

PLEASE NOTE CAREFULLY:

The full set of school regulations and procedures is contained in the Undergraduate Student Handbook which is available online at your MyAberdeen Organisation page. Students are expected to familiarise themselves not only with the contents of this leaflet but also with the contents of the Handbook. Therefore, ignorance of the contents of the Handbook will not excuse the breach of any School regulation or procedure.

You must familiarise yourself with this important information at the earliest opportunity.

COURSE CO-ORDINATOR/COURSE TEAM

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Students are asked to make themselves familiar with the information on key institutional policies which been made available within MyAberdeen (<https://abdn.blackboard.com/bbcswebdav/institution/Policies>). These policies are relevant to all students and will be useful to you throughout your studies. They contain important information and address issues such as what to do if you are absent, how to raise an appeal or a complaint and how seriously the University takes your feedback.

These institutional policies should be read in conjunction with this course guide, in which School specific policies are detailed. Further information can be found on the [University's Infohub webpage](#) or by visiting the Infohub.

TIMETABLE

Students can view their university timetable at <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/infohub/study/timetables-550.php>

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Some of the most pervasive forms of discrimination are based on sex, sexual orientation, race, and disability. Each of these phenomena straddles the boundaries between facts and values. This course investigates what these phenomena are in the first place, especially whether they are biological, socially constructed, or a combination of both. It also explores the extent to which they underpin, and are influenced by, our intuitions about what is natural, abnormal, innate or a matter of choice. The course focuses on some of the conceptual, ontological, and scientific issues that inform what we, individually or as a society, should do, must do, are permitted to do, or must not do with respect to sexual orientation, race, and disability.

INTENDED AIMS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

Course aims

- To introduce students to central topics concerning the scientific nature and ontological status of sex, sexual orientation, race, and disability
- To develop critical reading and writing skills
- To develop skills for analytic reasoning, debating, and oral presentations
- To find and procure books and journal articles

Learning outcomes

- To acquire knowledge of basic issues in philosophy of sex, race, and disability
- To engage critically and dispassionately with central texts and debates that raise sensitive and controversial issues
- To be able to articulate one's ideas clearly and systematically in written form and in discussions
- To know how to find and procure books and journal articles

SEMINAR PROGRAMME

This course is taught through weekly 90-min seminars, rather than lectures. You are required to read *in advance* the texts for each seminar. The topics and readings are listed below. Read the text with the following questions in mind: 1) What are the main claims? 2) How are they supported? 3) Do you agree/disagree with the claims or arguments, and why? There is no expectation that you get the answers to these questions 'right'. Instead, think through what is being claimed, have a stab at answering the questions, and take a note of where you get stuck. Advice about how to read philosophical text will be provided at the start of the course. You should also consult the "Guidelines on Reading Philosophy", available on the course website at MyAberdeen.

Seminars are devoted to discussing the readings and to clarify any issues you came across when preparing for the seminar. Importantly, the seminars are the place to try out your own views and ideas on the topic, as long as they engage with the readings and your peers.

READING LIST

The * items mark the compulsory readings for the seminar [only the underlined sections in square brackets !].

The readings are provided through the library [see square brackets for details] or, in a few cases, through openly available URLs. Access to journals is usually online and requires a login. Readings are not provided via MyAberdeen, because it is one of the course aims to learn how to find and procure books and journal articles.

Seminar 1: Introduction

[No required readings. The first meeting explains the course structure, requirements, and assessments. It also provides advice on reading philosophical texts and writing philosophical essays. The latter is mainly intended for non-philosophy students]

Seminar 2: Key Positions, Approaches, and Concepts

- * Haslanger, Sally (2013). *Resisting Reality*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. Ch10 [sections 'Race Eliminativism...', 'Natural and Social Kinds', 'Can Facts Settle the Matter?'] [e-book, library]
- Bird, Alexander (2000). *Philosophy of Science*. London: Routledge [chapter on natural kinds] [Heavy demand section, library]

Seminar 3: Race as a Social Construct

- * Haslanger, Sally (2013). *Resisting Reality*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. Ch10 [sections 'Lessons from Philosophy of Language', 'Is Race a Fiction?', 'Race as a Social Kind'] [introduces key positions and concepts] [e-book, library]
- Mills, Charles W. (2013). Notes from the resistance: some comments on Sally Haslanger's resisting reality. *Philosophical Studies* 171 (1):1-13 [response to Haslanger] [journal]

