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Philosophy 203

TOPICS IN PHILOSOPHY: PHILOSOPHY AND POLITICS OF IDENTITY

Course Description

Philosophy 203 will investigate the meanings, problems, and possibilities of contemporary identity politics. The course will begin with an examination of three very different approaches toward identity and politics: liberal conceptions of individual rights and religious liberties; existentialist explorations of nihilism and freedom; and traditionalist understandings of virtue and action. The heart of the course will then trace the emergence of a new kind of identity politics out of racial, feminist, and queer movements of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. The term will end by trying to make sense of contemporary discussions of identity and politics, in relation both to the history of Western thought and to the emerging global order, currently shaped by the strange mix of unifying market forces, divisive religious and ethnic extremism, hopes for democratization, and fears of terrorism. Note that this course is also cross-listed as Feminist and Gender Studies 206, "Topics in Feminist and Gender Studies," and American Cultural Studies 208, "Topics in Cultural Studies." Students may enroll under any of these rubrics.

Course Goals

The primary aim of the course will be to help students understand some basic philosophical approaches to understanding identity – both in personal and political or social senses. The course will explore dilemmas and controversies associated with such approaches to identity. An equally important aim of the course will be help students gain perspective on contemporary political controversies associated with the emergence of various forms of identity politics, particularly forms associated with racial, feminist, and queer political movements of the last 40 years or so. The course will also seek to develop students' ability to bring together judgments, based upon philosophical principles and arguments, with historical interpretations of the changing contexts that shape philosophical horizons.

Philosophy 203 course will seek to develop students' abilities to read, interpret, and respond to complex texts. Refining and developing interpretations of the texts we read will be emphasized through a number of short writing assignments, combined with discussion and presentations in class. Two longer papers will aim to give students chances to develop and defend their own judgments about the problems the course will investigate. A final informal review essay will give students a chance to form a final judgement about the materials and problems explored during the block.

Course Requirements

Reading. This course will have a heavy yet quite rewarding reading list. Students will be expected to keep up with the reading throughout the block. Plan to spend a fair amount of time reading *before* attending class and, at times, re-reading after class. In general, texts are to be brought to our meetings so that they may be referred to in our discussions.

Course Meetings and Discussion. Most course meetings will consist largely of discussion, with some lecturing from time to time. Individual students will be assigned to lead discussions or take part in debates on particular topics periodically. Students should expect to attend class meetings consistently and punctually; and to discuss the subjects and texts under investigation in a civil manner. Performance in discussions will strongly influence the participation grade.

Writing and Examinations. Students will write seven 1½-2 page reaction papers, two longer essays (4-5 and 5-7 pages, respectively), and a final, longer reaction paper (3-4 pages). The short reaction papers may be presented in an informal style, and they will be graded minimally. The two longer essays are to be typed (i.e., word-processed), double-spaced, and annotated in accordance with accepted norms of scholarship (that is, with citations and notes). The longer essays will be given letter grades. The final reaction paper may also be presented in an informal style; however, it will be given a letter grade. Unexcused late papers will be downgraded one step per hour tardy.

For detailed explanations of the grading policy, see the end of this syllabus.

Required Texts

John Locke, *A Letter concerning Toleration*, ed. James Tully (Hackett Publishing, 1983)
Jean-Paul Sartre, *Nausea*, trans. Lloyd Alexander (New Directions Publishing, 1964)
Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (Grove Press, 1963)
Iris Marion Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton University Press, 1990)
Charles Taylor, *Multiculturalism*, ed. Amy Guttman (Princeton University Press, 1994)
Martin Heidegger, *Identity and Difference* (University of Chicago Press, 2002)
Benjamin Barber, *Jihad vs. McWorld: Terrorism's Challenge to Democracy* (Ballantine Books, 1995, 2001)

Additional Readings

John Locke, selections from An Essay Concerning Human Understanding (1690), ed. Roger Bishop Jones, downloaded from Humanum (Research Institute for the Humanities, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1994, 1995): http://www.arts.cuhk.edu.hk/Philosophy/Locke/echu/, accessed 30 October 2004 Jean-Paul Sartre, "Existentialism Is a Humanism," from The Fabric of Existentialism: Philosophical and Literary Sources, ed. Richard Gill and Ernest Sherman (Prentice-Hall, 1973)

