PHI-216

Philosophy of Race

TTH 12:00-1:20 PM

Old Main 06

Instructor: Jon Ivan Gill

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**Course Description**

*This class is a study in ideas of race. Race as modes of thought, interaction, and social construction constitute how we live in the world, including our access or lack thereof to that which is needed to live as what many would define as “humanly decent.” What is the nature of race? How does race exist? Is race and idea or is it more “real” than that? Is race a universal or is it more discrete, and what happens when one’s race changes when their location in the world changes? What does science fiction have to say about race? How is race negotiated in art of various types? What are the connections between the idea of race and racism? Are we living in a postracial world? How is race a religious idea? How is the study of philosophy important to the study of race? I realize these are a load of questions. Our objective this term is to situate ourselves within the region of these questions as we seriously (and many times uncomfortably) interrogate the category of race and the implications of this category on present day existence. This course is also a “Book Intensive,” meaning that you as students have the option of turning your final assignment of the class into a contribution to a manuscript totally authored by you (the students) on philosophy of race.*

**Course Requirements/Assessment**

1. All students are required to finish **all** the assigned readings for the week, and will be held responsible for this material by a two-page weekly writing assignment covering the particular thinkers and schools of thought encountered in that section of the class. This paper is due by 11:59 on Friday of each week. There will be a writing prompt to answer that will be drawn from the readings and class time together. (50 % of grade)
2. Students will be asked to conduct a two-week long experiment on philosophy of race and write about it. There will be in-depth explanation of this assignment in a class session. Students have the option of working in conjunction with me to prepare papers submitted for this assignment for publication in a student-authored edited volume on philosophy of race and multi/race/less/ness. This is due the final class period. (30% of grade)
3. Since I am a perpetual student of knowledge in general and the study of philosophy in particular, I expect to learn from the rich and diverse views of my students as we dive into the study of ethics. Students are expected to attend **all**classes and sincerely requested to vocally contribute to the class. (20% of grade)

Note: Each student is granted **three** (3) absences without penalty. Any event of extreme emergency that occurs after the two allotted absences must be explained to me and I must deem it worthy of another absence free of penalty. Any unexcused absence after the second will result in a grade reduction of 2% per occurrence. If the student misses more than **four** (4) class periods, their grade will be reduced by a fourth of a letter. This policy will be enforced rigidly, though not without generous consideration for extenuating circumstances.

**Student Learning Outcomes**

1. Gain a working knowledge of the field of philosophy of race from important thinkers to key ideas.

1. Develop a keen ability to critically engage the category of race and how it affects and has affected life around the globe.

1. Attain an ability to observe philosophy of race as it occurs in areas that many people wouldn’t think to look (e.g. advertisements, rap music, sports, etc.)
2. Seriously think through the implications that follow if one concludes that race is or is not mostly (or totally) a “social construction.”
3. Become acutely aware of the intersectionality and interdisciplinary dimensions of race.

**Masks Required**

For the time being, I’m requiring masks for this class. We are many in a very small space, and with COVID cases rising, I’d like us to do this for mutual protection.

**Reading Assignments**

All reading for each class session will be listed. Students are required to have read the material before the class session it is covered in. The writing assignments may cover the reading from the previous week as well as the reading for the day on which the quiz is due. So, be mindful of that and stay on top of the reading as much as humanly possible.

**Late Work**

Late work submitted without consulting the instructor prior to the due date will result in a lower grade. This will cost the student 2% of the paper’s grade for each day it is late. What does this tell you? Simply keep the lines of communication if things are happening that prevent you from achieving your scholastic tasks. However, the instructor deserves the right to deny extensions based on the reason why the assignment was turned in late. I’ll make a deal with you: if you try your best to get your work in on time, I will try my best to return it to you in a timely fashion.

**Incomplete Grades**

Students seeking a grade of Incomplete must consult with me no later than the week prior to the final week of class. A grade of Incomplete will only be considered for unforeseeable emergency and justifiable reasons at the end of the term, and only upon agreement of conditions for completing coursework.

**Gustavus Adolphus Honor Code**

Gustavus Adolphus College is proud to operate under an honor system (<https://gustavus.edu/general_catalog/current/acainfo>). The faculty and students have jointly created an Honor Board to enforce the Honor Code and the Academic Honesty Policy. Each faculty member is responsible for stating course penalties for academic honesty violations, and for defining the level of authorized aid appropriate to the work in their courses. Each faculty member is also required to report violations of the Academic Honesty Policy to the Provost’s Office. It is your responsibility, as a student, to ask questions if you are not sure about situations such as when to cite a source, how to cite a source, sharing data with lab-mates, and avoiding inadvertent cheating when working in groups. It is also your responsibility to learn about the policy and the consequences for violations so please ask questions!

