

PHIL-274: African American Political Philosophy.

Summer Session II 2016
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Course summary. In 1903, W. E. B. Du Bois predicted that the problem of the twentieth century would be “the problem of the color-line” – that is, of the ways in which race affects Americans’ relations with one another. We can find evidence that Du Bois was right in all sorts of places: in representations of black Americans on television and in film, in the war on drugs, in relations between black Americans and the police, and in segregated cities across the country. The “problem of the color-line” is not a single problem, but a collection of many diverse problems that the American institution of race regenerates through the decades.

African American philosophy addresses these problems through a variety of critical lenses. In this course, we will investigate the *meaning* of race, unearthing tensions between its origins in outdated biology and its social significance today. We will explore several varieties of racism, and the ways in which racism manifests, not only in individuals’ hearts and minds, but in our culture and institutions. And we will discuss the ways in which race complicates itself, both in its interactions with gender and class, and in the lives of people with mixed racial heritage. These questions will afford us a forum in which to confront the past and present of race in America, and to imagine its future.

Course requirements. It is essential that you keep up with the readings, attend each class, and participate actively in class discussions. You must complete each assignment in a timely fashion. In order to pass the course, you must at least satisfy each of these requirements.

One practice paper (worth 10% of the final grade). In this short paper (2 to 3 pages), you will briefly explain a crucial argument from the assigned readings.

One mid-term paper (worth 20% of the final grade). In this longer paper (about 5 pages), you will present and respond to an argument from the assigned texts.

One final paper (30%). You will submit one longer (about 8 pages) paper at the time of the final exam. You will decide the focus of this paper in consultation with the instructor.

Presentations (20%). Once during the semester, each student will present briefly on the assigned texts and at least one supplemental text, to be chosen in consultation with the instructor. (Students may base their final papers on their presentations.)

Final exam (10%). In the exam, I will ask you to define the key terms and foundational principles with which our authors understand the world around them. We will see practice questions for the final exam throughout the semester.

Participation (10%). This course will depend on your active engagement with the material in class. You will need to be prepared to contribute actively each day, and to help make the environment one conducive to everyone’s participation – one that is open, respectful, and positive.

Attendance. Each student gets one free absence per session. Beyond that, you must speak to me about any absence, preferably beforehand. Be aware that I will be unlikely to excuse any

absence that the university does not require me to excuse. For each unexcused absence, you will be docked 3 points off of your final grade. For each failure to speak with me, you will lose an *extra* 2 points off of your final grade.

The Honor System. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill has had a student-led honor system for over 100 years. Academic integrity is at the heart of Carolina and we all are responsible for upholding the ideals of honor and integrity. The student-led Honor System is responsible for adjudicating any suspected violations of the Honor Code and all suspected instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to the honor system. Information, including your responsibilities as a student is outlined in the Instrument of Student Judicial Governance. Your full participation and observance of the Honor Code is expected.

Required texts. You must have available copies of Ta-Nehisi Coates' *Between the World and Me*, Patricia Hill Collins' *Black Feminist Thought*, Charles Mills' *The Racial Contract*, and Naomi Zack's *Race and Mixed Race*. Copies are available at the bookstore (and elsewhere). All other readings will be available through the course site.

Tentative Schedule

<i>June 20</i>	<i>Introduction to the course.</i>
	Unit 1. The Concept of Race
<i>June 21</i>	Zack, pp. 9-18. <i>Supplement:</i> Du Bois, "The Conservation of Races."
<i>June 22</i>	Zack, pp. 3-6; Appiah, "The Uncompleted Argument: Du Bois and the Illusion of Race."
<i>June 23</i>	Taylor, "Appiah's Uncompleted Argument: W. E. B. Du Bois and the Reality of Race."
	Unit 2. Racism and White Supremacy
<i>June 24</i>	Garcia, "The Heart of Racism." <i>Supplement:</i> The Moynihan Report.
<i>June 27</i>	Coates, <i>Between the World and Me</i> .
<i>June 28</i>	Coates, <i>Between the World and Me</i> (continued).
<i>June 29</i>	Mills, pp. 9-19; 31-40.
<i>June 30</i>	Mills, pp. 41-62.
<i>July 1</i>	Mills, 62-89.
<i>July 4</i>	<i>Holiday.</i>
<i>July 5</i>	Mills, 109-20.
<i>July 6</i>	Shelby, "Is Racism in the Heart?"
<i>July 7</i>	Shelby, "Ideology, Racism, and Social Critique."
	Unit 3. The Ethics of Racial Designations
<i>July 8</i>	Zack, 19-50.
<i>July 11</i>	Zack, pp. 61-65.

July 12 Gates, "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Black Man."
July 13 Daily Nous, "Philosophers on Rachel Dolezal."

Unit 5. Race and Gender

July 14 Collins, 3-11.
July 15 Collins, pp. 53-75.
July 18 Collins, 76-97.
Supplement: hooks, *Ain't I a Woman?* (excerpt).
July 19 Collins, 133-60.
Supplement: Guinier, "But Some of Us Are Brave."
July 20 Grillo, "Anti-Essentialism and Intersectionality: Tools to Dismantle the Master's House."
July 21 *Discussion and catch-up; no new reading.*