

STS 339: Philosophy and Psychology of Race and Gender

Time: WF 10:00-11:30

Location: CKB 223

Instructor: Michael Brownstein, msb@njit.edu

Office Hours: Mondays 3:00-4:30, Fridays 11:30-1:00, or by appointment in 312 Cullimore

Course Description

Persistent inequalities between social groups are a blight on modern, liberal democracies, which pride themselves on the idea of justice and fairness for all. This course focuses on inequalities having to do with race and gender, with special emphasis of the psychology of prejudice.

Required Texts

(BG) Banaji, M. and Greenwald, A. *Blindspot*. New York: Delacourte Press, 2013. ISBN: 978-0-553-80464-5.

(M) All other readings will be posted to Moodle.

Grading

The scale this course uses is as follows:

A= 100%-90%	D=69%-60%
B= 89%-80%	F=59% - 0%
C=79% -70%	

Note: pluses and minuses will be given (e.g. 92% = A-) except for in final grades, which will not use minuses, as per NJIT's bizarre policies.

Requirements

Papers (40%)

Students must write two critical essays, each approximately 6-8 pages. The instructor will distribute choices for essay topics. Students will have the option to re-write their essays for a better grade if they choose. Students will also do anonymous peer editing of each other's papers.

Be warned: you will be expected to work hard on these essays. Half-baked ideas and sloppy writing will not be accepted. You should plan to revise your essay several times **before** turning it in. Keep the following advice from David Foster Wallace in mind:

“If you are used to whipping off papers the night before they're due, running them quickly through the computer's Spellchecker, handing them in full of high-school errors and sentences that make no sense and having the professor accept them 'because the ideas are good' or something, please be informed that I draw no distinction between the quality of one's ideas and the quality of those ideas' verbal expression, and I will not accept sloppy, rough-draftish, or semiliterate college writing. Again, I am absolutely not kidding.”

Be really warned: IF YOU PLAGIARIZE A PAPER, YOU WILL FAIL THE COURSE. See the “What Counts as Plagiarism” handout for more information. Also see NJIT’s academic integrity policy: <http://www.njit.edu/academics/integrity.php>

Reading Quizzes (20%)

Occasional unannounced reading quizzes will be given in class to ensure that students are both doing and comprehending the assigned readings.

Group Poster Presentations (20%)

In groups, students will create a poster on a topic of their choice and present their research to the class. This project requires students to do independent research. [Here](#), [here](#), and [here](#) are tips for creating effective posters. Also, Davida Scharf is an expert researcher and our librarian for the Humanities Department. She has prepared online research guides which you may find useful. Start here: [Tools for All Writers](#). She is available for help during her office hours, or by appointment. Her contact information and calendar are available here <http://researchguides.njit.edu/scharf>. Take advantage of her expertise. Library Research Guides are also available to the Rutgers information resources. See: <http://libguides.rutgers.edu/>

Participation, Attendance, Quality of Failure, and Protokol (20%)

Active and informed **participation** in class discussions counts for a relatively large portion of your final grade in this course. If you are afraid of speaking in public, push yourself to try. If you are terribly afraid of speaking in public, please talk with me about it privately before the course begins. Note that asking questions in class—no matter how simple or well-informed the question is—counts as “active and informed participation.” So, ask the questions that are in your head, even if you think everyone else knows the answer. (Hint: they don’t.)

Regular class attendance is expected and counts toward this portion of your grade.

Quality of failure refers to your willingness to take intellectual risks. Have you proposed a different way to look at things? Have you taken a stand for an unpopular view? Have you argued for a view that might seem strange? Most importantly, have you been willing to speak or write about something even if you’re not it’s right? If so, then you will get a good Quality of Failure grade. Whenever you take a risk and fail, just tell yourself, “this is how I learn.”

The final component of your participation grade is a daily class *Protokol*. A *Protokol* is a short **interpretive** summary of the previous class’ discussion, read aloud by a student at the start of each class. An interpretive summary means that you must do more than simply regurgitate what was said in the previous class; instead, you must condense, organize, and clarify what went on in the previous class. Each student will be expected to do one *Protokol* over the course of the semester. Students will be asked to circulate an electronic copy of their *Protokol* to the class.

Schedule

W 9.4: Introductions

F 9.6: Small group conversations (no assigned reading)

Feminine Souls, The Workplace, and Equality

W 9.11: Beauvoir, selections from *The Second Sex* (M)

F 9.13: “Gender Pay Gap” (M) & read entries for 30 minutes on the “What is it like to be a woman in philosophy” blog (M)

Race, Consciousness, and Prejudice

W 9.18: Wideman, “The Seat Not Taken” (M), Carter, “The Black Table, the Empty Seat, and the Tie” (M) & President Obama’s remarks after the Trayvon Martin verdict (M)

F 9.20: Shapiro, “The Roots of the Widening Racial Wealth Gap” (M)

Cognitive Psychology and Blindspots

W 9.25: BG: Preface & Ch. 1

F 9.27: Sloman, “The Empirical Case for Two Systems of Reasoning” (M)

Implicit Attitudes

W 10.2: BG: Appendix 1

F 10.4: BG: Chs. 2 & 3

W 10.9: Discussion: IAT results (no reading)

F 10.11: Greenwald et al., “Race Attitude Measures Predicted Vote in the 2008 US Presidential Election” (M)

Implicit and Explicit Attitudes

W 10.16: BG: Ch. 4

F 10.18: Kelly and Roedder, “Racial Cognition and the Ethics of Implicit Bias” (M), **Paper #1 due**

Stereotypes and Stereotyping

W 10.23: BG: Ch. 5

F 10.25: BG: Ch. 6 & Appendix 2

W 10.30: Film: Fruitvale Station

F 11.1: Film: Fruitvale Station

W 11.6: Jost et al., “The Existence of Implicit Bias is Beyond Reasonable Doubt” (M)

F 11.8: No class

Interventions and Ethics

W 11.13: BG: Ch. 8

F 11.15: Monteith et al., “Consequences of Stereotype Suppression,” “Devine et al., “Long-Term Reduction in Implicit Bias” & Galinski and Moskowitz, “Perspective Taking”

W 11.20: Railton, "Two Cheers for Virtue"

F 11.22: TBD **Paper #2 due**

W 11.27: TBD

Student Research

W 12.4: Poster presentations

F 12.6: Poster presentations

W 12.11: Poster presentations