The overarching principle of the Academic Honesty Policy is that students shall submit their own work, in fairness to others and to self. As a developing scholar, your Professor wants you to be able to take pride in your own academic work and to maintain your academic integrity. Citations must accompany any use of another’s words or ideas that are not common knowledge. Quoting or paraphrasing from electronic sources without proper citation is as serious a violation as copying from a book or other printed source. A student may not submit work that is substantially the same in two courses without first gaining permission of both instructors if the courses are taken concurrently, or permission of the current instructor if the work had been submitted in a previous semester. Ask your Professor if you have questions about a particular assignment or kind of work. Please make sure you fully understand the rules related to online work, as it pertains to this course. Unauthorized aid during online exams and assignments is every bit as serious and inappropriate as it would be in an in-person course. In fact, in the online environment it is sometimes easier for faculty to detect violations.

The sanction in this course for a violation of the Honor Code involving plagiarism, copying another student on an exam, or other kinds of cheating on a single assignment will usually be an “F” on the plagiarized assignment or exam. For a more significant event, I, your Professor, reserve the right to assign you a grade of “F” for the course. In addition, for any Honor Code Violation, I will notify the Provost’s Office. A letter will be generated by the Provost’s Office and sent to you. The letter will remain on file. There will be no further consequence, beyond the course penalty and the letter, if you do not commit any further Honor Code violations. Repeat offenses could ultimately lead to dismissal from the College. You have the right to appeal any Honor Code violation through an Honor Board hearing process. In this course, your Professor aims for you to learn how to cite sources properly, do your own work on all exams, and function as a scholar with integrity. Please feel welcome to ask questions about the important matter of Academic Honesty and let me know how I can best support your learning.

**Adding This Class**

Students adding this section are responsible for completing the add process before the deadline to add. If you fail to add the class by the deadline, you are not officially enrolled and college policy prohibits you from continuing to attend class.

Be aware that your failure to pay fees/fines, to document prerequisites, to clear academic holds, or to navigate personal problems may hinder you from adding this section. Please allow sufficient time to take care of these issues before the deadline to add. Adding this course after the published deadline will require documented extenuating circumstances involving severe illness, accident, or death. **In short, be sure to add the class in a timely manner**.

**Dropping This Class**

You may withdraw from this course prior to the drop deadlines without penalty. If there is a hold restricting you doing this online, you may bring a completed ADD/DROP card to the Admissions counter of the college and complete the process there.

**Students are responsible for dropping this class should they decide no longer to attend. If you decide to stop coming to class, drop the course.**

**Violence on Campus**

Gustavus Adolphus College does not tolerate any violence or implied violence. A threat of violence includes any behavior that by its very nature could be interpreted by a reasonable person as intent to cause physical harm to self, another individual, or property. Violence or the threat of violence against or by any student or employee of the District or any other person is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Should an individual on District property, who is not an employee or student, or a student or employee of the District, demonstrate or threaten violent behavior, s/he may be subject to criminal prosecution.

If you are a victim of any violent, threatening, or harassing conduct, any witness to such conduct, or anyone receiving a report of such conduct, you shall immediately report the incident to the supervisor of Campus Safety (507-933-8888).

## Difficult Conversations

In this course, we will have opportunities to explore some challenging issues and increase our understandings of different perspectives. Our conversations, whether in person or virtual, may not always be easy. We will make mistakes in our speaking and our listening. When we post ideas or comments in an online format, we will need to pay close attention to word choice, and review what we have written carefully before we post. In video meetings or conversations, we will need to stay focused on the speaker and use the technology in a courteous manner (see Technology under “Netiquette” for some suggestions). We will need patience or courage or imagination or any number of qualities in combination to engage our texts, our classmates, and our own ideas and experiences. Always, we will need respect for others. Thus, an important aim of our course will be for us to increase our abilities for constructively engaging in the sometimes-difficult conversations that arise as we deepen our understandings of multiple perspectives. More specifically, we seek to cultivate the ability to listen and respond constructively to the ideas of others as we endeavor to increase the ability to express your own. As your professor, please know that it is my goal to make every student in this class feel included and welcome while we learn.

You may find yourself uncomfortable or offended by views expressed in class – whether by the course texts, by me, and/or by your classmates. Phrases such as, “I know you did not mean to be offensive, but what you said bothers me because…” are effective ways of noting your discomfort and asking the class to consider your objection. It can be challenging to speak up in such moments. Doing so treats others as well-intentioned participants in the classroom community. If you do not wish to address the interaction during class, please speak with me outside of class. If I offend you or cause you discomfort, I hope you will tell me. I commit to listening calmly, thoughtfully, and respectfully to you, and I promise to think carefully about your concern and my response.

