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H&SS 7077
Tuesday 2:00-4:50

Philosophy 285: Seminar on Special Topics Topic: Philosophy of Race

Seminar Question: *What is Race?*

Overview

Graduate level introduction to the new philosophical subfield that has come to be called “the philosophy of race.”

The seminar will be organized around the application of the traditional philosophical question form “what is X?” to the non-traditional topic of *race*. Its premise is that race is not “one thing” and that there is no concept that is *the* race concept. It will be essential to distinguish the racist race concept (the traditional “bad” race concept) from other race concepts. We will explore the proposition that there is social phenomenon, race (the existing social structure “race” that is a “social construction”), *and* a minimalist biological phenomenon, race. A thesis to be considered is that (non-racist) biological racial realism and social constructionism concerning race are complementary rather than competing positions. The proposition that belief in race can be given a cognitivist *cum* evolutionary explanation and the idea that such an approach can be combined with social constructionism will also be explored.

This course touches on issues in the philosophy of science, social philosophy, metaphysics, and the philosophy of language. Conceptual analysis will be highlighted. The seminar’s concerns will take us into biology (e.g. population genetics) and critical, empirical social theory.

Prior acquaintance with the philosophy of race is not presupposed. Nor does the course require training in any of the subfields of philosophy to be traversed. The philosophy of race is, by its nature, interdisciplinary. Non-philosophers are welcome. Students with training and expertise in related areas outside of philosophy are strongly encouraged to attend.

Although I will be defending views (about particular questions in the philosophy of race and the way the field hangs together as a whole), the course is meant to be “non-partisan” (realists, anti-realists, agnostics, and “undecided” about the reality of race are equally welcome). The course aims to encourage the philosophical spirit of critical open-mindedness.

A wide chunk of the philosophy of race will be surveyed so you know what is going on in the field and what the major positions are. The course will give you a sense of how philosophy can be brought to bear on a topic that, until recently, was thought to fall outside the scope of philosophical inquiry. It should in addition help give you a sense of how materials from other disciplines can be incorporated into a philosophical project. And it will make it possible for you to think about race in a new and different, more nuanced and reflective way.

Weeks, Topics, and Readings

Week 1: Introduction: What are we *asking* when we ask, What is race?

Mallon	'Race' Normative, Not Metaphysical or Semantic
Adelman	What Difference makes a Difference? <i>Race = The Power of an Illusion</i>

Week 2: Should 'race' be eliminated? What is the *racialist* concept of race?

Montagu	The Concept of Race
Appiah	Race, Culture, Identity Part 1: Against Race
AAA	Statement on Race

Week 3: Can the ordinary concept of race be saved? Should it?

Hardimon	The Ordinary Concept of Race
Glasgow	<i>A Theory of Race</i> — Chapters 1-4
Haslanger	Language, Politics, and "The Folk"

Week 4: Was the concept of race invented to oppress people of color?

AAA	Statement on Race (revisited)
OED	Race
Bernier	A New Division of the Earth
Linnaeus	<i>Systema Naturae</i>
Blumenbach	On the Natural Variety of Mankind
Kant	Of the Different Human Races

Recommended: Blum — "Race": A Brief History, with Moral Implications; Gould—The Geometer of Race; Smedley & Smedley — The Rise of Science and Scientific Classification; Sturmman — Francois Bernier and the Invention of Racial Classification

Week 5: What is the scientific case against the biological reality of race?

Gould	Human Equality is a Contingent Fact of History
Lewontin	The Apportionment of Human Diversity
-----	Confusions about Race
Root	The Use of Race in Medicine as a Proxy for Genetic Differences

Recommended: Feldman & Lewontin — Race, Ancestry, Medicine; Lewontin — Interview; Armand Marie Leroy — A Family Tree in Every Gene; Livingston— On the Non-Existence of Human Races; Zack *Philosophy of Science and Race*

Week 6: How do realists about biological race construe the concept?

Andreasen	A New Perspective on the Race Debate
Hardimon	The Idea of a Scientific Concept of Race
Kitcher	Race, Ethnicity, Biology, Culture
Pigliucci & Kaplan	On the Concept of Biological Race and Its Applicability to Humans

Recommended: Andreasen—Race: Biological Reality or Social Construct? Dupré — Race and

Gender; Hacking—Why Race Still Matters; Kitcher — Does Race Have a Future?
 Sesardic — Race: A Social Construction of a Biological Concept, Ruse — Sexual Orientation
 and Race; Spencer — What Biological Racial Realism Should Mean; How to Be a Biological
 Racial Realist

Week 7: Is there a genetic “basis” for biological race?

King & Motulsky	Mapping Human History
Rosenberg et al	Genetic Structure of Human Populations
-----	Clines, Clusters, and the Effect of Study Design on the Inference of Human Population Structure

Recommended: Dupré — Why There Are No Genes for Races; Hartl & Clark *Principles of Population Genetics*; Kitcher: Does Race Have a Future? Rish et al — Categorization of Humans in Biomedical Research: Genes, Race and Disease; Wilson et al. — Population Genetic Structure of Variable Drug Response

Week 8: Is there a specifically social phenomenon of race?

Omi and Winant	Racial Formation in the United States
Root	How We Divide the World

Recommended: Anderson—*The Imperative of Integration*; Blum—White Privilege; Geuss—*The Idea of a Critical Theory*; Hacking—*Social Construction of What?*; Johnson — *Privilege, Power, and Difference*; Mills—But What Are You Really?

Week 9: Is there a specifically social phenomenon of race? (continued)

Blum	Racialized Groups and Social Construction
Glasgow	<i>A Theory of Race</i> — Chapter 7
Hardimon:	The Concept of Social Race
Haslanger	Gender and Race: (What) Are They and (What) do We Want Them to Be?

Recommended: Appiah — Race, Culture, Identity Part 2: For Racial Identities
 Blum — Racialized Groups: The Sociohistorical Consensus; Haslanger — Social
 Constructionist Analysis of Race; Warnke — *After Identity*

Week 10: Can Cognitivism *cum* evolution explain belief in race? Can it be combined with social constructivism?

Machary & Faucher:	Why Do We Think Racially
-----	Social Construction and the Concept of Race

Recommended: Gil-White— Are Ethnic Groups Biological ‘Species’ to the Human Brain?
 Hirschfeld—*Race in the Making*

Course requirements

Attendance and participation at all seminar meetings, some seminar presentations (analyzing a key argument or claim in a reading and leading the discussion), and a term paper (about 12-15 pages in length) on some topic central to course themes, subject to approval by the instructor

Regular auditors of the class are welcome, and will be invited to contribute seminar presentations.

Texts

Most readings will be made electronically available via electronic reserves. The following books should be purchased (e.g. at Amazon).

- K. A. Appiah and A Gutmann, *Color Consciousness* (Princeton)
- J. Glasgow, *A Theory of Race* (Routledge)
- M. Omi & H. Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States* 2nd ed. (Routledge).

These books are recommended for purchase but not required:

- L. Blum *I'm not a Racist, But...*
- R. Geuss *The Idea of a Critical Theory* (Cambridge)
- I. Hacking, *The Social Construction of What?*
- A. Johnson, *Privilege, Power, and Difference* (McGraw Hill)