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PHIL 250-01, Philosophy of Race, Fall 2007

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Philosophy 250: PHILOSOPHY OF RACE
Fall 2007, T/Th 2:00-3:15
SYLLABUS

Professor: Dr. Leigh M. Johnson
Email: johnsonl@rhodes.edu

Office: Clough 401B
Office Hours: MTW 10-12 (and by appointment)

Course Description:

In this course, we will examine the advent and evolution of the concept of “race,” how it has been treated philosophically, and its application to the fields of ethics, metaphysics, epistemology, scientific methodology, and politics. The course will conclude with an evaluation of South African apartheid and the post-apartheid Truth and Reconciliation Commission, in order to discuss contemporary political strategies devised to address the “problem” of race. Students are encouraged to think critically not only about race as a global phenomenon or philosophical concept, but also as it may bear on their own particular experience.

Required (Classroom) Texts:

1. Tommy Lott and Robert Bernasconi (eds.), *The Idea of Race*
2. Charles Mills, *Blackness Visible: Essays on Race and Philosophy*

Independent (Group) Texts:

1. George Frederickson, *Racism: A Short History*
2. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Anti-Semite and Jew*
3. Philip Roth, *The Human Stain*
4. Rian Malan, *My Traitor’s Heart*
5. J.M. Coetzee, *Waiting for the Barbarians*
6. Albert Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*

Course Requirements:

1. Short paper (5-7 pages)—20% of grade
2. Presentation and written review of “independent” text—25% of grade
3. Midterm exam—20% of grade
4. Final paper (10-12 pages)—25% of grade
5. Class participation—10% of grade

Grading Scale:

A	93-100	C+	78-79
A-	90-92	C	73-77
B+	88-89	C-	70-72
B	83-87	D	60-69
B-	80-82	F	< 60

Dr. J's "Ground Rules"

1. Read more. Write more. Think more. Be more.
2. You are expected to attend class regularly and to complete all assigned readings *before* class. Excessive absences will result in a deduction of the student's final grade. Students who arrive to class late, who leave early, or who attend class unprepared will not be considered present for that day.
3. Always bring your books to class!
4. Cell phones, iPods, pagers, and any other electronic devices that might make noise or distract you from class must be **turned OFF** and put away before entering the classroom.
5. **Late work will not be accepted.** Only in a case involving *unusual* and *documented* circumstances can the student be given a one-week extension on deadlines. Papers are to be turned in at the beginning of class on the due date, and you must hand in your paper personally (that is, do not email assignments or send them with a classmate).
6. Students are reminded that in this class, as outside of this class, they bear the responsibility of upholding the Rhodes College Honor System. Please familiarize yourself with the standard protocols for citation, and be sure to double-check all of your work to make certain that you have not adopted or reproduced the ideas, words or statements of another person without appropriate acknowledgement.
7. This course will include discussions of many issues about which most people have strong personal opinions. Students are encouraged to speak openly and honestly, even if they feel that their views are unorthodox or unpopular. Passionate, even heated, philosophical discussions can be healthy and profound educational experiences and are excellent opportunities to refine one's own thinking and values. However, students are also required to treat their fellow classmates, even those with whom they disagree, with respect. We will insist upon professional decorum and general courtesy from everyone at all times. There are no exceptions to this rule.
8. All written work should be formatted in 12-pt. Times New Roman font, double spaced, with 1" margins on all sides of the page. The only identifying information should be the student's last name and the page number in the upper right-hand corner of every page. Dr. Johnson's definition of a "full typed page" is as follows: a page that includes writing from the top line of the page to the very bottom line of the page. Any paper that does not meet the minimum length requirement will receive no higher than a C.

Notes on Requirements:

Short Paper: The short paper should be **5-7 full typed pages**, involving an analysis of and critical reflection upon one of the texts that we cover in class before September 27. Although this is not a “research” paper (meaning you are not required to seek outside sources), simple summaries of the material will not be adequate. Students should pay attention to the technical aspects of their paper (grammar, spelling, punctuation, etc.) as well as the compositional aspects (organization of argument, clarity of ideas, substance and style).

