp of others. Attending lectures will be a necessary part of this learning experience—it will not be possible to understand how our texts and themes fit together and speak to one another, when they do, without attending lecture.

**Assignment requirements:**

**First essay (2500 words; worth 35%):** topics distributed Feb. 9<sup>th</sup>; essay due Feb. 23<sup>rd</sup> on Moodle by 11:59pm.

\*First essays returned with feedback for revision assignment by March 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Revision assignment (worth 15%):** Taking into consideration the feedback you've received, rewrite/edit your first essay and resubmit it. The 'revision' will be worth 15% of your total grade for the course. Your grade will be based solely on how well you've revised your first essay (this means that if you received an A on your first essay and resubmit it without making any changes, you will earn an F for your revision assignment). The revision assignment is due on April 10<sup>th</sup> (submit on Moodle by 11:59pm).

**Journal (7 entries, 150-200 words each; worth 15%):** due on April 13 (the last day of class)

**Final essay (2500 words; worth 35%):** topics distributed on April 11<sup>th</sup>; due date: April 27<sup>th</sup>.

\*Note that, although this course's language of instruction is English, students have the option of submitting their written work in French.

**Requesting extensions and late policy:** To hand in an assignment late, you must have good reasons for doing so and must negotiate a new arrangement with me in advance of the deadline; otherwise—or at least barring exceptional circumstances, which will require documentation—a late penalty will apply to your work. You will lose 3% per day late, regardless of whether these days are work days or weekend days (this means an essay that scores 85% but which is three days late will score 76% after the late penalty is applied).

**Grading scheme:**

*Philosophy Department Statement Regarding Grades and Grade Distribution:*

1) The Undergraduate Calendar 16.3 specifies that As, Bs, and Cs are for “outstanding,” “very good” and “satisfactory” work, respectively. The Philosophy Department interprets this to mean that: Cs are awarded for work that is adequate, yet in some way fails to completely meet all expectations and requirements; Bs are awarded for work that fully meets all expectations and requirements; As are reserved for outstanding work that exceeds expectations and requirements by, e.g., demonstrating outstanding rigour, clarity, or insight.

2) In 200 & 300 level courses with over 30 students, it is normally expected that: the grade average will be in the C+ to B- range; there will be no more than 25% As.

*Numerical Equivalents:*

A- 80-84% 3.7 GP	A 85-89% 4.0 GP	A+ 90-100% 4.3 GP
B- 70-72% 2.7 GP	B 73-76% 3.0 GP	B+ 77-79% 3.3 GP
C- 60-62% 1.7 GP	C 63-66% 2.0 GP	C+ 67-69% 2.3 GP
D- 50-52% 0.7 GP	D 53-56% 1.0 GP	D+ 57-59% 1.3 GP

I emphasize that A-range grades are reserved for work that EXCEEDS expectations and requirements. Outstanding, A-range work will be work that grounds itself in a rigorous engagement with the course readings and sets itself apart by advancing notably original ideas, by making unique connections between ideas, or by in other ways demonstrating keen philosophical insight. A-range essays (and journal entries) will be well-argued and well-composed. They will abide by proper academic citation requirements.

**The evaluation scheme and more in light of extraordinary circumstances:** In the event of extraordinary circumstances and pursuant to the Academic Regulations, the University may modify the delivery, content, structure, forum, location and/or evaluation scheme. In the event of such extraordinary circumstances, students will be informed of the changes.

**Important advice:** If a special condition or circumstance in your life may or will affect your performance, please let me know about it as soon as possible. It will be treated with the strictest confidence. Please do not wait until the condition or circumstance is impending or has already happened before telling me about its impact on you. If something unanticipated occurs, bring it to my attention and we will work out a way of dealing with it.

**Accessibility:** I will strive to make the course as accessible and inclusive as possible. If you have accessibility needs that require academic accommodations, please meet with an advisor from the Access Centre for Students with Disabilities (ACSD) as soon as possible to set up an accommodation plan. I welcome meeting with all students to discuss their accessibility needs.

