

PHIL 3130

## *Philosophy of Race and Racism*



Paintings by Kara Walker

University of North Texas  
Department of Philosophy and Religion  
Spring 2026

**Time:** Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3:30-4:50pm

**Location:** Environmental Science Building, Room 120

**Instructor:** Dr. Asaf Angermann (*he/him*)

**Email:** asaf.angermann@unt.edu

**Office:** Environmental Science Building, Room 225E

**Office Hours:** Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2-3 pm and by appointment

**Teaching Assistant:** Marisa Moreno (*she/her*)

**Email:** marisa.moreno@unt.edu

### Course Description

This course focuses on a philosophical analysis of the meaning of race and the problem of racism. It examines the origins, concepts, and nature of race: What is race? What do we talk about when we talk about race? Is race a natural, biological, social, or cultural category? Who and what determines race and racial identity? We will then proceed to examine the relation of race and racism: What is racism? What are racial prejudice, racial discrimination, and racial oppression? What are the historical, social, moral, and political aspects of racism? How can they be countered and overcome? Finally, we will explore philosophical aspects of specific racial and ethnic identities and different forms of racial prejudice and ethnic discrimination such as antisemitism, islamophobia, and bias against people of Native American and Latin American identities.

### Course Materials and Readings

**No book purchase is required for this course.** All readings will be made available on the course Canvas page.

Course materials include various philosophical texts on race and racism. All readings shall be completed before the class in which they are scheduled to be discussed. Most readings are about 15-25 pages long.

## Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of the course, students will:

1. be knowledgeable of the various philosophical traditions, questions, and arguments concerning the meaning of race and racism and how they function in society.
2. gain a deeper understanding of how race and racism shape individual and social identities, as well as a clearer understanding of possible responses to racial oppression and possible ways to achieve racial justice.
3. have expertise in the philosophical discussion of different perspectives, problems, and challenges that arise when analyzing central issues related to race and racism, and their various forms of expression.
4. be proficient in critically assessing, developing, and presenting erudite, precise, and cogent philosophical arguments.

## Technology in the Classroom

Use of all technology (laptops, tablets, phones) in the classroom is permitted, as long as it is done primarily for learning purposes and does not cause distraction. Use of technology for other purposes (such as texting, social media, watching videos) is not permitted, since it causes distraction and disturbs other students. Students who use technology for such purposes will be asked to leave for the duration of the class. This policy is subject to change according to circumstances.

## Grade Components

### **1. Attendance and Participation**

Attending class meetings and actively participating in the discussions are essential for succeeding in this course. If unavoidable, absences should be communicated to the instructor via email prior to the class. Two unexcused absences will have no effect on the final course grade. More than five unexcused absences will result in failing the course. Active participation in the course will positively contribute to your final grade in the course.  
= 20% of final grade.

### **2. Ten Reading Responses**

Ten reading responses shall be completed throughout the semester. Every student is free to choose any ten readings from the course syllabus for writing reading responses on. Only ten reading responses are required.

Reading responses are short (about one page; 250-350 words) written responses to the assigned readings. They shall be based solely on the readings (not using any other

materials). They are responses; not summaries: They shall not summarize the reading, but rather respond to 2-3 of the following points:

- What was your reading experience? Was the reading difficult, accessible, challenging, meaningful, relatable, etc.? Explain and discuss why.
- What do you find to be the reading's main argument? Explain what the author argues for and what your view on it is – do you agree, disagree, ambivalent, indifferent? Why?
- Choose a sentence or a paragraph that seems central or meaningful to you. Explain why you chose it and how you understand it.
- If you had the chance to meet the author and discuss their argument with them, what would you like to ask? What would you like to know? What would you like to tell them? What would you like to hear from them?

Reading responses shall be submitted on Canvas by the end of day before the class meeting in which the reading is scheduled to be discussed (that is, by end of day on Monday/Wednesday).

Overall, 10 reading responses shall be completed throughout the semester. Each reading response is worth 2 points x 10 reading responses. = 20% of final grade.

### **3. Three In-Class Essay Exams**

Essay exams are discussions of specific questions relating to the readings, lectures, and class discussions. They provide the opportunity to demonstrate knowledge of the material and to develop one's own thinking and ideas about it. Essay exams will take place in class and can be written with open materials. Each essay exam will consist of 2-3 questions to be discussed and analyzed according to the readings, the lectures, and one's own ideas about them. Three essay exams will be written during the semester at the times indicated on the syllabus. Each essay exam is worth 20 points x 3 essay exams. = 60% of final grade

### **4. Final Exam**

The final exam covers materials from the entire semester. It includes multiple choice questions, true/false questions, and open questions. It will take place during the exam period at the time set by the exam schedule. = 20% of final grade.

**Note: The lowest grade between the three essay exams and final exams will be dropped.** Students who receive an average grade of at least B on the three exam essays may skip the final exam if they wish to.

