

PHIL 261.02/WGST 201.01: Philosophy of Race and Gender  
Professor Jeff Engelhardt

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Office: 201 East College

Office hours: Tu Th 3-5, W 3-4, by appointment

Contact: [engelhaj@dickinson.edu](mailto:engelhaj@dickinson.edu); 717.254.8301

Class meetings: MWF 12:30-1:20

Texts: *Sexing the Body* (StB), Anne Fausto-Sterling, 2000. ISBN: 978-0-465-07714-4

*Color Conscious* (CC), Kwame A. Appiah and Amy Gutman, 1998. ISBN: 978-0-691-05909-9

*Metaphysics of Gender* (MoG), Charlotte Witt, 2011. ISBN: 978-0-19-974040-6.

***Recommended:*** *Philosophy of Language* (PoL), William Lycan, ISBN: 978-0-415-95752-6.

On the course: We're concerned in this course to ask distinctively philosophical questions about race and gender. Eventually, we'll focus on these questions: (i) what is race/gender? and (ii) why and how do we think about race/gender? But we'll build up to these questions slowly, and we'll pursue various tangents along the way. We'll read authors who deny that there are races/genders and others who propose that we should *make* new genders that better suit our goals of justice. We'll spend a long time trying to understand one recent view according to which genders are something real but rather strange. It's often going to be challenging. I hope you have fun.

Learning goals: You'll get a clearer sense for what race and gender are, for what philosophy is, and for the ways you might figure out what race and gender are. You'll come to write more clearly and argue more rigorously; you'll learn a bit of social psychology and have a clearer sense for what social constructs might or might not be.

Graded work:

Class participation	10%
Weekly discussion posts	15%
Short summary paper (2-5pp.)	15%
In-Class Panel Discussion	20%
Critical paper 1 (2-3pp)	15%
Critical paper 2 (3-6pp.)	25%

Class participation: I want everything you think about race and gender to be 'on the table' in this course: how you experience your race or gender and those of others, anything you've ever thought or heard or read about race or gender, the histories of the words "race" and "gender", cultural and historical differences in 'dividing' races and genders, and so on. We'll be asking

very difficult questions, and we don't stand much chance of answering them if we don't bring to bear all the information we can get our paws on. Come to class prepared to listen and speak very carefully, to support us all in our attempts to understand, to be aware of talking too much or too little. Unless you meet with me and convince me that I should make an exception, you may not use laptops, iPads, or other internet-capable technology during class.

Class contributions will be graded on (a) one's understanding of the discussion topic and its import and (b) the cogency of the reasoning one offers. You won't get credit simply for attending and making noises with your mouth. If it's difficult for you to speak in class, let me know as soon as possible, and we'll arrange to meet during my office hours.

Weekly discussion posts: each week, post on Moodle some of your original thoughts about the week's course content. You might pick an argument from one of the week's assigned readings and summarize it, but add something original as well. Your post needn't be more than a few sentences. It shouldn't be longer than a page. These will be graded on a scale of 0-3, with one point to be earned for each of originality, insight, and cogency. These are to be posted to Moodle by midnight Friday of each week for grading, but **bring drafts to class meetings.** We'll discuss them; you should then use the discussion as a guide to making revisions.

Short summary paper: Choose an argument from one of the assigned readings and summarize it. I'll expect you to (1) introduce the argument you're summarizing, putting it into context and saying a bit about why it's important and (2) defend each of the premises in the argument. An A paper will (i) present a valid argument, (ii) be written clearly and succinctly, and (iii) accurately represent the argument summarized, which means (a) including all the claims necessary to establish the argument's conclusion and (b) including in the argument only the claims necessary to establish the conclusion. Grades range from 0-100. Your summary may be on any reading from the course, but it must be submitted to me **before midnight on Friday, February 27th.**

In-class panel discussion: Throughout the semester, there will be several 'panel discussions' during class. You must sign up for at least one. In preparation for the discussion, you must research a position or theory relevant to the topic of the discussion; during the discussion, you must (i) present the theory to the class, (ii) articulate virtues of your theory, and (iii) raise challenges to other theories. You'll be graded on how accurately you present the theory, the cogency of your reasoning, and the insights you express during the discussion.