**Undergraduate general assignment policies:** Ensure that you keep backup copies of your work in paper and/or electronic form. This is good common sense. Don't make the mistake of typing up an assignment in a hurry on a library computer without saving it to an online account at the

university or elsewhere, to a memory key, etc. Consider purchasing a small USB key that you can carry with you at all times with your work on it, or finding an online resource such as DropBox or SugarSync where you can store files. Also, develop good backup practices: turn on the timed auto-recover function in your word processor, the save backup copy function, and get in the practice of saving versions of your work under a new name when you start making drastic revisions (or use version management functions of your word processor). Also note that according to the calendar (16.3.9.2) “Students are responsible for the preservation of any material, in its entire and original form, which has been returned to them.”

**Academic integrity:** Your academic Code of Conduct makes it very clear that plagiarism, as well as any other form of academic dishonesty, is entirely unacceptable. The Code defines plagiarism as “the presentation of the work of another person as one’s own or without proper acknowledgement” (CU Undergraduate Calendar; the Code goes on to state other offences). This could be material copied word for word from books, journals, internet sites, professor’s course notes, etc. It could be material that is paraphrased but closely resembles the original source. It could be the work of a fellow student, for example, an answer on a quiz, data for a lab report, a paper or assignment completed by another student. It might be a paper purchased through one of the many available sources. Plagiarism does not refer to words alone - it can also refer to copying images, graphs, tables, and ideas. “Presentation” is not limited to written work. It also includes oral presentations, computer assignments and artistic works. If you translate the work of another person into French or English and do not cite the source, this is also plagiarism. If you cite your own work without the correct citation, this too is plagiarism. In Simple Words: DO NOT COPY, PARAPHRASE OR TRANSLATE ANYTHING FROM ANYWHERE WITHOUT SAYING FROM WHERE YOU GOT IT! DON’T FORGET TO USE QUOTATION MARKS!

Plagiarism and academic dishonesty are highly disruptive of the learning that we should be doing here. Should I detect any form of academic dishonesty, including plagiarizing from the internet, from books, journals, other students, etc., I will report it directly to the Vice-Dean of Academic Affairs. The penalties for plagiarism tend to be rather severe, and in any case undermine your learning process. So avoid it. In case of doubt as to what counts as plagiarism, ask me. Cite your sources and inspirations; this enriches your ideas by showing their roots in the thoughts of other people, and does not detract from your exposition, articulation, and development of ideas.

**Note on intellectual property:** Content belonging to instructors shared in online courses, including, but not limited to, online lectures, course notes, and video recordings of classes remain the intellectual property of the faculty member. It may not be distributed, published or broadcast, in whole or in part, without the express permission of the faculty member. Students are also forbidden to use their own means of recording any elements of an online class or lecture without express permission of the instructor. Any unauthorized sharing of course content may constitute a breach of the Academic Code of Conduct and/or the Code of Rights and Responsibilities. As specified in the Policy on Intellectual Property, the University does not claim any ownership of or interest in any student IP. All university members retain copyright over their work.

**Note on behaviour:** All individuals participating in courses are expected to be professional and constructive throughout the course, including in their communications. Concordia students are subject to the Code of Rights and Responsibilities which applies both when students are physically and virtually engaged in any University activity, including classes, seminars, meetings, etc. Students engaged in University activities must respect this Code when engaging with any members of the Concordia community, including faculty, staff, and students, whether such interactions are verbal or in writing, face to face or online/virtual. Failing to comply with the Code may result in charges and sanctions, as outlined in the Code.

