

# PHIL 528: Intersectionality Spring 2023

## Instructor

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University Hall, #1402

Office Hours: T 3:30-4:30pm, or by appt

## Course Description

Proponents of intersectionality emphasize that it is important to attend to the ways in which axes of identity and oppression (e.g. race, class, gender, and sexuality) intersect. But while intersectionality has become central to critical work in many fields, it has also proven difficult to define. This seminar will explore and attempt to gain some clarity on core intersectional notions like simultaneity, inseparability, and mutual constitution. As part of this exploration, we will pursue the following questions: Does intersectionality posit or entail the dissolution of social categories? Does intersectionality mean that there is only one system of oppression, or is it compatible with thinking that there are multiple systems of oppression? At what level does (or should) intersectional analysis operate? And what implications does intersectionality have for philosophy?

Class sessions will meet on Thursdays from 3:30-6:00pm in University Hall #1430.

## Texts

PDFs of all of the readings will be made available through the Course Box:  
<https://uofi.box.com/v/Intersectionality> (password: MutualConstitution)

## Course Requirements

- 1. Reading Précis:** You will be required to submit a reading précis for each reading through Blackboard by noon before the relevant class. Each précis should cover the following:
  - (1) What is this piece about? What is the author arguing?
  - (2) How does this piece relate to one of our core questions (cf. course description)?
  - (3) A question or response to the reading, with a brief explanation of what is driving your question or response. Questions can be interpretive or pose an objection, and responses can include remarking on something that you found particularly interesting or helpful in the reading.

I will post examples and further guidance for the précis on Blackboard.

2. **Two Paper Proposals (1-2 pages each):** A proposal should identify some problem or debate that you are interested in, briefly articulate why it is interesting, and gesture at the direction you think you would want to go in for a paper on the topic. Your first proposal (due at the end of Week 7) should focus on one of the topics from the first half of the course. Your second proposal (due by the end of Week 13) should be a final paper proposal. For the final paper proposal you can either expand/revise your first proposal or select a new topic.
3. **Final Paper (~6,000 words).** The final paper will be due on the last day of finals (May 5th). Extensions may be granted with prior approval.

### **Disability Accommodation Procedures**

UIC is committed to the full inclusion and participation of people with disabilities in all aspects of university life. If you face or anticipate disability-related barriers while at UIC, please connect with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at [drc.uic.edu](http://drc.uic.edu), via email at [drc@uic.edu](mailto:drc@uic.edu), or call (312) 413-2183 to create a plan for reasonable accommodations. In order to receive accommodations, you will need to disclose the disability to the DRC, complete an interactive registration process with the DRC, and provide me with a Letter of Accommodation (LOA). Upon receipt of a LOA, I will gladly work with you and the DRC to implement approved accommodations.

Please note that the legal definition of disability is broad, such that rights to equal access also protect students who have chronic or mental health conditions. If you want more general information, I encourage you to visit the DRC website at [drc.uic.edu](http://drc.uic.edu), or you can contact the DRC directly at (312) 413-2183, [drc@uic.edu](mailto:drc@uic.edu), or by stopping by the office in SSB 1070.

### **Other Policies**

I expect all participants to adhere to norms for respectful and inclusive discussion, and to engage thoughtfully and generously with both each other and the texts. I also expect participants to adhere to norms of academic integrity. If you have questions about this, please come and talk to me.

If something is inhibiting your ability to be successful in this seminar or you need help accessing university resources, don't hesitate to reach out to me.

The course schedule (below) is subject to change as needed.

# Course Schedule

## Introduction

### Week 1 (Jan 12)

1. The Combahee River Collective Statement (1977)

### Week 2 (Jan 19)

1. Crenshaw (1989), "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics"
2. Carbado (2013), "Colorblind Intersectionality"

### Week 3 (Jan 26)

1. Crenshaw (1991), "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color"

## Is Intersectionality Anti-Essentialist? Anti-Category?

### Week 4 (Feb 2)

1. Spelman (1988), "Woman: The One and the Many." From *Inessential Woman: Problems of Exclusion in Feminist Thought*. Beacon Press. 1988.
2. Harris (1990), "Race and Essentialism in Feminist Legal Theory"

### Week 5 (Feb 9)

1. Lugones (1994), "Purity, Impurity, and Separation"
2. Garry (2011), "Intersectionality, Metaphors, and the Multiplicity of Gender"

### Week 6 (Feb 16)

1. Zack (2005), "Beyond Intersectionality" pp. 1-8. From *Inclusive Feminism : A Third Wave Theory of Women's Commonality*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005.
2. Carbado & Harris (2019), "Intersectionality at 30: Mapping the Margins of Anti-Essentialism, Intersectionality, and Dominance Theory"

## Mutual Constitution and System Monism vs. Pluralism

### Week 7 (Feb 23)

1. Gasdaglis & Madva (2020), "Intersectionality as a Regulative Ideal"
2. Collins (2019), "Relationality Within Intersectionality." From *Intersectionality as Critical Social Theory*. Duke University Press, 2019.

