

[PHL 213] Africana Philosophy (Spring Semester 2020)

Tuesday & Thursday 2:40—4:00 PM Room 103 Berkey Hall

Dr. John H. McClendon III, Professor of Philosophy

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Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 11-12:00 PM. All other times are by appointment.

Course Description

This course undertakes the examination of Africana philosophy via a focus on three primary areas, metaphilosophy, political philosophy and theories of Africana cultural philosophy. Students will learn how Africana philosophers has addressed varied philosophical problems within the context of the struggle against racism, national oppression and other forms of exploitation. Particular attention to matters of African identity.

Course Format

Lecture/discussion format and students are encouraged to apply the various philosophical tools of analysis in class discussions and written work. Our approach is multimedia incorporating readings and film.

Course Objectives

1. Introduce basic philosophical concepts, and reasoning, as well as develop skills in the interpretation of philosophical problems as it relates to themes and philosophers within the Africana philosophical tradition.
2. Develop a critical understanding of the various Africana philosophers and philosophical schools of thought.
3. Enhance skills in reading, writing, and the articulation of philosophical argumentation.

Course Requirements

1. Two quizzes each worth 20% or combined as 40% of the total grade. The quiz is unannounced and cannot be made up in the case of unexcused absences. One midterm exam and a final exam each constitute 30% of your grade or combined 60% of the total grade.
2. Class attendance as well as being on time to class is mandatory. There is one point grade deduction from your final grade for each unexcused absence.
3. Class presentations are assigned and constitute an integral part of class participation. Additionally assigned readings are made for each class presentation. Each student is assigned at least two class presentations. In case of absence, **students are still held responsible for all assignments made during absences.**
4. All required readings (or video assignments) designated in the syllabus should be read/viewed prior to the stipulated date of class. Thorough preparation for class and completion of assigned readings/videos are imperative for class participation.
5. **Test booklets are required for all quizzes and examinations.** Quiz and examinations must be written in black or blue ink. Not having a test booklet and writing in pencil will result in a failing grade for quizzes and exams. You should always carry a test booklet when attending class.

Policy on Academic Freedom and Integrity

Article 2.3.3 of the *Academic Freedom Report* clearly stipulates “the student shares with the faculty the responsibility for maintaining the integrity of scholarship, grades, and professional standards.” In addition, the Department of Philosophy adheres to the policies on academic honesty as specified in *General Student Regulations* 1.0, Protection of Scholarship and Grades, and in the all-University Policy on Integrity of Scholarship and Grades, which are included in *Spartan Life: Student Handbook and Resource Guide*. Students who commit an act of academic dishonesty are subject to failing the course.

Policy on Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities should contact the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities to establish reasonable accommodations. For an appointment with a counselor, call 353-9642 (voice) or 355-1293 (TTY).

Policy on texting and use of electronic equipment

All cell phones must be turned off during class. Texting or any other use of electronic equipment during class time not relating to class will result in an immediate dismissal from class and the loss of one credit point toward your final grade.

Please Note

This syllabus is a guide for directing our study thus modifications and amendments may occur when deemed necessary. Students will be given sufficient time to make the needed adjustments if such changes are necessary.

Required Texts

Stephen C. Ferguson II, *Philosophy of African American Studies*; *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*; *Philosophia Africana* and *APA Newsletter on Philosophy and the Black Experience* (found on the American Philosophical Association website)

Week 1 (1/7-9) Topic: Introduction to Course: Africana Philosophy and Metaphilosophical Considerations

Readings: A Discussion with Professor Teodros Kiros—Africana Philosophy, Lyrical Composition Global Justice, (YouTube video)

Week 2 (1/14-16) Topic: Africana Philosophy in World History:

Readings: Lucius Outlaw, Africana Philosophy *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*

Week 3 (1/21-23) Topic: What is Negritude?

Readings: Souleymane Bachir Diagne, Negritude in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*

Week 4 (1/28-30) (1/21-23) Topic: African Ethics and the Nature of Morality

Readings: Kwame Gyekwe, African Ethics in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*

Week 5 (2/4-6) Topic: Considerations on Universality: How is Philosophy Relevant to People of African Ancestry? **Readings:** Bernard Matolino, “Universalism and African Philosophy” *South African Journal of Philosophy*, 10/2015, **Vol. 34, Issue 4**, pp. 433–440 (Full Text Online)

Week 6 (2/11-13) Topic: Historical Context for African Philosophical Inquiry

Readings: Edwin Etieyibo, “African Philosophy: Past, Present and Future” *Philosophia Africana* V. 18, n. 1 Online journal MSU Library, Theophile Obenga and Atomist Philosophy in Ancient Egypt (video on YouTube)

Week 7 (2/19-21) Topic: Garveyism and Nkrumaism: Contending Ideas about Africa

Readings: McClendon, “On Assessing the Ideological Impact of Garveyism on Nkrumaism: Political Symbolism Contra Theoretical Substance” *APA Newsletter on Philosophy and the Black Experience*, (Spring 2003) V. 2, n. 2

Week 8 (2/25-27) Special Note: Topic: Review on Tuesday & **Midterm Exam Thursday**

Spring Break March 2-6 2019

Week 9 (3/10-12) Topic: Frederick Douglass as Philosopher **Readings:** Ronald Sundstrom, Fredrick Douglass in Stanford *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*

Week 10 (3/17-19) Topic: Philosophy of African American Studies: What frames the Black Experience and the notion of Class Struggle?

Readings: Ferguson, Chapter 1, *Philosophy of African American Studies*

Week 11 (3/24-26) Topic: Afrocentrism as Philosophical Viewpoint **Readings:** Ferguson, Chapter 2, *Philosophy of African American Studies*

Week 12 (3/31-4/2) Topic: Africana Philosophy and Ideological Struggle: Eurocentrism versus Afrocentrism

Readings: Ferguson, Chapter 3, *Philosophy of African American Studies*

Week 13 (4/2-4) **Topic:** What is Utopianism?

Readings: *Consciencism*, Ferguson, Chapter 4 *Philosophy of African American Studies*

Week 14 (4/9-11)

Topic: What is Knowledge and how does it serve the Africana world?

Readings: Ferguson, Chapter 5 *Philosophy of African American Studies*

Week 15 (4/16-18)

Topic: Concluding Remarks on Africana Philosophy

Readings: On D2L.

Final Exam: Place 103 Berkey Hall

Date: Thursday 4/29/2020

Time: 3-5 PM