

PL 308c: Africana Philosophy
Fall 2012 / MW 2:00-3:15

Instructor: Jim Maffie
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Course Description: Africana philosophy refers to the critical reflection by people identified as “Africans” through conquest and colonization upon the questions, concepts, arguments, and theories born from their experiences on the African continent as well as their experiences of transportation, slavery, colonization, and racialization in various parts of the European dominated system of global capitalism. Prominent among their concerns are the nature of race, gender, racialization, identity, colonialism, capitalism, liberation, the self-proclaimed moral and epistemological superiority of European civilization, and philosophy itself.

Required books available for purchase:

Fred Lee Hord (Mzee Lasana Okpara) and Jonathan Scott Lee (eds.). *I Am Because We Are—Readings in Black Philosophy*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995. ISBN0-87023-965-1 (pbk). [H&S]

Charles Mills, *The Racial Contract*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997. ISBN: 978-0-8014-8463-6 (pbk).

Franz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*. Richard Philcox (Translator). NY: Grove Press, 2008. ISBN: 0802143008 (pbk) 9780802143006 [Note: this is a recent re-translation: the older translation (also published by Grove) is not acceptable.]

Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, with introduction by Robin D.G. Kelley. New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000. ISBN:1-583670025-4 (pbk).

Electronic copies of all other readings will be available on the course Blackboard.

Course Requirements and Grading*: Students are required to attend lectures, complete the readings, participate in class discussions, and complete three take-home exams each of which counts 25% of the final grade. Class participation counts 25%. Late papers will be penalized one-half letter grade per academic day (not per class period). Electronic submission will not be accepted.

75%: Three, 3-5 page essay take-home exams (25% each)

25%: Class participation (assigned on a 1/3-term basis with each take-home exam)

Course Schedule

8/29: Introduction to the course: What is philosophy? What is Africana Philosophy?
Liberation pedagogy: Paulo Friere, “Pedagogy of the Oppressed”

I. Aimé Césaire

9/5-9/10: Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, pp. 31-54.

Robin Kelley, "Introduction."
9/10: Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, pp. 55-78.
René Depestre, "Interview with Aimé Césaire."

II. Charles W. Mills,

9/12: *The Racial Contract*, Introduction and Ch.1
9/17: Mills, chs.1 & 2
9/19: Mills, ch. 2
9/24: Mills, chs. 2 & 3
9/26-10/1: Mills, ch.3
10/1: Take-home exam #1 assigned (major scheduled grading event); #1 exam due in class 10/15. First 1/3-term class participation grade assigned.

III. Franz Fanon

10/3-10/8: *Black Skin, White Masks*, Introduction & Ch.1
10/8-10/10: Fanon, Chs. 2 & 3
10/10-10/15: Fanon, Chs. 4 & 5
10/15-10/17: Fanon, Chs. 7 & 8
10/22: Film "Fanon: "Black Skin, White Masks"

IV.

10/24-10/29: Malcom X, "Speech on 'Black Revolution'" (H&L); "I Don't Mean Bananas" (ELMS); You Tube video: "By Any Means Necessary" (selections from "Collection of some of the best Malcom X")
10/31: Molefi K. Asante, "The Afrocentric Idea in Education" (H&L)
11/5: Cornell West, "Learning to Talk of Race" (H&L)
11/7: Bernard Boxill, "The Morality of Reparations"; "The Morality of Reparations, II"
11/12: Angela Y. Davis, "Racialized Punishment and Prison Abolition"
11/12: Take-home exam #2 assigned (major scheduled grading event); due in class 11/19; second 1/3-term class participation grade assigned.

V.

11/14: Anna Julia Cooper, "Womanhood: A Vital element in the Regeneration and Progress of the Race" (H&L)
11/19: Awa Thiam, "Feminism and Revolution" (H&L)
11/26: Merle Hodges, "In the Shadow of the Whip" (H&L)
11/28: Angela Y. Davis, "Radical Perspectives on the Empowerment of Afro-American Women" (H&L)
12/1: Patricia Hill Collins, "Some Group Matters: Intersectionality, Situated Standpoints, and Black Feminist Thought"

VI. The Color of Philosophy

12/3: Charles W. Mills, "Non-Cartesian Sums: Philosophy and the African-American Experience," *Blackness Visible: Essays on Philosophy and Race*
12/5: Lucius T. Outlaw, "Philosophy, Ethnicity, and Race" (H&L)

12/11: Africana philosophy: Lewis Gordon, "Introduction: Africana Philosophy in Context."

12/11: Take-home exam #3 assigned (major scheduled grading event); due TBA.

Third 1/3-term class participation grade assigned.

*** BUSINESS MATTERS**

(1) The preceding course schedule, requirements, procedures, and reading assignments are subject to change by the instructor in the event of extenuating circumstances.

(2) Individuals having any disability, either permanent or temporary, which might affect their ability to perform in this class are encouraged to inform me at the outset of the term. Adaptation of methods, materials, or testing will be made as required to provide for equitable participation.

(3) Disruptive behavior: Students deemed by the instructor to be guilty of behavior disruptive to the class (e.g. cellphones, text messaging, passing notes, or talking) are subject to permanent expulsion from the class

(4) Regarding written assignments, students are expected to demonstrate:

- (a) the ability to convey a theme or argument clearly and coherently.
- (b) the ability to analyze critically and to synthesize the work of others.
- (c) the ability to acquire and apply information from appropriate sources, and reference sources appropriately.
- (d) competence in standard written English.

(5) Plagiarism:

"Plagiarism, according to the University website policy on plagiarism, http://www.lib.umd.edu/UES/plag_stud_what.html, is "intentionally or knowingly representing the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise." Examples of acts that would be defined as plagiarism are:

- Copying word for word, and neglecting to both enclose the words in quotation marks *and* to cite the source
- Summarizing or paraphrasing someone else's words or ideas and failing to cite the source
- Reproducing the organization or structure of another person's work and failing to cite it
- Any other act in which someone presents someone else's intellectual material as their own, whether it involves graphics, code, data, charts, etc.

Plagiarism is a serious act of academic dishonesty which is not taken lightly at this University." For further information see: <http://www.lib.umd.edu/guides/honesty.html>

You must cite all your sources including the course texts. Plagiarized papers will receive a "0". The instructor reserves the right to fail in the course anyone found guilty of plagiarism.

(6) All class lectures and class readings are copyrighted. As such they may not be reproduced for anything other than personal use without written permission of the instructor.

(7) Regarding attendance, I quote the following from UMD websites.

Regular attendance and participation in this class is the best way to grasp the concepts and principles being discussed. However, in the event that a class must be missed due to an illness, the policy in this class is as follows:

1. For every medically necessary absence from class (lecture, recitation, or lab), a reasonable effort should be made to notify the instructor in advance of the class. When returning to class, students must bring a note identifying the date of and reason for the absence, and acknowledging that the information in the note is accurate.
2. If a student is absent more than 4 successive times, the instructor may require documentation signed by a health care professional.
3. If a student is absent on days when tests are scheduled or papers are due [*or other such events as specified in the syllabus*] he or she is required to notify the instructor in advance, and upon returning to class, bring documentation of the illness, signed by a health care professional.

“It is the policy of the university to excuse the absences of students that result from the following causes: illness of the student, or illness of a dependent as defined by Board of Regents policy on family and medical leave; religious observance (where the nature of the observance prevents the student from being present during the class period); participation in university activities at the request of university authorities; and compelling circumstance beyond the students control.”

For further information, see <http://www.faculty.umd.edu/teach/instructionalguide201112.pdf>.