

PHILOSOPHY OF RACE
PHIL 253
Fall 2023

CONTACT	Professor Angela Sun (she/her/hers) asun@wlu.edu
LECTURE	Tuesdays and Thursdays 11:45pm-1:15pm in Reid 215
OFFICE HOURS	Wednesdays 12:00pm-3:00pm and by appointment
DESCRIPTION	In this course, students will consider a series of philosophical questions concerning race and racism, paying special attention to the ways we think and talk about race. Questions we will address include: What is race? What is racial oppression? What is the relationship between racism and capitalism? Why are racial stereotypes so pervasive? Why is hate speech harmful? Should colleges no-platform racist speakers? What is the best way to respond to racism?
GOALS	By the end of this course, you will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explain how philosophers have theorized race, racial oppression, and how to talk and think about race.• Closely and charitably read challenging texts.• Uncover and evaluate the argumentative structure for a claim, whether it is your own or someone else's.• Improve the clarity, argumentative structure, and originality of your writing.• Deliberately and critically reflect on your own views and conduct.• Respectfully discuss challenging topics with classmates from diverse backgrounds.
TEXTS	Everything we'll read is either in the "Files" section of our Canvas site or linked directly in the schedule below.
EXPECTATIONS	I expect you to come to class on time, having read the text, and ready to engage. I do not expect you to be perfect. I am looking for sustained effort to seriously grapple with the material, not for "brilliant" contributions. I expect you to treat me and your classmates with respect, and to get in touch with me if you have questions or concerns about the course. You should expect me to challenge you to grapple with difficult and important moral questions, to be transparent and honest with you in my feedback and my expectations, and to support you and your academic needs throughout the term.

ATTENDANCE	I don't take or require attendance. But if you are going to miss class (even just to take a mental health day), I ask that you email me beforehand. Otherwise, I will worry!
REQUIREMENTS	<p>The requirements for the course are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Reading responses</i> (8%): by 11:59pm the day before <i>eight</i> of our meetings, post one paragraph on our Canvas discussion board reflecting on that day's reading assignment. You might raise a question about the reading, challenge an argument in the reading, expand on or defend a point made in the reading, share what the reading made you think about, etc. You may also respond to what your peers have already posted on the discussion boards. I use reading reflections to help guide discussion. Responses are graded on the basis of completion. • <i>Short essays 1</i> (18%): submit 2 ~400-word essays. • <i>Short essays 2</i> (22%): submit 2 ~600-word essays. • <i>Paper outline</i> (3%): submit a one-page outline of your paper. Outlines will be graded on the basis of completion. • <i>Paper draft</i> (3%): submit a full draft of your ~2000-word paper. As long as you submit a full draft, you will receive full credit. • <i>Paper</i> (25%): submit a ~2000-word paper. • <i>Final assignment</i> (21%): create a work of public philosophy. <p>If you are taking this course for non-PHIL credit (e.g., LACS, WGSS), you need to complete some of the assignments on topics related to the discipline in which you are getting credit. Come see me if this applies to you so we can work out the details.</p>
LATE WORK	If you email me at least 24 hours before an assignment is due, with the exception of the final assignment, I will grant you a 48 hour extension, no questions asked. If you submit an assignment late without getting in touch with me 24 hours beforehand, you will lose $\frac{1}{3}$ of a letter grade per day after the deadline.
REWRITES	You can rewrite any assignment with the exception of the final one for a new grade. Rewrites are due 1 week after feedback on the original assignment is given back to you.
ELECTRONICS	You can use electronics at your own discretion, but keep in mind all the research that shows that the use of electronics detracts from your own learning and the learning of those around you. This is a discussion-based class, not a lecture-based one. Out of respect to your peers, do not multi-task on your laptop while they're speaking; give them your full attention. I will speak to you if I feel as though your use of electronics is hindering class discussion.

