



COURSE OUTLINE

Instructor Name: Dr. Nicole Wyatt

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COURSE INFORMATION

Charles Mills (1951-2021) was once described as by fellow philosopher Christopher Lebron as "our black Socrates". Mills was on the forefront of placing race, class, and gender into mainstream philosophical thought. Perhaps best known for his scathing critique of the whiteness of western political theory, Mills also made important contributions in metaphysics and epistemology. This class will be a deep dive into his views on race, racism, white ignorance, and the prospects for a radical revisioning of the liberal tradition.

PREREQUISITE(S)

Consent of the department.

COURSE OBJECTIVES/LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Deep knowledge of Charles Mills' views on race, racism, white ignorance, and the prospects for a radical revisioning of the liberal tradition.
- Ability to critically digest, interpret, and analyze complex sources
- Ability to write a convincing argument that takes adequate account of alternative positions
- Ability to engage in constructive, respectful, oral and written argumentation

REQUIRED/RECOMMENDED TEXTBOOKS, READINGS AND MATERIALS

There are three main texts for the class:

- Mills, Charles. 1998. *Blackness Visible: Essays on Philosophy and Race*. Cornell University Press. 978-0801484711
- Mills, Charles. 1999. *The Racial Contract*. Cornell University Press. 978-0801484636
- Mills, Charles. 2017. *Black rights/white wrongs : the critique of racial liberalism*. New York, NY : Oxford University Press. 978-0190245429

These are available as ebooks via the University library, as well as the usual book sellers. Due to the late addition of the course to the schedule they are not currently available via the University bookstore.

Additional readings will be made available via D2L.

COURSE ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

Assessment in this class will be based on the following components:

Weekly questions: Each week by the end of the day on Wednesday (i.e. the night before the class meeting on Thursday), I'd like you to submit a question based on one of the readings for that week. The question you write should demonstrate that you've read the reading well enough to be at least confused by it. As my colleague David Dick points out, "confusion is a philosophical heuristic, it either helps you identify a place where you don't understand, or where the argument doesn't make sense. Either one of these counts as philosophical progress."

Weekly questions and their explanations/context should not generally be longer than 300 words.

Over the 13 weeks of the term you need to submit 10 weekly questions. It's up to you which weeks, you wish to submit questions on. No extra credit will be given for questions beyond the ten.

Questions should be submitted to the Dropbox set up on D2L for this purpose, or in person in class on Tuesday.

Participation in discussion: You are expected to be an active contributor to class discussion. It is also expected that your contributions be respectful and constructive.

Briefing papers: Two briefing papers explaining two different aspects of Mills thought are required for this class. These papers should be approximately 1500 words, and should be written in language accessible to a non-specialist (though not a non-philosopher). A good (albeit longer) model are the papers published in the *Philosophy Compass* (<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/17479991>).

Briefing papers will be graded pass/fail. Failing papers may be resubmitted until such time as they are judged a pass. The instructor will meet with each student to discuss the briefing papers after submission.

The first paper should be initially submitted by **noon on February 11th**. The second should be initially submitted by **noon on March 11th**. They may be submitted earlier. Dropboxes will be set up on D2L for this purpose.

The letter grade for the briefing papers will be determined as follows:

2 Passing Briefing Papers = A (4.0)

1 Passing Briefing Paper = B (3.0)

0 Passing Briefing Papers = F (0.0)

Term Paper: The term paper for this class is due on **April 22nd at noon**. More detailed instructions on the paper will be provided after the winter break.

Students wishing instructor feedback on a draft paper should submit the draft by April 8th, and must book a meeting to discuss the draft with the instructor (written feedback will not be provided).

The instructor will meet with each student to discuss the term paper after submission.

IMPORTANT DEPARTMENTAL, FACULTY AND UNIVERSITY INFORMATION

Academic Accommodations

It is the student's responsibility to request academic accommodations according to the University policies and procedures. The student accommodation policy can be found at ucalgary.ca/legal-services/sites/default/files/teams/1/Policies-Student-Accommodation-Policy.pdf.