You may find that your views offend or discomfit others. It can be difficult to hear that you have offended someone, but being able to respond calmly and constructively to criticism is an important skill for learning new things and for growing and developing. It is also an important skill for communicating across differences. An appropriate response to learning that you have caused offense or discomfort is, “Thank you for telling me.” You may ask questions to learn more about what the other person thinks. If you are genuinely sorry, you may apologize. After you have heard the other person, you may decide to change how you think or talk. Or you may decide that you still think you are correct, but at least you will be aware that some people will take offense when you express that idea.

**Accommodations for Disabilities**

Gustavus Adolphus College is committed to ensuring equitable and inclusive learning environments for all students. If you have a disability and anticipate or experience barriers to equal access, please speak with the accessibility resources staff about your needs. A disability may include mental health, attentional, learning, chronic health, sensory, physical, and/or short-term conditions. Students with a documented elevated risk of COVID-19 may also request academic accommodations. When appropriate, staff will guide students and professors in making accommodations to ensure equal access. Accommodations cannot be made retroactively; therefore, to maximize your academic success at Gustavus, please contact them as early as possible. Accessibility resources staff are located in the Academic Support Center (<https://gustavus.edu/asc/accessibility/>) (x7227). Accessibility Resources Coordinator, Katy Clay, ([clayk@gustavus.edu](mailto:clayk@gustavus.edu)), can provide further information.

## Multilingual Student Support

Some Gusties may have grown up speaking a language (or languages) other than English at home. If so, we refer to you as “multilingual.” Your multilingual background is an incredible resource for you, and for our campus, but it can come with some challenges. You can find support through the Center for International and Cultural Education’s (<https://gustavus.edu/cice/>) Multilingual and Intercultural Program Coordinator (MIPC), Pamela Pearson ([ppearson@gustavus.edu](mailto:ppearson@gustavus.edu)). Pamela can meet individually for tutoring in writing, consulting about specific assignments, and helping students connect with the College’s support systems. If you want help with a specific task (for example, reading word problems on an exam quickly enough or revising grammar in essays), let your professor and Pamela know as soon as possible. In addition, the Writing Center (<https://gustavus.edu/writingcenter/>) offers tutoring from peers (some of whom are themselves multilingual) who can help you do your best writing

## Mental Wellbeing

The Gustavus community is committed to and cares about all students. Strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol or drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating, and/or lack of motivation may affect a student’s academic performance or reduce a student’s ability to participate in daily activities. If you or someone you know expresses such mental health concerns or experiences a stressful event that can create barriers to learning, Gustavus services are available to assist you, and include online options. You can learn more about the broad range of confidential health services available on campus at <https://gustavus.edu/counseling/> and <https://gustavus.edu/deanofstudents/services/>.

## Title IX: Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Resources

Gustavus Adolphus College recognizes the dignity of all individuals and promotes respect for all people. As such, we are committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination including sexual and gender-based discrimination, harassment, and violence like sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or is experiencing these types of behaviors, know that you are not alone. Resources and support are available; you can learn more online at <https://gustavus.edu/titleix/>.

Please know that if you choose to confide in me, I am required by the College to report to the Title IX Coordinator, because Gustavus and I want to be sure you are connected with all the support the College can offer. Although it is encouraged, you are not required to respond to outreach from the College if you do not want to. You may speak to someone confidentially by contacting the Sexual Assault Response Team (SART/CADA), Chaplains, Counseling Center, or Health Service staff; conversations with these individuals can be kept strictly confidential. SART/CADA can be reached 24 hours a day at 507-933-6868. You can also make a report yourself, including an anonymous report, through the form at <https://gustavus.edu/titleix/>.

**Evaluative Criteria**

\* A: 90-100

\* B: 80-89

\* C: 70-79

\* D: 60-69

\* F: 59 or below.

**Required Reading (Books You Need to Buy)**

None.

There are other readings listed throughout the course schedule. I will make these available free of charge on Moodle.