**Note on gender neutral language & human diversity:** In addition to all the other reasons for using gender neutral language and language that attends to human diversity, there are philosophical reasons for this too. Philosophy demands that we think very carefully, clearly and rigorously about human life and ideas. To do this well, we have to attend to the diversity of human life. Otherwise we build in and reinforce prejudices that betray who we are as human beings. Using gender neutral language in your writing and speaking reminds us that human beings are diverse in gender, that not all of them are “he.” And this reminds us of further diversities of human being. There are different ways of approaching the task of keeping gender and other differences in mind, e.g., substituting “she” where “he” might have traditionally been expected, alternating systematically between the two, using “she/he,” and so on. No formal procedure is adequate to the task, for the task is improving your thinking and that of our culture and future generations, and the form of thinking adequate to this cannot be set in advance. For helpful discussion and guidelines, Google: Warren, Virginia L. “Guidelines for the Nonsexist Use of Language.”

**Note on pronouns:** All course participants have the right to request which names and pronouns instructors use to refer to them. I respect this right and will do my best to satisfy any of these requests. If you want to be called by a name other than what is listed on the class list, please feel free to pass along the information to me. If I mistakenly use the wrong pronoun when referring to you, please advise me as soon as possible.

**Note on sexual violence:** Concordia’s [Policy Regarding Sexual Violence](#) defines sexual violence as “any violence or misconduct, physical or psychological, carried out through sexual means or by targeting sexuality. This includes, but is not limited to, sexual assault; sexual harassment; stalking; coercion; sexist, homophobic and/or transphobic jokes; indecent exposure; stealthing; voyeurism; degrading sexual imagery; recording and distribution of sexual images or video of a member of the University without their consent; cyber harassment or cyber stalking of a sexual nature or related to a person’s sexual orientation and gender identity and/or presentation.”

The Policy further defines sexual assault and harassment.

- The Philosophy Department condemns sexual violence. The Department encourages all students to report sexual violence to the Department Chair, the Dean, or to the Office of Rights and Responsibilities.

- Concordia's [Sexual Assault Resource Centre \(SARC\)](#) is an important resource on campus for students needing support, accompaniment, resources or information about sexual violence. SARC may convene a Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) to support a survivor/victim reporting sexual violence. See the [Policy](#) for further details.
- Other resources include the [Centre for Gender Advocacy](#) and the [CSU Advocacy Centre](#).
- The Philosophy Department welcomes Concordia's [Consensual Romantic Or Sexual Relationships Guidelines](#), which "strongly discourage[] all instructors from commencing or continuing any consensual romantic or sexual relationship with a student."

**Territorial acknowledgment:**

I would like to acknowledge that Concordia University is located on unceded Indigenous lands. The Kanien'kehá:ka Nation is recognized as the custodians of the lands and waters on which we gather today. Tiohtiá:ke/Montreal is historically known as a gathering place for many First Nations. Today, it is home to a diverse population of Indigenous and other peoples. I respect the continued connections with the past, present and future in our ongoing relationships with Indigenous and other peoples within the Montreal community.

**List of student services/resources:**

[Counselling and Psychological Services](#)  
[Concordia Library Citation and Style Guides](#)  
[Student Success Centre](#)  
[Health Services](#)  
[Financial Aid and Awards](#)  
[HOJO \(Off Campus Housing and Job Bank\)](#)  
[Academic Integrity](#)  
[Access Centre for Students with Disabilities](#)  
[CSU Advocacy Centre](#)  
[Dean of Students Office](#)  
[International Students Office](#)  
[Student Hub](#)  
[The Otsenhákta Student Centre](#)  
[Birks Student Service Centre](#)  
[Sexual Assault Resource Centre](#)

<p><b><u>Reading Schedule</u></b></p>
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\*Note: Our reading schedule isn't set in stone and we will be free to adjust it as the course progresses. We will do our best to keep to our schedule, but if some topics require slightly more time to cover, then we will allow them to spill over into subsequent weeks.