Alasdair MacIntyre, "Virtues, the Unity of Life, and the Conception of Tradition," in *After Virtue* (Notre Dame University Press, 1981, 1984)

John Rawls, "Justice as Fairness," in *Philosophy, Politics, and Society* (Second Series), ed. Peter Laslett and W. G. Runciman (Oxford, 1964)

Judith Butler, selections from *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (Routledge, 1990, 1999)

Annamarie Jagose, "Queer" and "Afterword," from *Queer Theory: An Introduction* (New York University Press. 1996)

Lennard J. Davis, "Gaining a Daughter: A Father's Transgendered Tale," in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (24 March 2000)

Linda M. G. Zerilli, "Feminists Know Not What They Do: Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble* and the Limits of Epistemology," from *Feminism and the Abyss of Freedom* (University of Chicago Press, 2005)

Jean Bethke Elshtain, "The Politics of Displacement" and "The Politics of Difference," from *Democracy on Trial* (BasicBooks, 1995)

Selections from *Social Postmodernism: Beyond Identity Politics* (Cambridge University Press, 1995, 1999): Linda Nicholson, "Interpreting Gender"; Kwame Anthony Appiah, "African Identities"; Steven Seidman, "Deconstructing Queer Theory, or the Under-Theorization of the Social and the Ethical"; and Cindy Patton, "Reconfiguring Social Space"

Anthony Simon Laden, "Legitimacy and Deep Diversity" and selection from "Reasonable Deliberation," in *Reasonably Radical* (Cornell University Press, 2001)

Aletta J. Norval, "Democratic Identification: A Wittgensteinian Approach," in *Political Theory: An International Journal of Political Philosophy*, vol. 34, no. 2 (April 2006)

Other supplemental readings may also be assigned as the block unfolds. All additional and supplemental readings will be available as electronic reserves.

SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS, TOPICS, AND ASSIGNMENTS

Note: All assignments are to be completed *before* class.

Class will meet from 9:20 a.m. to 11:45 a.m., with a 15-minute break around 10:30.

* Indicates electronic reserve reading.

I. Three Conceptions of Identity and Politics

Monday, 24 April Introduction – Identity, Philosophy, and Politics

Reading: Begin reading Locke and Sartre as soon as possible!

Tuesday, 25 April Lockean Consciousness and the Right of Liberty

a. *Locke, "Ch. 27: "Of Identity and Diversity," in An Essay

concerning Human Understanding

b. Locke, A Letter concerning Toleration, pp. 21-58.

FIRST PAPER TOPICS DISTRIBUTED

Wednesday, 26 April
Class Meets at 1PM

Existentialism, the Problem of the Self, and Modern Freedoms

a. Sartre, Nausea, pp. 1-94.

b. Sartre, *Nausea*, pp. 94-178.

Thursday, 27 April

Selfhood: Experiences, Choices, Virtuous Roles?

a. *Sartre, "Existentialism Is a Humanism," pp. 519-533.

b. *MacIntyre, "Virtues, Unity of Life, and Concept of

Tradition," pp. 204-225.

Friday, 28 April

Writing Day

FIRST PAPER DUE AT 6 PM

II. New Identifications and New Forms of Political Action

Monday, 1 May <u>Colonization, Racism, Violence, and National Identity</u>

a. Fanon, Wretched of the Earth, pp. 35-106.

b. Fanon, Wretched of the Earth, pp. 206-248.

Tuesday, 2 May <u>Losing Identity: Problem or Good?</u>

a. Fanon, Wretched of the Earth, pp. 249-316.

b. *Rawls, "Justice as Fairness," pp. 132-157.

Wednesday, 3 May

The Liberal State and the Problem of Oppression

a. Young, Justice and the Politics of Difference, pp. 3-38.

b. Young, Justice and the Politics of Difference, pp. 39-95.