### Course Grade Component Summary:

1. Attendance and Participation = 20 points
  2. Reading Responses = 20 points
  3. Three Essay Exams x 20 points each = 60 points
  4. Final Exam = 20 points
- [Lowest grade of components 3 and 4 will be dropped]
- Total: 100 points

### Grading Scale

The grading system for the course is as follows:

A: 90-100%, B: 80-90%, C: 70-79%, D: 60-69%, F: 0-59

### Academic Success Resources

UNT strives to offer a high-quality education in a supportive environment where you can learn, grow, and thrive. As a faculty member, I am committed to supporting you, and I want to remind you that UNT offers a range of mental health and wellness services to help maintain balance and well-being. Utilizing these resources is a proactive way to support your academic and personal success. To explore campus resources designed to support you, check out [mental health services \(https://clear.unt.edu/student-support-services-policies\)](https://clear.unt.edu/student-support-services-policies), visit [unt.edu/success](https://unt.edu/success), and explore [unt.edu/wellness](https://unt.edu/wellness). To get all your enrollment and student financial-related questions answered, go to [scrappysays.unt.edu](https://scrappysays.unt.edu).

### Academic Integrity

“UNT promotes the integrity of learning processed and embraces the core values of trust and honesty. Academic integrity is based on educational principles and procedures that protect the rights of all participants in the educational process and validate the legitimacy of degrees awarded by the university. In the investigation and resolution of allegations of student academic dishonesty, the university’s actions are intended to be corrective, educationally sound, fundamentally fair, and based on reliable evidence.” (UNT Academic Integrity Policy description, <https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003>)

Please note that plagiarism is considered an academic offense. Plagiarism means representing the words or ideas of someone else as one’s own in any academic exercise, such as:

1. Submitting as one’s own a paper written by another person or by a commercial “ghost writing” service,
2. Exactly reproducing someone else’s words without identifying the words with quotation marks or by appropriate indentation, or without properly citing the quotation in a footnote or reference,
3. Paraphrasing or summarizing someone else’s work without acknowledging the source with a footnote or reference,

4. Using facts, data, graphs, charts, or other information without acknowledging the source with a footnote or reference. Borrowed facts or information obtained in one's research or reading must be acknowledged unless they are "common knowledge". Clear examples of "common knowledge" include the names of leaders of prominent nations, basic scientific laws, and the meaning of fundamental concepts and principles in a discipline. When in doubt, footnotes or references should be used.

The likely penalty for plagiarism is failing the course.

If you have any questions regarding plagiarism or any other form of academic dishonesty, please do not hesitate to ask.

### Use of Generative AI (Artificial Intelligence) Tools

The use of Generative AI tools is neither encouraged nor prohibited in this class. It is fine and acceptable to use these tools as long as they do not substitute the reading of class materials and as long as classwork – or any part thereof – submitted using these tools is acknowledged as such. This means that if you use any Generative AI tools, you must indicate which sentences or paragraphs have been written using these tools (for example, by highlighting or underlining these sentences or paragraphs). Unauthorized use of AI tools in an assignment may lead to failing the assignment.

Please note that in philosophical papers, Generative AI tools may lead to wrong answers or incorrect arguments. Only use these tools after you have read the relevant materials and only if you are confident that the information they provide aligns with the philosophical content of the assignment.

Using Generative AI content without proper credit or substituting your own work with Generative AI undermines the learning process and violates academic integrity. If you are unsure whether something is allowed, please seek clarification.

### Title IX Statement on Sexual Misconduct, Sexual Harassment, and Survivor Advocacy

UNT is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. Federal laws (Title IX and the Violence Against Women Act) and UNT policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, and therefore prohibit sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know is experiencing sexual harassment, relationship violence, stalking, and/or sexual assault, there are campus resources available to provide support and assistance. UNT's Survivor Advocates can assist a student who has been impacted by violence by filing protective orders, completing crime victim's compensation applications, contacting professors for absences related to an assault, working with housing to facilitate a room change where appropriate, and connecting students to other resources available both on and off campus. The Survivor Advocates can be reached at [SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu](mailto:SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu) or by calling the Dean of Students Office at 940-565-2648.

Additionally, alleged sexual misconduct can be non-confidentially reported to the Title IX Coordinator at [oeo@unt.edu](mailto:oeo@unt.edu) or at (940) 565 2759.

### Accommodations for Students with Disabilities (ADA Statement)

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time; however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information, refer to the Office of Disability Access website (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access>). You may also contact ODA by phone at (940) 565-4323.

### Inclusive Learning Environment, Chosen Names, and Preferred Pronouns

UNT students represent a variety of backgrounds and perspectives. Every student in this class should have the right to learn and engage within an environment of respect and courtesy from others. Please work with me to create a classroom culture of open communication, mutual respect, and belonging. All discussions should be respectful and civil. Although disagreements and debates are encouraged, personal attacks are unacceptable. Together, we can ensure a safe and welcoming classroom for all. If you ever feel like this is not the case, please let me know. We are all learning together and we can all learn from each other!