ACCOMMODATION I will work with every student interested in taking this course to ensure it's possible to. If you have a disability, are struggling with mental or physical health, or if there is anything else that might prevent you from fully participating in this course, let me know as soon as you can, and we will figure something out. I also completely understand if you would prefer keep information about your health confidential. If you would prefer to speak about accommodations anonymously, contact Lauren Kozak (kozak1@wlu.edu), Title IX Coordinator and Director of Disability Resources.

SCHEDULE**UNIT 1: WHAT IS RACE?**

Sept. 7: Introduction
No reading

Sept. 12: Theories of race

- Chike Jeffers, part 1 of "Cultural Constructionism" in *What is Race? Four Philosophical Views*

Sept. 14: Is race socially constructed?

- Sally Haslanger, "Political Constructionism" in *What is Race? Four Philosophical Views*
- Chike Jeffers, part 2 of "Cultural Constructionism" in *What is Race? Four Philosophical Views*

Sept. 19: Is race biological?

- Quayshawn Spencer, "How to Be a Biological Racial Realist" in *What is Race? Four Philosophical Views*

UNIT 2: RACE AND OPPRESSION

Sept. 21: Oppression

- Iris Marion Young, "Five Faces of Oppression"

Sept. 22: SHORT ESSAYS 1 DUE BY 11:59PM

Sept. 26: Colonialism

- Lena Ypi, "What's Wrong With Colonialism"

Sept. 28: Race and capitalism

- Vanessa Wills, "What Could It Mean to Say, 'Capitalism Causes Sexism and Racism'?"

Oct. 3: White poverty

- Alec MacGillis, "The Despair of Poor White Americans"

Oct. 5: Racial fetishism

- Robin Zheng, "Why Yellow Fever Isn't Flattering: A Case Against Racial Fetishes"

Oct. 10: Transracialism

- Robin Dembroff and Dee Payton, "Why We Shouldn't Compare Transracial to Transgender Identity"

Oct 12: No class (Washington break)

UNIT 3: THINKING ABOUT RACE

Oct. 17: Harmful generalizations

- Sarah-Jane Leslie, "The Original Sin of Cognition: Fear, Prejudice, and Generalization"

Oct. 19: Implicit bias

- Tamar Szabó Gendler, "On the Epistemic Costs of Implicit Bias"

Oct. 20: SHORT ESSAYS 2 DUE BY 11:59PM

Oct. 24: The role of evidence in racist judgments

- Rima Basu, "To Avoid Moral Failure, Don't See People as Sherlock Does"

UNIT 4: TALKING ABOUT RACE

Oct. 26: Being called "racist"

- Shen-yi Liao and Nat Hansen, "'Extremely Racist' and 'Incredibly Sexist': An Empirical Response to the Charge of Conceptual Inflation"

Oct. 31: Identity politics

- Cressida Heyes, "Identity Politics"

Nov. 2: Race in the American culture war

- Liam Kofi Bright, "White Psychodrama"

Nov. 7: Political correctness

- Dan Moller, "Dilemmas of Political Correctness"

Nov. 9: Hate speech

- Jeremy Waldron, "Protecting Dignity or Protection from Offense?" in *The Harm in Hate Speech*

Nov. 14: No platforming

- Robert Mark Simpson and Amia Srinivasan, "No Platforming"

UNIT 5: RESPONDING TO RACIAL INJUSTICE

Nov. 16: Anger as a response to injustice

- Amia Srinivasan, "[The Aptness of Anger](#)"

Nov. 17: PAPER OUTLINE DUE BY 11:59PM

Nov 21 & 23: No class (Thanksgiving)

Nov. 28: An obligation to resist one's own oppression

- Ashwini Vasanthakumar, "[Epistemic Privilege and Victims' Duties to Resist their Oppression](#)"

Nov. 30: Joy

- Lindsey Stewart, excerpts from [The Politics of Black Joy](#)

Nov. 31: PAPER DUE BY 11:59PM

Dec. 5: Statue removal and renaming

- Elizabeth Scarbrough, "[Burying the Dead Monuments](#)"

Dec. 7: Affirmative action

- César Cabezas, "[Is Affirmative Action Racist?](#)"

Dec. 13: FINAL ASSIGNMENT DUE BY 11:59PM