Haslanger, Sally (2000). Gender and Race: (What) Are They? (What) Do We Want Them to Be? *Noûs* 34 (1): 31–55 [Haslanger's position in more detail] [journal]

Seminar 4: Race as a Biological Kind

* Glasgow, Joshua (2005). "On the New Biology of Race, *The Journal of Philosophy*, 456-74. [sections I-IV] [exposition and criticism of the 'new biology' of race] [journal]

Andreasen, Robin O. (2007). Biological Conceptions of Race. In Mohan Matthen & Christopher Stephens (eds.), *Philosophy of Biology*. Elsevier 455—481 [review of race as a biological kind by one of its advocates] [e-book, library]

Spencer, Quayshawn (2014). A Radical Solution to the Race Problem, *Philosophy of Science*, 1025-1038 [population genetics approach, technical] [journal]

Seminar 5: Race as a Scientific and Folk Concept

* Appiah, Kwame Anthony (2006). How to Decide If Races Exist. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 106 (3):363–380. [whole paper] [folk and biological notions of race] [journal]

Kendig, Catherine (2011). Race as a Physiosocial Phenomenon. *History and Philosophy of the Life Sciences* 33 (2):191-222 [reviews and combines biological and social accounts] [via <https://michiganstate.academia.edu/CatherineKatieKendig> login required]

Hochman, Adam (2013). Against the New Racial Naturalism. *Journal of Philosophy* 6:331–51 [journal]

Seminar 6: Sex and Gender

* Stone, Alison, (2007). *An Introduction to Feminist Philosophy*, Cambridge: Polity Press [Ch. 1 (sections 1-6) and ch. 2 (sections 1, 3, 9)] [Heavy demand section, library]

Moi, Toril, 1999, *What is a Woman?*, Oxford: OUP [Ch. 1: against the sex/gender distinction] [Heavy demand section, library]

- Mikkola, Mari. 2006, "Elizabeth Spelman, Gender Realism, and Women", *Hypatia*, 21: 77–96. [defends gender realism] [journal]
- Fausto-Sterling, Anne, (2000). *Sexing the Body: Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality*, New York: Basic Books. [historical and biological background] [Heavy demand section, library]

Seminar 7: Biological Accounts of Sexual Orientation

- * The Nuffield Foundation (2002). *Genetics and Human Behaviour*. Chapter 3 [sections 3.1-3.15 and 3.20] <http://nuffieldbioethics.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Genetics-and-behaviour-Chapter-3-Research-in-behavioural-genetics.pdf>
 - * The Nuffield Foundation (2002). *Genetics and Human Behaviour*. Chapter 10 [sections 10.1-10.13 and 10.23-10.28] <http://nuffieldbioethics.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Genetics-and-behaviour-Chapter-10-Review-of-the-evidence-sexual-orientation.pdf>
 - * Sober, Elliott. (2000). *Philosophy of Biology*. Boulder: Westview Press [pp. 189-192]. [Heavy demand section, library]
- Horvath, Christopher (2007). Biological Explanations of Human Sexuality: The Genetic Basis of Sexual Orientation. In David L. Hull & Michael Ruse (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Philosophy of Biology*. [Heavy demand section, library]

Seminar 8: Sexual Orientation as Choice

- * Wilkerson, William S. (2009). Is It a Choice? Sexual Orientation as Interpretation. *Journal of Social Philosophy* 40 (1):97-116. [pp. 97-107] [journal]
- Adriaens, Pieter R. & Andreas De Block (2006). The Evolution of a Social Construction: The Case of Male Homosexuality. *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine* 49 (4):570-585 [defend social construction account] [journal]

Seminar 9: Naturalism and Normativism about Disorders

- * Wakefield, Jerome C. (1992). The Concept of Mental Disorder: On the boundary between biological facts and social values. *American Psychologist* 6(3): 373–388 [pp. 373-374 and 381-386] [journal]

Ereshefsky, Marc (2009). Defining 'Health' and 'Disease'. *Studies in the history and philosophy of biological and biomedical sciences* 40(3): 221-7 [journal]

Wakefield, Jerome C. (2000) Spandrels, vestigial organs, and such: reply to Murphy and Woolfolk's 'The harmful dysfunction analysis of mental disorder'. *Philosophy, Psychiatry, and Psychology* 7: 253-269 [journal]

Seminar 10: Disability as Mere Difference

* Barnes, Elizabeth (2009). Disability, Minority, and Difference. *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 26 (4):337-355. [[sections 1-2, pp. 337-347](#)] [mere difference account of disability] [journal]

