

PHIL 345/ALST 345 Topics in African-American Philosophy

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Fall 2014
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Synopsis

This course is designed to serve as an introduction to issues in African-American Philosophy. In particular this course explores the political and ideological goals of leading intellectuals from the nineteenth century to the present. From DuBois and Delaney to the black power movement of the 60's, analysis of African-American experiences has produced divergent strategies intended to better the condition of black communities in America. The course will investigate nationalist strategies and their roots in notions of black identity as they have been developed through the writings of intellectuals, artists, and political figures. We will also address challenges as to whether or not non-integrationist strategies can be used to achieve social equality. Authors include: Elizabeth Anderson, Anthony Appiah, Countée Cullen, Martin Delany, W.E.B. DuBois, Marcus Garvey, Alain Locke, Claude McKay, Tommie Shelby, Malcolm X, Huey P. Newton, and Bobby Seale.

Important Dates

Requirements

One course in philosophy or ALST/POSC 212 The Politics of Race and Ethnicity is required.

Goals

The first goal is to put you in a position where you can meaningfully contribute to several discussions concerning topics in African-American philosophy. This course will also get you up to speed on contemporary discussions in African-American philosophy such as black nationalism, integrationism, civil rights, civil disobedience, and issues dealing with compensatory and distributive justice. After taking this course (and under the assumption that you have been keeping up with the reading for the appropriate classes, writing essays, and coming to office hours when clarification is needed) you should be equipped to read and understand professional articles on issues concerning African-American philosophy. The second goal is to improve your abilities to argue and write about issues concerning African-American philosophy.

Grading

Evaluation

Participation – 25%

Two 6-7 page papers – 30% (weighted evenly)

Midterm– 15%

Final Exam – 30%

Grading will be on a 4.0 scale.

	A 4.00	A– 3.67
B+ 3.33	B 3.00	B– 2.67
C+ 2.33	C 2.00	C– 1.67
D+ 1.33	D 1.00	D– 0.67

Philosophy Junior Option: For Juniors in philosophy who are planning on writing a senior thesis and are exploring topics to write on, the following alternative method of evaluation is available. A completed draft of the 15 page paper must be presented to me two weeks before the due date (the last day of classes). Keep in mind that expectations for a 15 page paper will be high and the paper should make a substantial philosophical contribution to a debate (e.g. A detailed attack of a position with suggestions for an alternative approach to a problem or alternatively, a less detailed attack of a position, with a well developed solution to a problem). A completed draft of the 15 page paper must be presented to me two weeks before the due date (the last day of classes). There should be a total of at least 3 consultations (two before the first draft and one after the first draft). A choice to pursue this option must be made within the first two weeks of class.

Participation – 25%

One 15 page paper 45%

Final Exam 30%

Participation

Participation will be determined by attendance, preparedness (having read the assigned readings before class and coming to class with questions), and discussion. Part of learning philosophy is to learn how to engage in argumentation (and not just exchange opinions) with others, so being informed on the matters we are discussing and *practicing* verbal argumentation is essential to learning philosophy.

If you miss a class you should always contact a classmate to see what you missed and what the next assignment is. You should not plan on missing more than 3 classes (excused or otherwise). The occasional homework assignment (no more than 5) will also figure into participation.

6-7 Page Papers

These two papers will give you a chance to further practice argumentation both by covering arguments for essays you have read and, more importantly, by giving you a chance to develop your own arguments (in my opinion, this is the most rewarding part of philosophy). Papers should aim to clearly explain the material you are writing about as well as providing a thesis that is supported by original argumentation. By ‘Original’ I don’t mean to suggest that no one has ever made that argument, just that you come up with the argument independently of what you have read by other philosophers. Original argumentation will be evaluated in terms of its existence (is there any?) and plausibility (how well does it stand up to criticism?). I encourage you to take risks within reason. Don’t think you can come up with a new theory of nationalism in 6-7 pages, but do try to critique arguments, and propose solutions to smaller problems. (I take grading papers to be something like scoring diving: both the difficulty of the project and the quality of the execution are taken into account). You are both welcome and encouraged to come to me to talk

about your paper. While I do not read drafts, I am happy to help you test out arguments, structure your ideas, your papers, and introductions.

- The papers are due September 24th and December 3rd by 5pm in my office or my mailbox in 113 Hascall.

Exams

There will be an in class midterm on October 8th and a cumulative Final Exam which focuses on the second half of the course. The final is scheduled for TBA.

Readings:

Anderson, Elizabeth (2010). *The Imperative of Integration*. Princeton University Press.

Locke, Alain Leroy (ed.) *The New Negro: Voices of the Harlem Renaissance*. New York: Touchstone, 1997.

Shelby, Tommie. *We Who Are Dark*. Belknap Press, 2007.

Other readings will be made available online.

Part I: Nationalism – Introduction (3 classes)

Gans, Chaim (2003). *The Limits of Nationalism*. Cambridge. Chp. 1 Nationalist ideologies – a normative typology.