Weeks	Readings
<p>1 Intro to the Course and Race as a Concept</p> <p>Jan. 12/2022</p>	<p>*Lecture online via Zoom. Find the link to our Zoom meeting in our 'announcement' section on Moodle.</p> <p>Mills, Charles W. 1998. "“But What Are You <i>Really</i>’?: The Metaphysics of Race.” <i>Blackness Visible: Essays on Philosophy and Race</i>. Ithaca; London: Cornell. 41-66.</p> <p>Taylor, Paul C. “Taking Postracialism Seriously.” <i>Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race</i> v11 n1 (2014): 9-25.</p> <p>Taylor, Paul C. “Race, Rehabilitated — Redux.” <i>Critical Sociology</i> v36 n1 (01/2010): 175-190.</p>
<p>2 Race in Philosophy</p> <p>Jan. 19/2022</p>	<p>*Lecture online via Zoom. Find the link to our Zoom meeting in our 'announcement' section on Moodle.</p> <p>Mills, Charles W. 2017. “Philosophy and the Racial Contract.” <i>The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy and Race</i>. Ed. Naomi Zack. New York: Oxford UP. 65-76.</p> <p>Bernasconi, Robert. 2018. “Critical Philosophy of Race and Philosophical Historiography.” <i>The Routledge Companion to Philosophy of Race</i>. Ed. Paul Taylor, Linda Alcoff, Luvell Anderson. New York: Routledge. 3-13</p> <p>Moten, Fred. 2018. “There is No Racism Intended.” <i>The Universal Machine</i>. Durham: Duke UP. 1-52.</p>
<p>3</p>	



<p>Race and Phenomenology</p> <p><i>Jan. 26/2022</i></p>	<p>*Lecture in-person, in our assigned room. Lectures will continue to be in-person until the end of the course. (Note: this may change: we may be required to remain online longer than anticipated, or may be required to change our mode of delivery entirely. Check our announcement section on Moodle frequently for updates.)</p> <p>Fanon, Frantz. 2008. <i>Black Skin, White Masks</i>. New York: New Grove. 1-81 (Intro up to and including Chapter 4).</p> <p>Weiss, Gail. 2018. "Phenomenology and Race (Or: Racializing Phenomenology)." <i>The Routledge Companion to Philosophy of Race</i>. Ed. Paul Taylor, Linda Alcoff, Luveell Anderson. New York: Routledge. 233-244.</p> <p>Morrison, Toni. 2007. <i>The Bluest Eye</i>. New York: Penguin Random House. XI-93. (*Read from the beginning up to, but not including, the section titled 'Spring')</p>
<p>4</p> <p>Race and Phenomenology Continued</p> <p><i>Feb. 2/2022</i></p>	<p>Fanon, Frantz. 2008. <i>Black Skin, White Masks</i>. New York: New Grove. 82-181. (Read Chapter 5 up to and including Chapter 8: 'By Way of Conclusion').</p> <p>Morrison, Toni. 2007. <i>The Bluest Eye</i>. New York: Penguin Random House. 93-206. (*Finish the text.)</p>
<p>5</p> <p>Identity Politics, Intersectionality and Race</p> <p><i>Feb. 9/2022</i></p>	<p>*Topics for first essay distributed</p> <p>hooks, bell. 1981. "The Imperialism of Patriarchy." <i>Ain't I a Woman</i>. Toronto: Between the Lines. 87-117.</p>

	<p>Lugones, Maria. 2003. "Playfulness, 'World'-Travelling, and Loving Perception." <i>Pilgrimages = Peregrinajes: Theorizing Coalition against Multiple Oppressions</i>. Lanham: Rowman &amp; Littlefield. 3-19.</p>
<p>6 Microaggressions and Race  <i>Feb. 16/2022</i></p>	<p>Rankine, Claudia. 2014. <i>Citizen: An American Lyric</i>. Minneapolis: Graywolf.</p> <p>Fatima, Saba. 2020. "I Know What Happened to Me: The Epistemic Harms of Microaggression." <i>Microaggressions and Philosophy</i>. Ed. Lauren Freeman, Jeanine Weekes Schroer. New York: Routledge. 163-83.</p> <p>Fatima, Saba. 2017. "On the Edge of Knowing: Microaggression and Epistemic Uncertainty as a Woman of Color." <i>Surviving Sexism in Academia</i>. Ed. Kirsty Cole and Holly Hassel. New York: Routledge. 147-157.</p> <p>Henning, Tempest. 2020. "Racial Methodological Microaggressions: When Good Intersectionality Goes Bad." <i>Microaggressions and Philosophy</i>. Ed. Lauren Freeman, Jeanine Weekes Schroer. New York: Routledge. 251-71.</p>
<p>7 Postcolonial Discourse and Subaltern Agency  <i>Feb. 23/2022</i></p>	<p>*Essay 1 due on Moodle by 11:59pm.</p> <p>Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. 1994. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" <i>Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader</i>. New York; London: Columbia UP. 66-111</p> <p>Bhabha, Homi K. 2004. "The Postcolonial and the Postmodern: The Question of Agency." <i>The Location of Culture</i>. New York: Routledge. 245-82.</p>
<p>8</p>	