Barnes, Elizabeth (2016). *The Minority Body: A Theory of Disability*. Oxford University Press [philosophical account of disability, comprehensive and readable] [e-book, library]

Seminar 11: Against the Mere-Difference Account

* Barnes, Elizabeth (2009). Disability, Minority, and Difference. *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 26 (4):337-355. [[sections 3-4, pp. 347-351](#)] [problematic implications] [journal]

* Andrić, Vuko & Joachim Wündisch (2015). Is It Bad to Be Disabled? Adjudicating Between the Mere-Difference and the Bad-Difference Views of Disability. *Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy* 9 (3):1–16 [[sections I, II, and IV](#)] [criticism of Barnes] [journal]

Edwards, Claire (2013). The Anomalous Wellbeing of Disabled People: A Response. *Topoi* 32 (2):189-196 [more on normative judgements regarding disability] [journal]

Review Session

[No required readings. The review session is student-led]

ACCESS TO READINGS AND USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have full and convenient access to the required texts during seminars. Failure to do so will affect your mark for seminar participation. Therefore, as a rule, **students are expected to print out the required readings and take notes by hand.**

There are several reasons for this. It avoids the frequent accessibility problems during seminars as well as the temptation to use devices for activities unrelated to the course. It also facilitates active participation in seminar discussions. If you insist on using a device, then only for accessing the readings and/or for note-taking. Any reasonable suspicion (not proof) of misuse is sufficient for incurring sanctions, which can include the removal from the course.

ASSESSMENT

First attempt

Level 3: Participation (20%), Quizzes (40%), 2000-word essay on a topic chosen from a list of options (40%)

Level 4: Participation (20%), Quizzes (40%), 3000-word essay on a topic of your choice (40%)

Resit for level 3

3000-word essay on an assigned topic and to be completed within a set time period (100%)

[Click to view the University Level Descriptors \(ANNEX A\).](#)

[Click to view the University Assessment Scale Band Descriptors \(ANNEX B\).](#)

PLEASE NOTE: In order to pass a course on the first attempt, a student must attain a Common Grading Scale (CGS) mark of at least E3 on each element of course assessment. Failure to do so will result in a grade of no greater than CGS E1 for the course as a whole.

ESSAYS

Formal requirements: The word count ($\pm 5\%$) includes quotations and footnotes, but not the bibliography; students should note that they will be penalised for work which is either too long or too short

General: Essays must critically engage with at least (1) one compulsory reading, so that you can take advantage of the seminar discussions, and (2) one additional text. The additional text may be taken from the reading list. If you prefer a text that is not listed here, then you should discuss this with the course coordinator.

It is possible to write an excellent essay on the basis of two texts only. The goal of the essay is to master a (potentially narrow) topic in some depth and articulate your own, considered view about it. The focus is on carefully thinking through some (perhaps only one or two) of the issues raised in the seminars and readings, rather than on surveying the existing literature. Advice on writing philosophical essays will be given at the start of the course. You should also study the “Guidelines on Writing a Philosophy Paper”, available on the course website.

Topics for Level 3: Choose one of the following essay questions:

1. Is race a social kind?
2. Do biological races exist?
3. Are sex and gender distinct phenomena?
4. Do we choose our sexual orientation?
5. Is the popular idea of a ‘gay gene’ conceptually problematic?
6. Are mental disorders harmful dysfunctions?
7. Is disability a mere difference?

Topics for Level 4: You can choose a question from the list above or propose your own question on a topic covered in this course. Proposing your own essay questions requires prior discussion with, and approval from, the course coordinator.

ESSAY DEADLINE

30 November 2018

SUBMISSION ARRANGEMENTS

Submit a .doc or .docx and include the word count.

Submit by the due date, no hard copy will be required unless directly requested by the course coordinator through [MyAberdeen](#).

In advance of uploading, please save the assignment with your student id number listed in the filename, i.e. 59999999 DRXXXX Essay 1.

When asked to enter a title for the assignment, please enter a title identical to the name of your saved assignment, i.e. 59999999 DRXXXX Essay 1.

Please note: failure to submit by the due date (unless a prior arrangement has been made) will result in a deduction of marks. Where no submission is received, this will result in a mark of zero.

Please note: *Safeassign* text matching software will be used, however the School of Divinity, History and Philosophy reserves the right to also submit material to *TurnitinUK* when deemed necessary.