***Chosen Names:*** A chosen name is a name that a person goes by that may or may not match their legal name. If you have a chosen name that is different from your legal name and would like it to be used in class, please let the instructor know.

***Preferred Pronouns:*** Pronouns (*they/them, she/her, he/him, etc.*) are a public way for people to address you, much like your name, and can be shared with a name when making an introduction, both virtually and in-person. Just as we ask and don't assume someone's name, we should also ask and not assume someone's pronouns. You can add your pronouns to your Canvas account so that they follow your name when posting to discussion boards, submitting assignments, etc.

**Note:** This course complies with all UNT policies and State of Texas laws, including the most recent bills such as SB 17 and SB 37, which do not affect content, instruction, and discussion, and do not censor course topics related to any belief of race, gender, or nationality or any social, political, and religious belief.

## Course Schedule, Readings, and Assignments

Changes to the syllabus may be made, if necessary, to meet learning objectives, to make up for missed class sessions, or for other similar reasons.

### **Week 1: Introduction to the Class**

- Tue. 1/13 Introduction to Philosophy of Race and Racism: What is Race? What is Racism? How does Philosophy discuss them? In-Class Readings
- Thu. 1/15 Overview of the Topic, Syllabus, and Readings: What will this course be about? How to succeed in this course?

### **Week 2: Historical Background I – Science, Violence, and Slavery**

- Tue. 1/20 Robert Bernasconi and Tommy L. Lott: *The Idea of Race*, Introduction
- Thu. 1/22 Frederick Douglass: *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* (selected sections)  
Ida B. Wells: “Lynch Law in America”

### **Week 3: Historical Background II – Post-Slavery Racial Oppression and Segregation**

- Tue. 1/27 W.E.B. Du Bois: *The Souls of Black Folk*, “Of Our Spiritual Strivings”
- Thu. 1/29 W.E.B. Du Bois: *The Souls of Black Folk*, “Of the Black Belt”

### **Week 4: The Concept of Race I**

- Tue. 2/3 W.E.B. Du Bois: “The Conservation of Races”
- Thu. 2/5 Kwame Anthony Appiah: “The Uncompleted Argument: Du Bois and the Illusion of Race”

### **Week 5: The Concept of Race II**

- Tue. 2/10 Lucius Outlaw: “‘Conserve’ Races? In Defense of W.E.B. Du Bois”
- Thu. 2/12 **In-class Essay Exam I**

### **Week 6: Racial Identity and Racial Embodiment**

Tue. 2/17 Charles Mills: “But What Are You Really?’ The Metaphysics of Race”

Thu. 2/19 Linda Martín Alcoff: “Phenomenology of Racial Embodiment”

### **Week 7: Lived Experience and Racist Science**

Tue. 2/24 Frantz Fanon: *Black Skin, White Masks*, “The Lived Experience of the Black Man”

Thu. 2/26 Magnus Hirschfeld: *Racism*  
Albert Memmi: *Racism*

### **Week 8: Epistemology, Superiority, and Exploitation**

Tue. 3/3 Charles Mills: *The Racial Contract*, Ch. 1

Thu. 3/5 **In-Class Essay Exam II**

**Spring Break: March 9 - 15 - No Classes!**

### **Week 9: Race, Gender, and Feminism**

Tue. 3/17 Sojourner Truth: “Ain’t I a Woman?”  
bell hooks, *Ain’t I a Woman? Black Women and Feminism*,  
Introduction

Thu. 3/19 Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw: “Mapping the Margins:  
Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of  
Color”

### **Week 10: History, Formations, and New Forms of Racism**

Tue. 3/24 George M. Frederickson: *Racism - A Short History*, Appendix: “Racism in  
Historical Discourse”

Thu. 3/26 Naomi Zack: *The Philosophy of Race*, “Racism and Neo-Racisms”

**Week 11: Antisemitism and Judeophobia**

Tue. 3/31 Mitchel B. Hart: “Jews and Race”

Thu. 4/2 Deborah E. Lipstadt: *Antisemitism - Here and Now*

**Week 12: Colonialism, Orientalism, and Islamophobia**

Tue. 4/7 Edward Said: *Orientalism*, Ch. 1

Thu. 4/9 Todd H. Green: *The Fear of Islam - An Introduction to Islamophobia in the West*, Ch. 1: “What is Islamophobia?”

**Week 13: Race, Ethnicity, and Indigeneity**

Tue. 4/14 Wub-e-ke-niew: *We Have the Right to Exist: A Translation of Aboriginal Indigenous Thought*

Thu. 4/16 Linda Martín Alcoff: “Latinos and the Categories of Race”

**Week 14: Ethnicity, Identity, and Immigration**

Tue. 4/21 Gloria E. Anzaldúa: *Borderlands/La Frontera - The New Mestiza*, Ch. 1-2.

Thu. 4/23 José Jorge Mendoza: “Philosophy of Race and the Ethics of Immigration”

**Week 15: Overview, Summary, and Conclusions**

Tue. 4/28 **In-Class Essay Exam III**

Thu. 4/30 Overview, Summary, and Conclusions