SECOND PAPER TOPICS DISTRIBUTED

Thursday, 4 May From Impartial Justice to Difference Politics

a. Young, Justice and the Politics of Difference, pp. 96-163.

b. Young, Justice and the Politics of Difference, pp. 163-191.

Friday, 5 May	Queering Identity/Difference, Performing Sex/Gender a. *Butler, <i>Gender Trouble</i> , pp. vii-xxxiii, 3-44, 163-90. b. *Jagose, "Queer" and "Afterword," pp. 72-100, 127-132; and Davis, "Gaining a Daughter," pp. 1-4.			
Monday, 8 May	 Questioning Identity Politics: Friendly Linguist/Hostile Moralist a. *Zerilli, "Feminists Know Not What They Do," pp. 33-65. b. *Elshtain, "The Politics of Displacement" and "The Politics of Difference," pp. 37-77. Afternoon: Writing Workshop – Meet in Small Groups SECOND PAPER DRAFT DUE 			
Tuesday, 9 May	 Tensions and Ambiguities of Contemporary Identities a. *Nicholson, "Interpreting Gender," and Appiah, "African Identities," pp. 39-63, 103-113. c. *Seidman, "Deconstructing Queer Theory," and Cindy Patton, "Refiguring Social Space," pp. 116-139, 216-241. 			
Wednesday, 10 May	 A Work in Progress? Philosophical Reflection on Recognition a. Charles Taylor, <i>Multiculturalism</i>, pp. 3-25. b. Charles Taylor, <i>Multiculturalism</i>, pp. 75-104. 			
Thursday, 11 May	Writing Day NO CLASS – SECOND PAPER DUE AT 2 PM			
II. Making Sense of Identity and Politics				
Friday, 12 May	A Problem with the Tradition? An Ontological Perspective			
	a. Heidegger, <i>Identity and Difference</i>, pp. 7-41.b. Heidegger, <i>Identity and Difference</i>, pp. 42-74			
Monday, 15 May				
Monday, 15 May Tuesday, 16 May	 b. Heidegger, <i>Identity and Difference</i>, pp. 42-74 A Problem with Globalized Markets? A Political Perspective a. Barber, <i>Jihad vs. McWorld</i>, pp. 1-87. b. Barber, <i>Jihad vs. McWorld</i>, pp. 88-151. 			

Grading and Attendance Policies

Grades will be assigned on an 100-point scale and weighted in the following manner:

1.	First paper (4-5 pages)	Fri., 28 April	25%
2.	Second paper draft/writing workshop	Mon., 8 May	2%
2.	Second paper (5-7 pages)	Thurs., 11 May	35%
3.	Final Reaction Paper (3-4 pages)	Wed., 17 May.	4%
4.	Seven reaction papers (1½-2 pages)	Various dates	14%
4.	Participation	All block!	20%
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TOTAL:			

The $1\frac{1}{2}$ -2 page reaction papers will be graded minimally: check, minus, zero. For detail on this requirement, see below.

Regular, timely attendance and active participation in discussion are essential parts of the course. Unexcused absences and regular tardiness will be noted and will affect grades negatively. If you have a good reason to be absent or late, notify me as soon as possible. Be sure to write a note (so that I remember!) as well as speak to me. Students absent three times or more may be asked to leave the course.

The schedule of assignments appears above. You will be expected to meet all of these deadlines. Exceptions will be made only in extreme and unavoidable circumstances. If you expect to miss submit a paper late, contact me immediately. Either see me in my office, or give me a note or an e-mail message explaining your circumstances. If religious observances or other serious obligations conflict with the course schedule, let me know as soon as possible, and we can work out an alternate schedule for you.

Plan to attend class for the whole period, focusing on coursework throughout. If you have a good reason for arriving late or leaving early, please notify me in advance in writing (e-mail is best). If you cannot notify me in advance, do so as soon as you can afterwards. As a courtesy to all, please turn off pagers and telephones while in class. Note that this entire syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.