Critical papers: these should be formatted like the short summary, except that the arguments given are your own. They'll be graded on the same grounds as the short summary except that a criterion of *originality* replaces *accuracy*. For the first paper, I'll give you a prompt and all papers will be written on the same topic. It's due on **4.3**. The second is due **before midnight on the class exam day.** It may be written on any topic, but I recommend that you come to office hours and **discuss your topic and argument with me at least once** before submitting the paper for a

grade. If you expect an 85 or higher, you should plan to bring a polished draft to office hours at least once before submitting for a grade. [There is a model A paper on Moodle.](#)

Late papers: Papers submitted any time after midnight on the due date are late. At each midnight, I'll reduce the grade on the assignment by 5 points. So, if you submit your work at 11:55pm two days after the due date, you'll lose 10 points. If you submit it 10 minutes later, you'll lose 15 points. Use these rules to make rational decisions. For instance, if you think you can improve your paper by 10 points by taking an extra day to write it, it makes sense for you to take that day and hand the paper in late. What I want is for you to write good papers whether they're late or not. However, unless there are special circumstances, **no assignments will be accepted after midnight on the class exam day.**

### Accommodating Students with Disabilities

Dickinson College makes reasonable academic accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Students requesting accommodations must make their request and provide appropriate documentation to Disability Services in Biddle House. Because classes change every semester, eligible students must obtain a new accommodation letter from Director Marni Jones every semester and review this letter with their professors so the accommodations can be implemented. The Director of Disability Services is available by appointment to answer questions and discuss any implementation issues you may have. Disability Services proctoring is managed by Susan Frommer at [717-254-8107](tel:717-254-8107) or [proctoring@dickinson.edu](mailto:proctoring@dickinson.edu). Address general inquiries to Stephanie Anderberg at [717-245-1734](tel:717-245-1734) or e-mail [disabilityservices@dickinson.edu](mailto:disabilityservices@dickinson.edu).

### Academic Violations of the Community standards

In the course, we will follow Dickinson policy for defining, investigating, and responding to academic violations of the Dickinson Community Standards. Find information about the Community Standards here:

[http://www.dickinson.edu/info/20273/dean\\_of\\_students/867/community\\_standards](http://www.dickinson.edu/info/20273/dean_of_students/867/community_standards)

### Tentative schedule

#### Overview

**1.19** Introductions and review syllabus. See Soundness and validity slides on Moodle.

**1.21** SEP: Feminist Metaphysics [plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminism-metaphysics/](http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminism-metaphysics/)

**1.23** SEP: Race [plato.stanford.edu/entries/race/](http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/race/)

**1.26** SEP: Feminist Perspectives on Sex and Gender [plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminism-gender/](http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminism-gender/)

#### Doubts about Sex, Gender, Race

**1.28** *Sexing the Body* Ch. 1

**1.30** *Sexing the Body* Ch. 2

- 2.2 *Sexing the Body* Ch. 3
- 2.4 *Sexing the Body* Ch. 4
- 2.6 PoL 1-6 (Ch. 1)
- 2.9 PoL 31-62 (Ch. 3)
- 2.11 CC "Race, Culture, Identity: Misunderstood Connections" part 1
- 2.13 CC "Race, Culture, Identity: Misunderstood Connections" part 1
- 2.16 **No class: draft your summary paper; bring draft to office hours this week**
- 2.18 **Panel Discussion:** Are there sexes, genders, or races?

Replacements: Gender Systems, Racial Identities, Future Genders

- 2.20 *Sexing the Body* Ch. 9
- 2.23 CC "Race, Culture, Identity: Misunderstood Connections" part 2
- 2.25 CC "Race, Culture, Identity: Misunderstood Connections" part 2
- 2.27 Sally Haslanger "Future Genders? Future Races?" **Summaries due**
- 3.2 Sally Haslanger "Future Genders? Future Races?"
- 3.4 **Panel Discussion:** Should we replace gender or race? If so, with what?
- 3.6 **Panel Discussion:** Everything we've covered so far

3.9 – 3.13 No class: Spring Break

A New Gender Essentialism

- 3.16 – 3.20 *Metaphysics of Gender* Ch. 1
- 3.23 – 3.27 *Metaphysics of Gender* Ch. 2
- 3.30 – 4.3 *Metaphysics of Gender* Ch. 3 **First critical paper due 4.3**
- 4.6 – 4.10 *Metaphysics of Gender* Ch. 4
- 4.13 – 4.17 *Metaphysics of Gender* Ch. 5
- 4.20 **Panel Discussion:** What are genders? What are races?

Racial Cognition, Gender Cognition

- Before 4.22, take at least **three** tests here: <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>
- 4.22 Uhlmann and Cohen, "[Constructed Criteria: Redefining Merit to Justify Discrimination](#)"
- 4.24 Daniel Kelly and Erica Roedder, "[Racial Cognition and the Ethics of Implicit Bias](#)"
- 4.27 Jules Holroyd "[Responsibility for Implicit Attitudes](#)"
- 4.29 **Panel Discussion:**
- 5.1 **Panel Discussion:** anything left to discuss; lingering questions/open discussion