

**Philosophy of Race**  
**PHIL3870-001, Block U: Spring 2022 (3 credit hours)**  
**Mon, Weds; 11:50 am- 1:10 pm; HPR N 225**



**Instructor:** Louise Pedersen

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**Course Type:** In-person

**Office Hours:** TBA

**Course Description:** Philosophy of race is an important and growing sub-discipline, and it has two features that make it a particularly interesting sub-discipline. First, it is of significant public interest given the pertinence of issues about race in public discourse. Second, it is of significant philosophical interest given how it draws on and draws connections between, central topics in metaphysics, philosophy of language, philosophy of science, political philosophy, and ethics. We will focus on two central areas in philosophy of race. First, the metaphysics of races: do races exist, and if so, are they biological kinds, or socially constructed? Second, politics, race, and racism: what is the relationship between white supremacy and social contract theory and racism, bias, and injustice? If there is a connection, what should be done about it?

**Course Objectives:** Upon completion of this course, the students will:

- Achieve a working grasp of the recent history of race and racism
- Gain a solid understanding of the notions of race, racism, privilege, stereotypes, propaganda, and related ideas
- develop/improve their ability to read contemporary philosophical texts
- acquire/hone ability to reconstruct and assess philosophical arguments
- Advance their critical thinking/writing/argumentative skills by engaging with philosophical texts and literature on race

**Prerequisites:** There are no prerequisites for this course.

**Course Materials:**

- Required (available through the Inclusive Access Program\*):
  - Atkin, Albert: *Philosophy of Race* (ISBN: 9781844655751)
  - Mills, Charles: *The Racial Contract* (ISBN: 9780801484636)
- All other readings are available on Canvas as PDFs (see Files).

**\*Inclusive Access Program:** The University of Utah Campus Store is launching an innovative new course materials program that instantly provides accessible, interactive digital course materials/textbooks while also drastically reducing the cost to students. In short, the University of Utah has enhanced its textbook model to instantaneous access to the course materials [through Canvas] while also drastically improving affordability. The goal of this program is to reduce the cost of course materials by up to 80% for students while also improving educational success through day-one access (An email will go out to students before the first day of class with information on what Inclusive Access is and instructions on how to access their digital course materials for the courses that utilize this program).

**Expectations:** In addition to the roughly three hours of in-class meetings every week, each student is expected to spend an average of twice the in-class time performing out-of-classroom activities like reading, preparing questions, researching and writing papers, etc. This brings the total weekly time investment for my class to nine hours or 135 hours for the semester.

### **Assignments and Evaluation:**

#### **Participation (30% of final grade):**

Philosophy is an interactive discipline. Therefore, you are expected to show up to class; be prepared to contribute to the discussions; ask questions during lectures; and interact with your peers during student presentations. Throughout the semester we have **27** class meetings, and each meeting is worth **one** participation point. The way you get the point is to do one of the following:

- Answer a check-on-learning question at the end of class (after a lecture), and hand the answer to me on a piece of paper (don't forget to add your name and the date). The question will simply check that you were paying attention in class.
- Participate in group discussions. On days that are more discussion-based (rather than lecture-based), each group will hand me a piece of paper with the names of the participants (don't forget the date).

#### **Three Short Essays (30 % of final grade (10% each)):**

- Short Essay 1 due Friday, February 4 at 11:59 pm MST
- Short Essay 2 due Friday, March 4 at 11:59 pm MST
- Short Essay 3 due Friday, April 8 at 11:59 pm MST

Essays are turned in through Canvas (and checked for plagiarism by Turnitin).

#### **“In the News” Presentation (15% of final grade):**

- Pick an online news article that is relevant to the topics discussed in this class.
- Prepare a 20-minute presentation (you may use PowerPoint or make a handout) in which you explain what the article says, how the content is relevant to our class, and why the topic is philosophically important and interesting.
- Prepare two questions that relate to the article. After your presentation, you will write the questions on the board and the class will discuss them together.
- The grade for your presentation will be based on: 1) how well you present the information, 2) the quality/relevance of the topic, 3) how well you generate a lively discussion for the class.

**Ask A Question (10% of final grade):**

- On five different occasions, you must write down a question (on actual paper!) at the end of class about the material that we covered. Each question is worth 1 point.
- The questions should ask for clarification about an idea or argument that we discussed or should concern something that the material we covered made you wonder about.
- In order to get 5 points, you must turn in five questions. If you turn in fewer than five questions, you will get no points.

**Final Exam (15% of final grade):**

The final exam is scheduled for Wednesday 5/4, 10.30 am-12:30 pm. The exam is comprehensive (covers the main texts we have read throughout the course) and consists of 20 short answer questions and two essay questions. A study guide will be provided in advance to help you prepare for the exam.