

**WESTERN UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
Undergraduate Course Outline 2021-22**

**Phil 4751G/9107B*
Gender and Race**

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| Class time: Mondays 11:30-2:30 Class location: UC 1110** Class website: OWL | Instructor: Prof. Carolyn McLeod Office: Stevenson Hall 2150G Office Hours: TBA Email: cmcleod2@uwo.ca |
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*This course is a split upper-year undergraduate and graduate course. Students can enrol in Phil 4751G if they are upper-year undergraduate students with some background in Philosophy or Gender, Sexuality, and Women’s Studies. Students can enrol in Phil 9107B if they are graduate students in Philosophy (MA or PhD). Other students could enrol with special permission from me, the instructor.

**UC 1110 is a WALS room, that is, a Western Active Learning Space (see <https://wals.uwo.ca>). We will regularly be doing active learning exercises in this class.

Note also that this syllabus is tentative and thus subject to change.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course deals with various types of philosophical questions about gender and race, including metaphysical, political, and ethical questions. We’ll analyze how well philosophers have approached these questions and we’ll do that with an intersectional lens—that is, a perspective that takes seriously how gender and race intersect with one another such that people’s gender (or gender identity) is affected by their race (or racial identity) and vice versa.

We’ll mainly discuss questions to which philosophers and others have given different answers, depending on whether they are focused on gender or race. For example, in response to the metaphysical question of whether people can change their gender or race, many argue that the answer is “yes” when it comes to gender but “no” when it comes to race. In response to a related metaphysical question—How is gender or race socially constructed?—philosophers’ answers also differ. Another example appears at the intersection of metaphysics and political philosophy with the question of whether a fully just world (not our current world!) would have gender or race in it, where some philosophers say “no” with respect to race but “yes, in some form” with respect to gender. Finally, in ethics, particularly applied ethics, there is the question of whether choosing the sex/gender or race of one’s future child—through techniques of assisted reproduction or processes of adoption—is morally permissible. Philosophers’ views on this question differ, sometimes again depending on whether they are talking about (sex/)gender or race.

Our goal will be to critically reflect on philosophers’ answers to these sorts of questions, asking in particular whether their answers make sense given how gender and race intersect

with one another. We'll also strive more generally to better understand gender and race, how they structure ourselves and our social worlds, and how they might do that differently.

TEXTS

All of the course material will be available on our OWL site under Course Content. There are no books that you need to purchase for this course.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course, you (a student in the course) will be able to:

- Appreciate better what gender and race are and how they intersect with one another
- Understand debates about gender and race occurring in different areas of philosophy
- Assess and stimulate discussion about arguments that appear in these debates
- Construct your own clear and persuasive argument on a topic of your choice
- Imagine how you could translate what you learn in the course into political action

In addition, through your assignments (see below under Requirements), you will develop or hone the following skills:

- Critical analysis and writing (through the reflections on readings and the final paper)
- Confident public speaking (through the in-class exercises and class presentations for those who do a presentation)
- Synthesis and consolidation of significant amounts of material (through the summary or presentation of a required reading and the final paper)
- Thoughtful engagement with others on controversial issues (through the in-class exercises)

REQUIREMENTS

The requirements are very similar for Phil 4751G and Phil 9107B but the grading of them will take into account the student's background and degree.

Phil 4751G:

1. In-class exercises: 10%
2. Summary of a required reading: 20%
3. Reflections on readings: 20%
4. Final paper (in three parts): 50%
 - a. Paper topic: 5%
 - b. Paper outline: 15%
 - c. The Paper: 30%

Phil 9107B:

1. In-class exercises: 10%
2. Presentation of a required reading: 20%
3. Reflections on readings: 20%
4. Final paper (in three parts): 50%

- a. Paper topic: 5%
- b. Paper outline: 15%
- c. The Paper: 30%

A NOTE ON COURSE CONTENT

In this course, we will be dealing with issues that may be deeply personal for members of the class. While rigorous debate across differing perspectives is expected and encouraged, it is absolutely essential that all members of the class participate respectfully and in a non-dogmatic way. In other words, you will need to be charitable toward others and their views, be open to the fact that your own views may be mistaken, and never express hatred or prejudice. If, at any point, you find that what we are discussing is distressing to you, then I encourage you to speak with me (the instructor). Should your needs exceed my professional capacities, then I will do my best to help you find the support that you need.

ETIQUETTE FOR EMAIL AND CLASSES

Be sure to be professional when sending emails and during class. When sending me an email, please put the course number in the subject line (Phil 2062F), include an appropriate greeting (e.g., “Dear Professor McLeod” or “Dear Carolyn”), and sign your name at the end so that I know who is emailing me (!). Please also avoid emailing me on Saturdays.

For our classes, the expectation is that you will be alert, prepared, and actively participating. To that end, you should minimize distractions (e.g., from your cell phone—silence it and keep it out of sight—and from your computer—turn off alerts that might pop up on your screen). You should have copies of the readings and lecture slides at hand and be prepared to ask and/or answer questions about them.

AUDIT

Students wishing to audit the course should consult with the instructor prior to or during the first week of classes.

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY POLICIES

The **Department of Philosophy Policies** which govern the conduct, standards, and expectations for student participation in Philosophy courses is available in the Undergraduate section of the Department of Philosophy website at <http://uwo.ca/philosophy/undergraduate/policies.html>. It is your responsibility to understand the policies set out by the Senate and the Department of Philosophy, and thus ignorance of these policies cannot be used as grounds of appeal.

ACCOMMODATION

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the Office of the Dean of the student’s Faculty of registration, together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation

being requested. The UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness and further information regarding this policy can be found at http://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf.

SELF- REPORTED ABSENCE FORM

Students who experience an unexpected illness or injury or an extenuating circumstance (48 hours or less) that is sufficiently severe to temporarily render them unable to meet academic requirements (e.g., attending lectures or labs, writing tests or midterm exams, completing and submitting assignments, participating in presentations) should self-declare using the online Self-Reported Absence portal. This option should be used in situations where the student expects to resume academic responsibilities within 48 hours or less.

The following conditions are in place for self-reporting of medical or extenuating circumstances: http://westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#SubHeading_322

EVALUATION OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

At least three days prior to the deadline for withdrawal from a course without academic penalty, students will receive assessment of work accounting for at least 15% of their final grade. For 3000- or 4000-level courses in which such a graded assessment is impracticable, the instructor(s) must obtain an exemption from this policy from the Dean and this exemption must be noted on the corresponding course syllabus. In rare instances and at the Dean's discretion, other courses could receive a similar exemption, which also must be noted in the course syllabus.

COURSE ASSIGNMENT

The last day of scheduled classes in any course will be the last day on which course assignments will be accepted for credit in a course. Instructors will be required to return assignments to students as promptly as possible with reasonable explanations of the instructor's assessment of the assignment.

ACADEMIC OFFENCES

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

PLAGIARISM CHECKING

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com <http://www.turnitin.com>.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Student Development Centre <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help. Immediate help in the event of a crisis can be had by phoning 519-661-3030 (during class hours) or 519-433-2023 after class hours and on weekends.