Honor Code

Students will be expected to abide by the Honor Code. Among other things, the Honor Code specifies that you will be responsible for producing all of your own work and that you will always cite the works or ideas of others used in your work. However, discussing your ideas and your writing with others is *not* a violation of the Honor Code. In fact, it is a good idea to compare your ideas and writings with those of others and to ask others for criticisms of your work. And using other people's ideas can also be a good idea – *if* their ideas are good *and* you credit the authors for developing the ideas.

Disability Accommodations

If you believe you are eligible for learning accommodations as the result of a qualified disability, please contact me privately. If you believe you may have a disability that impacts learning, and you have not self-identified to the College's Disabilities Services Office, please do so immediately. You will find their office in the Colket Student Learning Center at Tutt Library. You may also contact the College's learning consultant, Dr. Bill Dove, at the Learning Center or directly at extension 6168. I will make appropriate learning accommodations in accordance with the Disabilities Service Office's instructions.

Office Hours/Communication

I will hold office hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1:30-3 p.m. I am also generally be in my office (132 Armstrong) in the afternoon. The easiest way to meet with me would be to make an appointment after class, or via telephone (x6564) or e-mail (dmcennerney@coloradocollege.edu).

1½-2 Page Summary and Reaction Statements

Over the course of the term, students will write at least seven short, informal summary-and-reaction statements. These pieces should:

- a) state in summary form what strikes you as the most significant or interesting point (or two points) made in the assigned text or texts; and
- b) explain your reaction to that aspect of the reading.

These statements should be the equivalent of $1\frac{1}{2}$ - 2 word-processed, double-spaced pages – so about 375-525 words long. The format is informal: your statement should list your name, the date, the assignment (the authors, titles, and chapters/pages discussed), and your own title at the top. You should divide the statement into two parts, one summarizing the reading's most important point or points and the other giving your reaction to the reading. You need neither quote nor cite the text, though you can, if you think it important to do so. The statements should be written in clear, Standard English prose. The style may be informal.

As you write, don't try to summarize *all* the points made in the reading. Focus on one or points (or, at most, three) that seems highly significant *to you*. This point or these points ought to have led you to think about something that seems important, significant, or meaningful. This point or these points need not be central to the reading, although in most cases I expect they will be. You may well write about some minor aside that the authors make, if that aside has led you to begin thinking. Just be sure to explain clearly and accurately what the authors say when you say the authors say something. Also, explain your reaction, your interest, your thought process. When I say, "explain," I don't mean saying that something is "interesting" or it has "made you think." Instead, identify what *in particular* strikes you as interesting, or what specific problems or ideas the reading raised for you, and then give the reader some sense of why any of these ideas seem important or significant to you. What has led you to react in the way you have?

This assignment is meant to be focused both on the reading and on your thoughts insofar as they relate to the readings. For the second half of the papers, you may explain why the authors' claims seem to you wrong-headed, or really cogent; why they excite or repel you; why they have made you think of something in a new way, or why they seem to point to a dead end. You may explain why the piece seems really bad or really good to you. This assignment lets you think aloud, as it were. However, the first part of the paper should accurately summarize what the author says.

The assignment also, I hope, will further four other aims. First, it will give you a chance to work on mastering the readings, as well as to demonstrate to me that you have done the reading. If there are parts of the readings that you don't understand, then write about the problems you have in seeing the author's points. I'll try to address those problems, either directly, by commenting on your paper, or indirectly, in class. Second, these assignments are designed to give you some easy practice in writing clearly and coherently. The more you learn to clarify your thoughts on paper, the better off you will be as a writer and student. Third, your comments may provide food for thought for you and your fellow students in class discussion and when you prepare to write formal essays.

These papers will be graded minimally: plus, check, minus, zero. At most, I will add only a few comments.

- Plus: a) the paper clearly and coherently develops an idea; b) it also accurately and fully summarizes what the readings say; and c) it convincingly and clearly shows why this point or line of thought is significant to you.
- Check: the paper is a serious effort that contains a reasonably accurate summary and a serious reaction.
- Minus: the paper is just thrown together, it lacks careful thought, or it is inaccurate about the reading,

Pluses will earn extra credit (2.5%), with checks gaining full credit (2%), check/minus partial (1.5%), and minuses partial (1%) credit. Zero grades may also be given. I give pluses very, very rarely. A check is already the equivalent of an "A+" already for 2% of your final grade.

