

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

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

Class time: Mondays 11:30-2:30 Class location: Zoom and UC 1110** Class website: OWL	Instructor: Prof. Carolyn McLeod Office: Stevenson Hall 2150G Office Hours: M 3:00-4:00, T 11:00-12:00 Email: <a href="mailto:cmcleod2@uwo.ca">cmcleod2@uwo.ca</a>
--	---

**\*A split upper-year undergraduate/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.

**\*\*Course delivery during the COVID-19 pandemic**

The original intent was for this course to be delivered entirely in person, but the COVID-19 situation demands that at least some of it be delivered online. The online delivery will be synchronous via Zoom (at the time indicated above). Any in-person delivery will occur in UC 1110, which is a WALS room, that is, a Western Active Learning Space (see <https://wals.uwo.ca>). We will regularly do active learning exercises in this class, whether we’re meeting online or in person.

**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 addressed these questions, and in doing so, take seriously how gender and race intersect with one another.

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 and concerns whether a fully just world (not our current world) would have gender or race in it; 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 issue differ, often again depending on whether they are talking about (sex/)gender or race.

Our goal will be to critically reflect on philosophers’ answers to the above sorts of questions, asking whether their answers make sense particularly 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 the course material will be available on our OWL site under the Resources tab. There is nothing 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
- Discuss how philosophical reflections on gender and race are relevant to practical moral or political problems

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

- Critical analysis and writing (through, e.g., the reflections on readings and the final paper)
- Confident public speaking (through, e.g., your class participation and presentation 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, e.g., forums and participation)

### **ASSESSMENTS**

The course assessments (or assignments) are very similar for Phil 4751G and Phil 9107B. The grading will take into consideration whether the student is enrolled in Phil 4715G or Phil 9107B.

#### *Phil 4751G:*

1. Reflections on readings: 20%
2. Forums and participation: 10%
3. Summary of a required reading: 20%
4. Final paper (in three parts): 50%
  - a. Paper topic: 5%
  - b. Paper outline: 10%
  - c. The Paper: 35%

#### *Phil 9107B:*

1. Reflections on readings: 20%
2. Forums and participation: 10%
3. Presentation of a required reading: 20%

4. Final paper (in three parts): 50%
  - a. Paper topic: 5%
  - b. Paper outline: 10%
  - c. The Paper: 35%

Details can be found under Resources on OWL in a document simply called “Assessments.”

## GENERAL COURSE POLICIES

### **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 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 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 4751G/9107B), 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 at hand and be prepared to ask and/or answer questions about them.

### **Special rules for online learning**

To ensure the best experience for everyone for our synchronous online meetings, please honour the following:

- Use your computer, if possible, as opposed to a cell phone or tablet
- Ensure you are in a private location to protect the confidentiality of our discussions
- To minimize background noise, kindly mute your microphone for the entire class until you are invited to speak, unless directed otherwise
- Keep your video camera on (unless you have a legitimate excuse to have it off)
- Be prepared to turn your camera off at my request if your internet connection becomes unstable
- Unless invited by me, do not share your screen in the meeting

- Use the 'raise hand' function if you wish to speak and wait for me or the leader of a breakout room to acknowledge you before beginning your comment or question

## DEPARTMENT OR UNIVERSITY POLICIES OR SERVICES

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.

### **AUDIT**

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

### **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](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](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](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.