<p>March 2/2022</p>	<p>Mid-term break</p>
<p>9 Biopolitics and Race</p> <p>March 9/2022</p> <p>March 10/2022</p>	<p>Arendt, Hannah. 1973. "The Decline of the Nation-State and the End of the Rights of Man." <i>The Origins of Totalitarianism</i>. New York: Harcourt Brace. 267-302.</p> <p>Agamben, Giorgio. 1998. Selections from "The Camp as Biopolitical Paradigm of the Modern." <i>Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life</i>. Stanford: Stanford UP. 119-134;136-143;166-180.</p> <p>McWhorter, Ladelle. 2004. "Sex, Race, and Biopower: A Foucauldian Genealogy." <i>Hypatia</i> 19, no. 3 (2004): 38-62.</p> <p>McWhorter, Ladelle. 2017. "From Scientific Racism to Neoliberal Biopolitics: Using Foucault's Toolkit." <i>The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy and Race</i>. Ed. Naomi Zack. New York: Oxford UP. 282-93.</p> <p>*First essay returned with feedback.</p>
<p>10 Incarceration</p> <p>March 16/2022</p>	<p>Davis, Angela. 2003. <i>Are Prisons Obsolete?</i> New York: Seven Stories Press. 9-59. (Read Chapter 1 up to and including Chapter 3.)</p>
<p>11 Incarceration Continued</p> <p>March 23/2022</p>	<p>Davis, Angela. 2003. <i>Are Prisons Obsolete?</i> New York: Seven Stories Press. 60-118. (Finish the text.)</p>
<p>12 Indigeneity</p>	

<p><i>March 29/2021</i></p> <p><i>March 30/2021</i></p>	<p>*Revision assignment due on Moodle by 11:59pm.</p> <p>Borrows, John. 1997. "Frozen Rights in Canada: Constitutional Interpretation and the Trickster." <i>American Indian Law Review</i> v22 n1 (19970101): 37-64.</p> <p>Maracle, Lee. 2017. <i>My Conversations with Canadians</i>. Toronto: BookThug. E-book.</p> <p>Tomlin-Jahnke, Huia. 2019. "Contested Spaces: Indigeneity and Epistemologies of Ignorance." <i>Indigenous Education: New Directions in Theory and Practice</i>. Edmonton: University of Alberta P. 83-102.</p>
<p>13</p> <p>Diversity Work within Institutions</p> <p><i>April 6/2022</i></p>	<p>Ahmed, Sara. 2012. <i>On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life</i>. Durham; London: Duke University Press. 1-112. (Read Chapter 1 up to and including Chapter 3.)</p>
<p>14</p> <p>Diversity Work within Institutions Continued</p> <p><i>April 11/2022</i></p> <p><i>April 13/2022</i></p>	<p>*Topics for final essay distributed.</p> <p>*Last day of class: Journal assignment due by 11:59pm on Moodle.</p> <p>Ahmed, Sara. 2012. <i>On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life</i>. Durham; London: Duke University Press. 113-90. (Finish the text.)</p>
<p>15</p> <p><i>April 18/2022</i></p> <p><i>April 19/2022</i></p>	<p>DISC deadline.</p> <p>Exam period begins. Final essay due April 27.</p>