Scheffler, S. (1997). Liberalism, Nationalism, and Egalitarianism. in *The Morality of Nationalism* (Eds. R. McKim & J. McMahan). 191-208.

Part II: Roots of Black Nationalism (2 classes)

Shelby, T. (2005). *We Who Are Dark*. Belknap Press. Chp. 1 Two conceptions of Black Nationalism. 24-59.

Delany, Martin R (1852). *The Condition, Elevation, Emigration, and Destiny of the Colored People of the United States* (abridged). In *Negro Social and Political Thought 1850-1920*. Ed. Howard Brotz. New York: Basic Books Inc. 37-100.

Part III: Du Bois and Cultural Nationalism (6 classes)

DuBois, W.E.B. (1897). The Conservation of Races. in *W.E.B. DuBois: A Reader*. D. Levering Lewis (Ed.) New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1995. 20-27.

Gray, D. M. (2013). Racial Norms: A Reinterpretation of Du Bois' "The Conservation of Races". *Southern Journal of Philosophy*, 51(4).

DuBois, W.E.B. (1903). “The Talented Tenth”

URL=<<http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?documentprint=174>>.

Locke, A. (1925). *The New Negro*. Alain Locke (Ed.). New York: Touchstone. ix-xxvii, 3-16, 47-56, 129-131, 134, -135, 142-145, 226-227.

Further Study: When Harlem was In Vogue by David Levering Lewis.

Locke, A. (1925). *The New Negro*. Alain Locke (Ed.). New York: Touchstone. 301-311. 57-74, 96-114.

Shelby, T. (2005). *We Who Are Dark*. Belknap Press. Chp. 5 Race, Culture, and Politics. 161-200.

Part VI: Garveyism – Political Nationalism During the Harlem Renaissance (2-3 classes)

Garvey, M. “Race Assimilation”, “The True Solution of the Negro Problem”, “An Appeal to the Soul of White America”, “Racial Reforms”, “Who and What is a Negro”, “An Appeal to the Conscience of the Black Race to See Itself”, “The Negro’s Place in World Reorganization”, “Aims and Objects of Movement for Solution of Negro Problem”, “Racial Ideals”. In *Negro Social and Political Thought*. Howard Brotz (Ed.) New York: Basic Books. 553-576.

DuBois, W.E.B. (1923). “Back to Africa” in *W.E.B. DuBois: A Reader*. D. Levering Lewis (Ed.) New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1995. 333-39.

Garvey, M. (1923). “W.E. Burghardt DuBois as a Hater of Dark People.” Reprinted in *Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey*. Amy Jacques-Garvey (Ed.). New York: Atheneum. 310-320.

DuBois, W.E.B. (1924). “Lunatic or Traitor” in *W.E.B. DuBois: A Reader*. D. Levering Lewis (Ed.) New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1995. 340-42.

----- (1928). “Marcus Garvey and the NAACP” in *W.E.B. DuBois: A Reader*. D. Levering Lewis (Ed.) New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1995. 343-45.

Shelby, T. (2005). *We Who Are Dark*. Belknap Press. Chp. 2 Class, Poverty, and Shame. 60-80.

Part V: Black Power (6 classes)

Malcolm X

April 23rd, 1961 NOI Panel Discussion (57 min)

April 12th 1964 Ballot or Bullet (53 min)

June 28th 1964 Program of the Organization of Afro-American Unity

URL=<http://www.malcolm-x.org/docs/gen_oaau.htm>.

Shelby, T. (2005). *We Who Are Dark*. Belknap Press. Chp. 3 Black Power Nationalism. 101-35

- Newton, H.P. and Seale, B. (1966). "Black Panther Party Platform and Program: What We Want, What We Believe." in *The Black Panthers Speak*. Philip S. Foner (Ed.). New York: Da Capa Press. 2-6.
- Newton, H.P. (1967). "In Defense of Self-Defense: Executive Mandate Number One" in *The Black Panthers Speak*. Philip S. Foner (Ed.). New York: Da Capa Press. 40-41.
- Seale, B. (1969). "The Ten-Point Platform and Program of the Black Panther Party." in *The Black Panthers Speak*. Philip S. Foner (Ed.). New York: Da Capa Press. 78-80.
- (1970). "Bobby Seale Explains Panther Politics: An Interview." in *The Black Panthers Speak*. Philip S. Foner (Ed.). New York: Da Capa Press. 81-88.
- Hamilton, C. and K. Ture. (1967). *Black Power*. Vintage Books. Chp. 2 Black Power: Its Need and Substance and Chp. 3 The Myths of Coalition. 34-84
- Shelby, T. (2005). *We Who Are Dark*. Harvard University Press. Chp. 4 Black Solidarity after Black Power. 136-160.

Part VI Integration (6 classes)

- Anderson, E. (2010). *The Imperative of Integration*. Princeton University Press