

Department of Philosophy
Philosophy 9164 - Structural Injustice
Course Outline [DRAFT]

Instructor: Professor Tracy Isaacs

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Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 3 p.m. and other times by appointment.

Course Description: In this course we will understand structural injustice (or oppression) as (roughly) a form of injustice that (1) is built into a society's social and political institutions (i.e. its structures) and (2) creates patterns of discrimination and advantage that affect people in virtue of their membership in social groups. This is a complicated social and political phenomenon that is difficult to identify and address. Understanding structural injustice requires that we engage with the ontology of social groups, feminist and social epistemology / theories of epistemic injustice, theories of collective action/responsibility/obligation, the complexities of intersectionality, and critical understandings (feminist, anti-racist, etc.) of power as a source of systemic disadvantage/privilege. In this course we will touch on all of these areas, and students will have an opportunity to engage more deeply through discussion questions, discussion papers, and a final term paper with the themes that interest them the most.

Course Materials

1. Selected articles (complete schedule of readings and course bibliography to be provided in OWL; all materials may be found in Western Libraries online resources).
2. Possibly a book TBA

Methods of Evaluation

1. Weekly discussion questions (5%): Our class has an OWL. Each week please post one discussion question that engages with some aspect of the week's readings in the relevant area of the OWL Forum no later than 8 a.m. on Wednesday mornings so that we all have a chance to look at them (quickly) before our meeting. Provide a brief introduction to / philosophical context for your question when you post it. I'll sometimes call on you in class to say a few remarks to introduce your discussion question when we get to it. From JANUARY 5 to [end date here] you are responsible for writing and distributing

for that week that you wish to explore. I invite you to use this assignment as an

opportunity to introduce a topic for discussion in class by critically examining an argument or idea. You can engage with just one of the readings or make connections that run through more than one, but please focus on the material assigned for the week you choose to do your paper.

Please tilt slightly more towards analysis than exposition, include enough exposition to demonstrate an understanding of the material and issues and to provide context for your analysis. Ideally we will spend at least a few minutes on each discussion paper. Between [January 5 and .] you are responsible for writing and distributing one discussion paper in the week of your choosing. Note that we will not be meeting on February 22 so please do not submit a discussion paper that week. Please submit to the Discussion Paper assignment in the Assignment portal in OWL and circulate to the rest of the class in the Discussion Forum on Monday before our class meets (i.e. by 5 p.m. the Tuesday).

3. Final Paper Proposal (15%)

DUE: [Date TBA]

The proposal will be 750-1000 words plus a short bibliography of 10 sources. The proposal should include:

- x Your paper's central philosophical question(s), stated clearly in question form (e.g. Does (or how does) collective responsibility distribute among individual members of collectives?).
- x Your tentative thesis and a sketch of the argument(s) you will use to support it
- x Background information that provides a scholarly context and motivation for your question(s)
- x Questions that, at this stage of the research and writing process, are as yet unresolved and require further attention.

4. Final Paper (60%) Due [date TBA] A 5000-word paper (double spaced with adequate margins and 12 point font) paper. Number your pages and include a title page with your name, email address, and the title of the paper. Please use a consistent style (personally I like Chicago, Author-Date format with reference list) include a complete bibliography (it can be in addition to your word count). Your paper should follow through on the promise of your proposal.

5. Attendance and participation: At the graduate level, we operate on the assumption that you will attend every class, arriving on time and staying for the duration, and that you will participate in both online and class discussion at_nssik2(y)14Ctt3(l)-1(r.)3(l)-12(o)1.9(le)-1(as)2((u)6(s)2