Students needing an Accommodation because of a disability or medical condition should communicate this need to Student Accessibility Services in accordance with the Procedure for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: ucalgary.ca/legal-services/sites/default/files/teams/1/Policies-Accommodation-for-Students-with-Disabilities-Procedure.pdf. Students needing an Accommodation in relation to their coursework or to fulfil requirements for a graduate degree, based on a protected ground other than disability, should communicate this need, preferably in writing, to their instructor.

Absence or Missed Course Assessments

Students who are absent from class assessments (tests, participation activities, or other assignments) should inform their instructors as soon as possible. If the reason provided for the absence is acceptable, instructors may decide that any arrangements made can take forms other than make-up tests or assignments. For example, the weight of a missed grade may be added to another assignment or test.

Student Support and Resources

Full details and information about the following resources can be found at ucalgary.ca/current-students/student-services

- Wellness and Mental Health Resources
- Student Success Centre
- Student Ombuds Office
- Student Union (SU) Information
- Graduate Students' Association (GSA) Information
- Emergency Evacuation/Assembly Points
- Safewalk

Academic Advising

If you are a student in the Faculty of Arts, you can speak to an academic advisor in the Arts Students' Centre about course planning, course selection, registration, program progression and more. Visit the Faculty of Arts website at <https://arts.ucalgary.ca/current-students/undergraduate/academic-advising> for contact details and information regarding common academic concerns.

For questions specific to the philosophy program, please visit arts.ucalgary.ca/philosophy. Further academic guidance is available by contacting Jeremy Fantl (Undergraduate Program Director ifantl@ucalgary.ca) or David Dick (Honours Advisor dgdick@ucalgary.ca).

Writing Assessment and Support

The assessment of all written assignments—and, to a lesser extent, written exam responses—is based in part on writing skills. This includes correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc.), as well as general clarity and organization. Research papers must include a thorough and accurate citation of sources. Students are also encouraged to use Writing Support Services for assistance. For more information, and other services offered by the Student Success Centre, please visit ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success.

Required Technology

In order to successfully engage in their learning experiences at the University of Calgary, students taking online, remote, and blended courses are required to have reliable access to the following technology:

- A computer with a supported operating system, as well as the latest security, and malware updates;
- A current and updated web browser;
- Webcam (built-in or external);
- Microphone and speaker (built-in or external), or headset with microphone;
- Current antivirus and/or firewall software enabled;
- Broadband internet connection.

Most current laptops will have a built-in webcam, speaker and microphone.

Responsible Use of D2L

Important information and communication about this course will be posted on D2L (Desire2Learn), UCalgary's online learning management system. Visit <https://ucalgary.service-now.com/it> for how-to information and technical assistance.

All users of D2L are bound by the guidelines on the responsible use of D2L posted here: <https://elearn.ucalgary.ca/commitment-to-the-responsible-use-of-d2l/>. The instructor may establish additional specific course policies for D2L, Zoom, and any other technologies used to support remote learning. Instructional materials, including audio or video recordings of lectures, may not be posted outside of the course D2L site. Students violating this policy are subject to discipline under the [University of Calgary's Non-Academic Misconduct policy](#).

Media Recording

Please refer to the following statement on media recording of students: https://elearn.ucalgary.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Media-Recording-in-Learning-Environments-OSP_FINAL.pdf

Academic Misconduct/Honesty

Cheating or plagiarism on any assignment or examination is as an extremely serious academic offense, the penalty for which will be an F on the assignment or an F in the course, and possibly a disciplinary sanction such as probation, suspension, or expulsion. For information on academic misconduct and its consequences, please see the University of Calgary Calendar at ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html.

Intellectual honesty requires that your work include adequate referencing to sources. Plagiarism occurs when you do not acknowledge or correctly reference your sources. If you have questions about referencing, please consult your instructor.

University Policies

The Instructor Intellectual Property Policy is available at ucalgary.ca/legal-services/sites/default/files/teams/1/Policies-Intellectual-Property-Policy.pdf

The University of Calgary is under the jurisdiction of the provincial Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act, as outlined at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/access-information-privacy>. The instructor (or TA) must return graded assignments *directly* to the student UNLESS written permission to do otherwise has been provided.

All students are required to read the University of Calgary policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright (<https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/sites/default/files/teams/1/Policies-Acceptable-Use-of-Material-Protected-by-Copyright-Policy.pdf>) and requirements of the copyright act (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html>).