

PHIL 3018/Philosophy of Race and Racism/Autumn 2022

Unit Description:

Academic race discourse sits at the intersection of overlapping research programs taking place in a number of fields including cultural anthropology, the history of science, sociology, political theory, communication studies, and critical philosophy of race. While the questions being posed by these fields generally start with an analysis of the concept of race—and its various histories as a biological, political, and/or cultural construction—the subsequent investigations cover a wide territory such that analyses of socio-economic forces, power and oppression in the State, the history and politics of slavery, immigration and asylum, incarceration, and institutional and structural racism, sit alongside separate investigations in black feminism, political phenomenology, standpoint epistemology, and philosophical historiography, to name only a few.

In this semester's unit we will open with an overview of the area, and some brief time spent on the major discussions taking place in anthropological, sociological, and philosophical discourse from population genetics to "white fragility" and the racial justice movement today.

The remainder of the semester will be divided into themes including:

- Canonical western philosophers on civil society, the nature of human history and progress, and the development of the races
- African abolitionist writings
- Slavery in the Caribbean and Australia
- Slavery in the US
- European settler colonialism and the politics of revolution
- Aboriginal sovereignty

Housekeeping Notes:

All required and recommended readings will be available on vUWS, with additional source material added on a regular basis. Students should check the vUWS site regularly for announcements and changes to the schedule.

Attendance in the seminar is compulsory so please send me a brief email if you anticipate an absence due to illness or misadventure: j.mensch@westernsydney.edu.au

Remember to always have a copy of the readings, either printed out or on a digital device, in class with you so you can follow along with the discussion and text analyses.

I am happy to meet students by appointment, just send an email and we'll set up a zoom time or meet in person (Bankstown or Parramatta South Campus):

j.mensch@westernsydney.edu.au

Week	<p>I teach this class on Thursdays 11-1, PS-EA-G34 and on Fridays 1-3, BA-SR06</p> <p>Students can attend either class if they need the flexibility, HOWEVER, regular attendance is critical for success in this unit since I will be going through the readings carefully each week and you really need a guide for most of them.</p> <p>Please bring your laptop/tablet for digital access to vUWS or have hard copies of seminar readings with you to consult during class; all readings will be available on vUWS.</p>
1: 7/3	<p>Required: Read the Intro and first Chapter of Mills’s <i>The Racial Contract</i>, pp. 1-40. Do a quick read of the ‘Conceptual Toolkit.’</p> <p>Recommended: Bernasconi, “Critical Philosophy of Race and Philosophical Historiography,” in <i>Routledge Companion to Philosophy of Race</i> (Routledge, 2017), pp. 3-13; Marwah’s Oxford Entry on Mill’s book; check out Alana Lentin’s page on Mill’s book: https://www.alanalentin.net/2021/09/24/revisiting-the-racial-contract-and-white-ignorance-charles-w-mills-in-memoriam/</p>
2: 14/3	<p>Required: Locke, <i>Second Treatise of Government</i> [1690], chapters 1-7 + ch. 16, (Hackett, 1980), pp. 7-51, 91-100.</p> <p>Recommended: Bernasconi and Mann, “The Contradictions of Racism: Locke, Slavery, and the Two Treatises,” in <i>Race and Racism in Modern Philosophy</i> (Cornell, 2005), pp. 89-107; Armitage, “Locke, Carolina, and the Two Treatises,” <i>Political Theory</i> 32:5 (2004): 602-627; Farr, “Locke, Natural Law, and New World Slavery,” <i>Political Theory</i> 36:4 (2008): 495-522; Bernasconi, “Proto-Racism: Carolina in Locke’s Mind,” (De Gruyter, 2011), pp. 68-82; Armitage, “John Locke: Theorist of Empire?” <i>Empire and Early Modern Political Thought</i> (Cambridge, 2014), pp. 84-111.</p>
3: 21/3	<p>Required: Montesquieu, <i>The Laws</i> [1748], Part 3, Book 15 (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 246-63; Hume, “Of National Characters” [1748] (Liberty Fund, 1985), pp. 197-215.</p> <p>Recommended: Curran, “Montesquieu” in <i>The Anatomy of Blackness: Science and Slavery in the Enlightenment</i> (Johns Hopkins, 2011), pp. 130-137; “Hume’s Racism,” Entry in the Oxford Handbook of Philosophy and Race, Zack ed. (2017), pp. 31-43; Sebastiani, “Hume Versus Montesquieu: Race Against Climate” <i>The Scottish Enlightenment: Race, Gender, and the Limits of Progress</i> (Palgrave, 2013), pp. 23-43.</p>
4: 28/3	<p>Required: Kant, “Of the different races of human beings” [1775] in <i>Kant: Anthropology, History, Education</i> (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 82-97; Schiller, “The Nature and Value of Human History” [1789] <i>History and Theory</i> 11:3 (1972): 321-34.</p> <p>Recommended: Bernasconi, “Will the Real Kant Please Stand Up?” <i>Radical Philosophy</i> 117 (2003): 13-22; Eze, “The Color of Reason: The Idea of Race in Kant’s Anthropology,” <i>Bucknell Review</i> (1995), pp. 200-241.</p> <p>PORTFOLIO ONE DUE IN CLASS EITHER 31/3 or 1/4</p>