**Course Schedule**

**Section 1: Before Race**

**Week 1**

**What Are We Doing in this Class??**

**What is Philosophy of Race and Why is it Important (9/5)**

**A Conversation With Jennifer Vest (9/7)**

* Jennifer Vest, “Names”

**Week 2**

**Let Us Look South**

**Maya Identity (9/12)**

* Quetzil E. Castañeda, “We Are Not Indigenous!: An Introduction to the Maya Identity of Yucatan”

**Maya Identity (9/14)**

* Hunbatz Men, “The Form, Sound, and Use of the Letter ‘G’ is of Mayan Origin”

**Week 3**

**A Visit in Time Travel to Northern “Africa”**

**The Moors (9/19)**

* José Pimienta-Bey, “The Moorish Background: Ethnic Origins and an Overview of Their Historical Impact”

**The Moors (9/21)**

* José Pimienta-Bey, “Africans in the Ancient and Early Americas: A Moorish Science Temple Interpretation
* Geraldine Heng, [“Did Race or Racism Exist in the Middle Ages?”](https://notevenpast.org/did-race-and-racism-exist-in-the-middle-ages/) (suggested)

**Week 4**

**Ireland: Final Train Stop Before “Race”**

**Noel Ignatiev (9/26)**

* Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White*, “Introduction” and “Something in the Air”

**Noel Ignatiev (9/28)**

* Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White*, “White Negroes and Smoked Irish”
* Peaky Blinders, S1:E1

**Section 2: Race**

**Week 5**

**Nobel Conference\_No Class (10/3)**

**The Invention of Race**

**Background (10/5)**

* [Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy Race Entry](https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/race/)

**Week 6**

**Background (10/10)**

* Robert Bernasconi, *Routledge Companion to Philosophy of Race*, “Critical Philosophy of Race and Racial Historiography”

**Deeper Investigations**

**Modernity and Race (10/12)**

* Olufémi Táíwò. *Routledge Companion to Philosophy of Race*, “Of Problems Moderns and Excluded Moderns: On the Essential Hybridity of Modernity”

**Week 7**

**India (10/17)**

* Ania Loomba, *Routledge Companion to Philosophy of Race*, “Racism in India”

**Intersectionality (10/19)**

* Elena Ruiz, *Routledge Companion to Philosophy of Race*, “Framing Intersectionality”

**Week 8 (10/24 and 10/26)**

**No Class/Fall Break and Travel (Special Assignment)**

**Week 9**

**Caribbean Philosophy/Race (10/31)**

* Jennifer Vest, “The Promise of Caribbean Philosophy: How it Can Contribute to a ‘New Dialogic’ in Philosophy”

**Religion as Race (11/2)**

* James W. Perkinson, *White Theology: Outing Supremacy in Modernity*, “Modern White Supremacy and Western Christian Soteriology”

**Week 10**

**China (11/7)**

* Frank Dikötter, *Routledge Companion to Philosophy of Race*, “The History of Racial Theories in China”

**The Festival of San Joaquín Parts 1-2 (11/9)**

**Week 11**

**The Festival of San Joaquin Parts 3-4 (11/14)**

**Section 3: After Race**

**“Us,” “Them,” and Stereotypes (11/16)**

* Daniel Wodak and Sarah-Jane Leslie, *Routledge Companion to Philosophy of Race*, “The Mark of the Plural: Genetic Generalizations and Race”

**Week 12**

**Metaphysics of Racial Language (11/21)**

* Jorge J.E. Garcia and Susan L. Smith, *Routledge Companion to Philosophy of Race, “Analytic Metaphysics*: Race and Racial Identity”

**THANKSGIVING BREAK (11/23)**

**When Verbiage is Experience: Betwixt Language and Life**

**Week 13**

**Afro-Diasporic vs. African-American vs. Black Identity (11/28)**

* Ytasha Womack, *Post Black*, “The African Diaspora: New Immigrants in African America”

**Mixed Race Identity (11/30)**

* Jennifer L. Vest, Philosophy and the Mixed Race Experience, “Being and Not Being, Knowing and Not Knowing”

**Should We Not See Color Anymore?**

**Week 14**

**Post-Racial Identities (12/5)**

* Ronald R. Sundstrom, *Routledge Companion to Philosophy of Race*, “On Post-Racialism: Or, How Color-Blindness Rebranded is Still Vicious”

**Racial Social Groups and Necessity (12/7)**

* Lucius Turner Outlaw (Jr.), *Routledge Companion to Philosophy of Race,* “On Race and Solidarity”

**Why Don’t We Just Abolish Race?**

**Week 15**

**Multi/Race/Less/Ness (12/12)**

* Jon Ivan Gill, *Underground Rap as Religion: A Theopoetic Examination of a Process Aesthetic Religion*, “Reconstructions of Religious Identities and Racial Ideologies in Process Philosophy and Hip-Hop Culture”

**Racial Transcendence (12/14)**

* Kerry Ann Rockquemore, “Socially Embedded Identities: Theories, Typologies, and Processes of Racial identity Among Black/White Biracials.”

**12/18 Final Papers Due**