**\*First Paper Proposal due by the end of the day on Feb 24**

### Week 8 (Mar 2)

1. Carastathis (2008), "The Invisibility of Privilege: A Critique of Intersectional Models of Identity"

2. Haslanger (2020), "Why I Don't Believe in Patriarchy: Comments on Kate Manne's *Down Girl*"

### **Week 9 (Mar 9)**

1. Dembroff, "The Metaphysics of Injustice". Forthcoming in Chang and Srinivasan (eds) *New Conversations in Philosophy, Law, and Politics*. Oxford University Press.
2. Walby (2007), "Theory, Systems Theory, and Multiple Intersecting Social Inequalities"

### **Levels of Analysis: Micro or Macro?**

### **Week 10 (Mar 16)**

1. Bilge (2010), "Recent Feminist Outlooks on Intersectionality," Sect 2 (pp. 60-63)
2. Yuval-Davis (2006), "Intersectionality and Feminist Politics"
3. Anthias (2012), "Intersectional What? Social Divisions, Intersectionality and Levels of Analysis"

### **SPRING BREAK - No class March 23**

### **Week 11 (Mar 30)**

1. Collins (2003), "Some Group Matters: Intersectionality, Situated Standpoints, and Black Feminist Thought." From *A Companion to African-American Philosophy*, edited by Tommy L. Lott, and John P. Pittman. John Wiley & Sons, 2003.
2. Cho, Crenshaw, McCall (2013), "Toward a Field of Intersectionality Studies: Theory, Applications, and Praxis"

### **Critical Theory and Philosophical Practice**

### **Week 12 (Apr 6)**

1. Collins (2019), Introduction to *Intersectionality as Critical Theory*
2. Collins (2019), "Intersectionality as Critical Inquiry." From *Intersectionality as Critical Theory*
3. Collins (2019), Epilogue to *Intersectionality as Critical Theory*

### **Week 13 (Apr 13)**

1. Dotson (2016), "Word to the Wise: Notes on a Black Feminist Metaphilosophy of Race"
2. Lawford-Smith and Phelan (2021), "The Metaphysics of Intersectionality Revisited"
3. Botts (2017), "The Genealogy and Viability of the Concept of Intersectionality," pp. 351-354

**\*Final paper proposal due by the end of the day on Apr 14**

**Weeks 14 and 15: Work on final papers**

## Further Reading

A partial list of readings that provide further background or delve more deeply into some of the topics we will be broaching. With the exception of Collins and Bilge (2020), these can be found in the “Further Reading” folder of the Course Box.

- Alcoff (1998), “Cultural Feminism versus Post-Structuralism: The Identity Crisis in Feminist Theory”
- Anthias (1998), “Rethinking Social Divisions: Some Notes Towards a Theoretical Framework”
- Belle (2020), “Interlocking, Intersecting, and Intermeshing: Critical Engagements with Black and Latina Feminist Paradigms of Identity and Oppression”
- Carastathis (2013), “Identity Categories as Potential Coalitions”
- Collins (1993), “Toward a New Vision: Race, Class, and Gender as Categories of Analysis and Connection”
- Collins and Bilge (2020), *Intersectionality (Key Concepts)*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Polity Press.
- Frye (1983), “Oppression”
- Garry (2008), “Intersections, Social Change, and “Engaged” Theories: Implications of North American Feminism”
- Gimenez (2001), “Marxism, and Class, Gender, and Race: Rethinking the Trilogy”
- Haslanger (2000), “Gender and Race: (What) Are They? (What) Do We Want Them To Be?”
- King (1988), “Multiple Jeopardy, Multiple Consciousness: The Context of a Black Feminist Ideology”
- McCall (2005), “The Complexity of Intersectionality”
- Mikkola (2007), “Gender Sceptics and Feminist Politics”
- Stoljar (1995), “Essence, Identity, and the Concept of Woman”
- Young (1990), “Five Faces of Oppression” (From *Justice and the Politics of Difference*. Princeton University Press.)
- Young (1994), “Gender as Seriality: Thinking about Women as a Social Collective”