There are 19 authors assigned in this course. You must write reaction papers on seven of them, but you may write on additional authors – in which case only the seven best grades will be counted for the final grade. *No late papers will be accepted.* You may write on an author only once, even if we read different pieces by that author.

Note: Reaction papers must come from across the term. Papers must come from each of the four parts of the course:

- I. Locke, Sartre, MacIntyre (choose 2 authors)
- II. Fanon, Rawls, Young, Butler, Jagose (choose 2 authors)
- III. Zerilli, Elshtain, Nicholson, Appiah, Seidman, Patton, Taylor (choose 2 authors)
- IV. Heidegger, Barber (choose 1 author)

FURTHER READING

Inquiry into the meaning and lived experience of identity cuts across many fields, including sociology and anthropology (often focusing on the construction of collectivities in particular times and places); psychology (typically examining the development of "the self"); and political science (analyzing the success or failure of national or subcultural group formation). In philosophy, investigations of identity tend to fall into three main categories: accounts of personal identity; inquiry into the logic of identity; and examination of social or political identity.

Below, I have collected—in a very unsystematic way—references to works in each of these areas that Tutt Library owns. I have also included a few important works that Tutt does not yet own. Articles and books appearing in the syllabus are not included below.

In some cases, the works listed are extremely important. In other cases, the citations appear here just because our library carries them and a brief look at the book or article led me to think that it might be worth some study. I've added a comment or two to some entries. Bear in mind, however, that this bibliography is a work-in-progress. Some important works are neglected, and some of the works here are probably not that significant. I offer this list just to give students a sense of what else might be available on the broad topic of identity.

<u>Personal Identity – Philosophical Accounts</u>

- Eric T. Olson. "Personal Identity." In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/identity-personal/>.
- David Shoemaker. "Personal Identity and Ethics." In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/identity-ethics/>.

 A very useful overview of the literature a good place to start.
- Terence Penelhum. "Personal Identity." In *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. 6, pp. 95-107. The first section contains a good, short historical introduction to the problem of identity.
- Raymond Martin and John Barresi, ed. *Personal Identity*. Blackwell, 2003.

 Very comprehensive collection of articles on the philosophy of personal identity. The introduction presents an extremely thorough (and long) overview of every major Western thinker's view of personal identity. The subsequent articles cover mainstream (largely analytic) philosophical accounts of identity published since 1970. [Not owned by CC.]
- Diana Tietjens Meyers. Feminists Rethink the Self. Westview Press, 1997.

 Provocative collection of essays by feminist philosophers calling into question the more mainstream philosophical accounts of identity. [Not owned by CC.]
- Derek Parfit. "Personal Identity." In *The Philosophical Review* 80:1 (January 1971), pp. 3-27.

 Often regarded as the most influential 20th-century account of personal identity one that belittles the focus on identity.
- Derek Parfit. Reasons and Persons. Oxford University Press, 1984.
- Christine M. Korsgaard. "Personal Identity and the Unity of Agency: A Kantian Response to Parfit." *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 18:2 (Spring, 1989), pp. 101-132.

John Perry, ed. Personal Identity. U. California Press, 1975.

A good collection of the historical literature on personal identity, including influential works by Locke, Butler, and Hume, as well as the 1971 Parfit article.

"Personal Identity." Social Philosophy & Policy 22: 2 (Summer, 2005).

A journal issue devoted to the topic of personal identity.

<u>Identity – Logical and Analytic Accounts</u>

Avrum Stroll. "Identity." In *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. 4., pp. 121-124.

Gottlob Frege. "On Sense and Reference," trans. Max Black, *The Philosophical Review* 57 (1948), pp. 207-230.

Commonly regarded as one of the founding works of the analytic philosophical tradition.