Midterm Exam: The midterm will be given in class, and will cover all the material from the first half of the semester. The exam will consist partly of true and false questions, part short answer questions, and at least two essay questions. *Exam” review” sheets will be distributed one week before the exam in order to help students focus their study.*

Presentation and Written Review of Independent Text: Each student will be placed randomly in a reading group, which will be responsible for presenting one of the assigned group texts. The groups will collaborate to present their material to the class on the day assigned for their text in the schedule of classes. Reading groups must meet together at least 3 times during the semester, one of which will be a meeting with the instructor before the scheduled presentation day. Each member of the group is expected to carry equal responsibility in the class presentation. Group members should also be prepared to answer questions and lead discussion on their presentation day. The group will be given a grade on their presentation as a whole. In addition to the presentation grade, individual members must turn in a 3-5 page book review of their group text. These reviews will be graded individually.

Final Paper: The final paper will be due on the scheduled final exam day for this course. The final paper must be **10-12 full typed pages** and should include properly cited references to both (1) material we covered in this course and (2) some independent academic source. A list of paper topics will be handed out the second half of the semester, from which students may choose to write their papers. Students have the option of choosing their own topics for the final paper, but any topic that is not on the distributed list must be approved in advance

Class Participation: In-class participation is very important and will be rewarded in your final grade. Students who come prepared, engage in class discussions, and ask questions will receive full participation credit. Students who sit quietly all semester or who are not prepared for class will not receive full credit.

Schedule of Classes

Aug 23	Course and syllabus overview; Introductory lecture
Aug. 28	Bernier, "A New Division of Earth"
	Kant, "Of the Different Human Races"
Aug. 30	Herder, "Idea on the Philosophy of the History of Humankind"
	Hegel, "Anthropology"
Sep. 4	Gobineau, "The Inequality of Human Races"
	Galton, "Eugenics: Its Definition, Scope, and Aim"
Sep. 6	(Alain) Locke, "The Concept of Race as Applied to Social Culture"
	Montagu, "The Concept of Race in the Human Species in Light of Genetics"
Sep. 11	DuBois, "The Conservation of Races"
Sep. 13	Appiah, "The Uncompleted Argument: DuBois and the Illusion of Race"
Sep. 18	Senghor, "What is Negritude?"
Sep. 20	Fanon, "Racism and Culture" and "The Fact of Blackness"
Sept. 25	Group Presentation (Memmi, <i>The Colonizer and the Colonized</i>)
Sept. 27	Omi and Winant, "Racial Formation in the United States"
	SHORT PAPER DUE
Oct. 2	Group Presentation (Coetzee, <i>Waiting for the Barbarians</i>)
Oct. 5	MIDTERM EXAM
Oct. 9	Mills, "Preface" and "Non-Cartesian Sums"
Oct. 11	Group Presentation (Frederickson, <i>Racism: A Short History</i>)
Oct. 16 & 18	FALL BREAK
Oct. 23	Mills, "But What Are You <i>Really</i> ? The Metaphysics of Race"
Oct. 25	Mills, "But What Are You <i>Really</i> ? The Metaphysics of Race" (cont.)
Oct. 30	Group Presentation (Roth, <i>The Human Stain</i>)
Nov. 1	Group Presentation (Sartre, <i>Anti-Semite and Jew</i>)
Nov. 6	López, "White By Law"
	MacIntosh, "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack"
Nov. 8	NO CLASS
Nov. 13	Mills, "Revisionist Ontologies: Theorizing White Supremacy"
Nov. 15	Mills, "The Racial Polity"
Nov. 20 & 22	THANKSGIVING BREAK
Nov. 27	Apartheid and the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission
Nov. 29	Group Presentation (Malan, <i>My Traitor's Heart</i>)
Dec. 4	Apartheid and the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission

FINAL PAPER DUE BY NOON ON EXAM DAY