

Philosophy of Race

Philosophy 153; Winter 2014; UCSC

Syllabus

Instructor: Prof. Rasmus Grønfeldt Winther

Classroom: Cowell 134

Meeting Times: Tuesdays&Thursdays 10:00 – 11:45 am

Email: rgw@ucsc.edu

Webpage (teaching): <http://www.rgwinther.com/Courses.html>

There is an [eCommons](#) page for this course.

1. COMMUNICATION

Please ask all questions about the content or format of the course *during classtime*. If you're wondering about X, almost certainly some of your peers also will be. A non-asked question is a lost teaching opportunity and potentially a question never answered! We'll have "open questions" session for a few minutes during every class. Please consult my webpage (teaching) for my policy regarding student emails.

2. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. A weekly 1 page maximum think piece. It will be due on Tuesday and Thursday. Bring it on Tuesday and talk about it. Revise and resubmit for Thursday's class. Five of these will be graded. (50% of your grade)

It is possible to cluster 2 (or max. 3) of these think pieces into a single, rewritten longer think piece. However, you must come speak to me during office hours if that is an option you wish to choose.

You have the option of redoing any think piece. In that case, turn in the old think piece with my comments and grade on it together with your revised work. Do not expect further comments.

N.b. All think pieces must be turned in on paper. **Do not email think pieces to the Professor.**

2. Group Project (30% of your grade; see below)

3. In-class participation, via small group discussions and cold-calls (approx. 10 students per class hour). (20% of your grade)

+ **All assignments are mandatory.** You will fail the course if you miss even a single think piece [if you are absent (see below), you have no more than two weekdays to turn in your think piece].

+ **Attendance is mandatory.** You may miss up to two classes, no questions asked. (Although I do NOT recommend that you do so.) The third class missed requires a serious medical excuse, or you will fail. Missing more than three classes results in failing the course.

+ You will sign a **student contract** committing to this minimal reading/work load.

3. GROUP PROJECT

For the group projects, you will work on a specific course-relevant theme of your choosing. Use the class readings, but also do your own research (e.g., at McHenry, on the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, etc.). You will be divided into a group of 3-5 people. These are your peers for the entire quarter. You will also evaluate one another. For the projects you have four options (which do not exclude one another):

- i. a poster of your philosophical school, which can be made directly physically or through PowerPoint
- ii. a well-organized skit or dialogue of your philosophical school
- iii. a board game or card game showing extensive knowledge of your philosophical school, and that perhaps points to the dialectics among a handful of the philosophical schools. What would the objective of the game be? What would the rules be?
- iv. A video. Here is an example from another class Prof. Winther taught:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l3OrcjXi1mw>

Timeline

Week 8: show preparatory materials, including a bibliography, to the Professor during class.

Week 9: mini dry-run in class on March 7.

Week 10: in-class presentations

Each of the three milestones will be part of your group project grade! Moreover, you will also evaluate your group peers as part of your grade.

4. WRITING ADVICE

Writing is essential to our craft as philosophers. Your writing can always improve. Here are some relevant online resources. Read and enjoy!

1. Guidelines for philosophical writing:

<http://www.public.asu.edu/~dportmor/tips.pdf>

<http://www.hps.cam.ac.uk/research/wp.html>

2. Guidelines for essay writing, in general:

<http://www.westmont.edu/~work/material/writing.html>

3. Oxford English Dictionary. You have access to this extraordinary resource at:

<http://www.oed.com.oca.ucsc.edu/>

4. "Politics and the English Language." Please read this funny and useful essay by George Orwell (author of *1984*) here:

<http://www.resort.com/~prime8/Orwell/patee.html>

5. From the inimitable Kurt Vonnegut (in course packet):

<http://kmh-lanl.hansonhub.com/pc-24-66-vonnegut.pdf>

5. STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

If you qualify for classroom accommodations because of a disability, please submit your Accommodation Authorization Letter from the Disability Resource Center (DRC) to me, after class or in office hours, **as soon as possible**, preferably within the first week of the Quarter. Contact DRC by phone at 831-459-2089 or by email at drc@ucsc.edu for more information.

6. WARNING

Academic misconduct will not be tolerated. Please consult:

http://www.ucsc.edu/academics/academic_integrity/index.html

7. COURSE READINGS

The two books, Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* and Childs' *Transcommunalism*, and the course packet are available at Literary Guillotine (204 Locust St, Santa Cruz, CA 95060).

Week 2 (January 14 and 16)

UNESCO and its Programme: "The Race Question" (1950)

Lévi-Strauss, Claude. 1952. *Race and History*. Paris: UNESCO.

(approx. 25 pages; in Course Packet)

Week 3 (January 21 and 23)

Mills, Charles W. 1988. "But What Are You Really?" In Mills, *Blackness Visible: Essays on Philosophy and Race*, pp. 41-66, Cornell University Press.

(approx. 25 pages; in Course Packet)

Week 4 (January 28 and 30)

Fanon, Franz. 1952/2008. *Black Skin, White Masks*. New York: Grove Press.

Tuesday: Foreword, Introduction, Ch 1 "The Black Man and Language"

Thursday: Ch. 4. "The So-Called Dependency Complex of the Colonized", part of Ch. 7 "The Black Man and Hegel." (approx. 60 pages; purchase book)

Week 5. (February 4 and 6)

Taylor, Charles. 1992/1994. "The Politics of Recognition." In Gutmann, *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*, pp. 25-73, Princeton University Press. (approx. 49 pages; in Course Packet)

Week 6 (February 11 and 13)

Childs, John Brown, 2003. *Transcommunalism. From the Politics of Conversion to the Ethics of Respect*.

Philadelphia: Temple University Press. Chapters 1 and 5; commentaries by Stefano Varese and Hayden White. (approx. 50 pages; purchase book)

Week 7 (February 18 and 20)

No reading. Discussions. Touch base.

Week 8 (February 25 and 27)

Winther, Rasmus Grønfeldt. 2014. The Genetic Reification of 'Race'? A Story of Two Mathematical Methods. Forthcoming in *Critical Philosophy of Race*. <http://philpapers.org/rec/WINTGR> Previously appeared as 2011. "¿La cosificación genética de la 'raza'? Un análisis crítico", in Genes (&) mestizos. Genómica y raza en la biomedicina mexicana. (C. López Beltrán, ed.), UNAM, Mexico City (in Spanish). (approx., 19 pages; in Course Packet)

Week 9 (March 4 and 6)

Mallon, Ron. 2006. 'Race': Normative, Not Metaphysical or Semantic. *Ethics*: 525-551.

(approx. 25 pages; in Course Packet)

Week 10 (March 11 and 13)

Group presentations