Baruch Brody. *Identity and Essence* (Princeton University Press, 1980).

Milton K. Munitz, ed. *Identity and Individuation* (New York U. Press, 1971)

David Wiggins. Sameness and Substance Renewed (Cambridge U. Press, 2001)

Social and Political Identity – Philosophical Accounts

Cressida Heyes. "Identity Politics." In In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/identity-politics/>.

Linda Martín Alcoff. *Visible Identities: Race, Gender, and the Self.* Oxford U. Press, 2006.

A philosophical inquiry into contemporary identities and identity politics, focusing on gender and race.

Patchen Markell. Bound by Recognition. Princeton U. Press, 2003.

A work of political theory questioning whether justice requires recognition.

Shane Phelan. *Identity Politics: Lesbian Feminism and the Limits of Community*. Temple U. Press, 1989.

Anne Norton. Reflections on Political Identity. Johns Hopkins U. Press, 1988.

Ross Abbinett. Culture & Identity: Critical Theories. Sage, 2003.

Social and Political Identity – Sociological and Cultural Accounts

Hetherington, Kevin. *Expressions of Identity: Space, Performance, Politics.* London: Sage, 1998. Focuses on expressivity and performance, and the ways in which "the new social movements" are not necessarily agents of social change but are instead a more heterogeneous phenomenon.

Richard Jenkins. Social Identity. Routledge, 1996.

Examines identity from a traditional sociological and anthropological perspective.

Jean-François Bayart. *The Illusion of Cultural Identity*. U. Chicago Press, 2005.

Critiques Anglo-American interest in identity, using classic sociological and political arguments to dispute the significance of cultural identity.

Gordon Matthews. Global Culture / Individual Identity: Searching for Home in the Global Supermarket.

Routledge, 2000.

Ethnographic anthropological study of identities in Japan, the U.S., and Hong Kong, questioning whether unique cultural identities exist.

- Ernest Gellner. *Culture, Identity, and Politics*. Cambridge U. Press, 1987. Reflections of prominent anthropologist on the contemporary condition.
- Pnina Werbner and Tariq Modood, ed. *Debating Cultural Hybridity: Multi-Cultural Identities and the Politics of Anti-Racism*. Zed Books, 1997.

 Essays on identity from a post-colonial perspective. [Not owned by CC.]
- Scott Lash and Jonathan Friedman, eds. *Modernity and Identity*. Blackwell, 1992.

 A collection of conference papers on modernity and postmodernity that addresses the transformation of identity in a world marked by fluidity and change.
- Manuel Castells. *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture, Vol. II: The Power of Identity.*Blackwell, 1997.
 Sprawling inquiry into the rise of new forms of identification in an age in which globalization and massive information flows undermine states and traditional forms of organizing.
- Barbara Ryan, ed. *Identity Politics in the Women's Movement*. New York U. Press, 2001. Very thorough collection of essays on the problems and promise of identity politics, especially as it involves feminist movements.
- Rina Benmayor and Andor Skotnes. *International Yearbook of Oral History and Life Stories, Vol. III: Migration and Identity.* Oxford U. Press, 1994.
 Histories of identities in transition in a globalizing world.

Psychological Approaches to Personal and Social Identity

- Donald M. Taylor. *The Quest for Identity: From Minority Groups to Generation Xers*. Praeger, 2002. Examines collective identities, especially among disadvantaged, dysfunctional minority groups.
- Cynthia Burack. *Healing Identities: Black Feminist Thought and the Politics of Groups*. Cornell U. Press, 2004.

Psychoanalytic inquiry into identity politics, its problems and possibilities, as seen from a Black feminist perspective.

- Theodore R. Sarbin and Karl E. Scheibe. *Studies in Social Identity*. Praeger, 1983, Essays building on a model of "social identity" as developed by social psychologists and covering a wide range of topics and behaviors.
- Marilyn B. Brewer and Miles Hewstone. *Self and Social Identity*. Blackwell, 2004. Essays from the *Blackwell Handbook on Social Psychology* addressing the interplay between the individual self and collective selves.