5: 4/4	<p>Required: Hegel, <i>Lectures on the Philosophy of World History</i> (Cambridge, Nisbet tr.), pp. 152-190.</p> <p>Recommended: Bernasconi, “With What Must the Philosophy of World History Begin? On the Racial Basis of Hegel’s Eurocentrism,” <i>Nineteenth Century Contexts</i> 22:2 (2002): 171-201; Bernasconi, “Hegel at the Court of the Ashanti,” <i>Hegel after Derrida</i> (Routledge, 1998); Zambrana, “Hegel, History, and Race,” Entry in the <i>Oxford Handbook of Philosophy and Race</i>, Zack ed. (2017), pp. 251-260.</p>
6: 11/4	<p>Required: Equiano, <i>The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano</i> [1789] (Dodo Press, 2007), ch. 2 & ch. 5, pp. 16-30, 62-78; Cugoano, <i>Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evils of Slavery</i> [1787] (Penguin, 1999), pp. 85-111; Zong massacre handout + links on vUWS; Walvin, “The Campaign Against the Slave Trade,” <i>An African’s Life: The Life and Times of Olaudah Equiano, 1745-1797</i> (Continuum, 1998), pp. 151-159.</p> <p>Recommended: Walvin, “Black Enlightenment,” <i>An African’s Life: The Life and Times of Olaudah Equiano, 1745-1797</i> (Continuum, 1998), pp. 173-184; Bernasconi, “Ottobah Cugoano’s Place in the History of Political Philosophy: Slavery and the Philosophical Canon,” section 3, <i>Debating African Philosophy: Perspectives on Identity, Decolonial Ethics and Comparative Philosophy</i> (Routledge, 2018), pp. 25-42.</p>
7: 18/4	<p>Required: Dabhoiwala, “Speech and Slavery in the West Indies,” <i>NYRB</i> 20/8/2020; Lydon, “A Secret Longing for a Trade in Human Flesh: The Decline of British Slavery and the Making of the Settler Colonies,” <i>History Workshop Journal</i> 90 (2020): 189-210.</p> <p>Recommended: Lester and Vanderbyl, “The Restructuring of the British Empire and the Colonization of Australia, 1832-8,” <i>History Workshop Journal</i> 90 (2020): 165-188; Lydon, <i>Anti-Slavery and Australia: No Slavery in a Free Land?</i>, (Routledge, 2021), ch. 6, pp. 135-160.</p> <p>PORTFOLIO TWO DUE IN CLASS EITHER 21/4 or 22/4</p>
8: 25/4	<p>Midterm Break</p>
9: 2/5	<p>Required: Dickens, <i>American Notes</i> [1842], ch. 17, “Slavery,” pp. 291-306; Douglass, <i>Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave, Written by Himself</i> [1845], chs. 9-10.</p> <p>Recommended: “The Fugitive Slave Act” [1850]; Blight, “A Doubtful Freedom,” <i>NYRB</i>, 16/1/2020.</p>
10: 9/5	<p>Required: Threadcraft, “What Free Could Possibly Mean,” <i>Intimate Justice: The Black Female Body and the Body Politic</i> (Oxford, 2018), pp. 34-68; Davis, “The Legacy of Slavery: Standards for a New Woman,” <i>Women, Race & Class</i> (Penguin, 1981), pp. 1-25.</p> <p>Recommended: Williams, “You Want a Confederate Monument? My Body is a Confederate Monument,” <i>NYT</i>, 26/6/2020; Kenneally, “Large DNA Study Traces Violent History of American Slavery,” <i>NYT</i>, 23/7/2020.</p>

11: 16/5	<p>Required: Memmi, “Portrait of the Colonizer,” in <i>The Colonizer and the Colonized</i> [1957] (Souvenir Press, 2016): 47-88, 116-120.</p> <p>Recommended: Onishi, “George Floyd’s Killing Forces Wider Debate on France’s Slave Trading Past,” <i>NYT</i>, 24/6/2020; Onishi, “Will American Ideas Tear France Apart? Some of Its Leaders Think So,” <i>NYT</i>, 9/2/2021.</p>
12: 30/5	<p>Required: Memmi, “Portrait of the Colonized,” in <i>The Colonizer and the Colonized</i> [1957] (Souvenir Press, 2016): 123-197; Watch, “In My Blood it Runs” (ABC iview link on vUWS).</p> <p>Recommended: Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native,” <i>Journal of Genocide Research</i> 8:4 (2006): 387-409.</p> <p>PORTFOLIO THREE DUE IN CLASS EITHER 26/5 or 27/5</p>
13: 6/6	<p>Required: Watch TED talk by Jade Kennedy, “Welcome to Country,” on vUWS; Davis, “The Promise of an Australian Homecoming,” <i>The Monthly</i>, July (2020): 8-11; Harkin, “State Lady Report,” in <i>Archival Poetics</i> (Vagabond Press, 2019); Baker, “Camping in the Shadow of a Racist Text,” <i>The National, New Australia Art</i> (2021).</p> <p>Recommended: Scheck & Haggis, “Terrains of migrancy and whiteness: how British Migrants locate themselves in Australia,” in <i>Whitening Race</i> (Aboriginal Studies Press, 2004), pp. 176-191.</p>
14: 13/6	<p>Required: Uluru Statement from the Heart; Davis, “The Truth about Truth Telling,” <i>The Monthly</i> (Dec 2021-Jan 2022); Walter and Butler, “Teaching Race to Teach Indigeneity,” <i>Journal of Sociology</i> 49:4 (2013): 397-410.</p> <p>Recommended: Bennett, “How Do Light-Skinned Aboriginal Australians Experience Racism?” <i>AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples</i> 10:2 (2014): 180-192.</p>
15: 20/6	STUVAC
16: 27/6	Email final assessment to me anytime this week or no later than 27/6/22 at j.mensch@westernsydney.edu.au