Spring ’18 PHILOSOPHY 318: RACE AND RACISM

Prof. Larry Blum

W-5-035

**Office hours:**

Tuesday 12:30-1:30

Thursday 9:50-10:50

or by arranged appointment

**e-mail**: [Lawrence.blum@umb.edu](mailto:Lawrence.blum@umb.edu)

**(please feel free to contact me by e-**mail)

**Course readings:**

The one required text for the course is Lawrence Blum, *“I’m Not a Racist, But…”: The Moral Quandary of Race* (2002). In paperback at the University Bookstore (including rental), and at the Reserve Desk at Healey Library. All other readings are on my website: [www.lawrenceblum.net/courses.html](http://www.lawrenceblum.net/courses.html) (or [www.lawrenceblum.net](http://www.lawrenceblum.net) and click on “Courses”)

The readings on the site are grouped under the general topic that appears on the syllabus (e.g. the reading Alcoff, “Is Latino/a Identity a Racial Identity?” is under the topic “LATINOS AND RACE”), rather than by the date of the class they are due. Look for the author and title under the topic on the syllabus, then find this reading on the site. The date a reading is due is stated on the syllabus.

# GOALS OF THE COURSE

1. To become better informed about the history, development, and current understanding of the idea of "race," and of contemporary philosophical approaches to issues related to racism.

2. To learn to have productive and mutually beneficial conversations with fellow students about the highly-charged areas of race and racism; to respect and learn from other students in these conversations even if they do not agree with you.

3. To learn to be self-critical about issues of race and racism, and to consider seriously points of view other than those which you yourself bring to the class.

4. To learn to write and think clearly and analytically about emotionally-charged issues of race and racism. (This does *not* mean that these issues necessarily stop being emotional ones!)

# COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADES, with %s of your final grade

**1**. **2 take-home exams**, due February 22 (**20%)** and April 12 (**20%).** Papers can always be rewritten in light of my comments and grade. A re-written paper will receive as a final grade a grade that is 2/3 of the way from your original grade to the grade you would have received on the rewrite had you turned that paper in as your original.

**2**. **Take-home Final exam**: **30%. *Or*** option of writing **final research paper** of 10-12 pages instead; if you wish to do final research paper, you must speak to me and then work out a topic and a research plan **by** **April 1**.

**3**. **10 “one-pagers”:** These are 300-350-word short reading summaries of a reading that is due on a particular day. (There are 18 reading assignments; you have pick 10 of them to do 1-pagers on.) **20%** **altogether**.

The one-pager is due at the very latest by the beginning of the class where that reading will be discussed; but I would very much prefer that you turn them into me electronically by 6PM the night before, so I can use them to help me plan the class on that reading. **You must include a word count on your 1-pager!**

The one-pagers must include a summary of the main overall point(s) of a given reading. (Sometimes more than one reading is due on a given day and you must do the one-pager on all of the readings, except where otherwise indicated.) It must also include a question that the reading raises for you; a point that seems important but which you feel you do not understand; a question that you would ideally like to have answered; *or* a criticism you have of the reading. *You will be graded on how many 1-pagers you turn in that meet a minimum standard to get credit.* *But otherwise, each one is* not *given a specific grade.* The purposes of the one-pagers are (1) to give you feedback on how well you are understanding the readings prior to discussing them in class; (2) to give me feedback on the same thing.

**4**. You are expected to come to every class, and to come to class **having done the reading** and being prepared to probe, question, criticize, and otherwise discuss it in class. Attendance, preparation, and constructive class participation will count for **10%.** Attendance will be taken every class; after 2 unexcused absences, .4 [on the UMass 4.0 scale] will automatically be deducted from the attendance portion of your attendance/preparation grade. For an absence to be excused, you will have to produce appropriate documentation.

**Disability accommodations**: If you have a disability and will need accommodations in order to complete course requirements, please contact the Ross Center for Disability Services (Campus Center, UL, room 211): 617.287.7430 or [ross.center@umb.edu](mailto:ross.center@umb.edu). Once you have an accommodation letter, please meet with me as soon as possible to discuss accommodations.

**Academic Honesty and Plagiarism:**

An institution of higher education such as the University of Massachusetts can function properly only if its members conduct their academic life in an entirely honest manner, with complete integrity. The university spells out in detail what kinds of conduct violate this requirement of academic integrity (under the “Code of Student Conduct”) in the catalog, in the student handbook, and on the university website, summarized at <https://www.umb.edu/life_on_campus/policies/community/code>. See sections 11-14.

Violations of this policy are subject to a range of punishments, from a failing course grade, a failing grade on the assignment in which plagiarism or other dishonesty has taken place, to expulsion from the university. The penalties, and the procedures to be taken by the instructor, the student, and the university, in a case of suspected plagiarism or other dishonesty are spelled out in the document just mentioned. [The instructor’s rules for appropriate citation of sources will be provided with the first essay assignment.] I see academic honesty as a matter both of individual morality and institutional morality.

**Electronic devices**, such as computers, cell phones, and the like may *not* be used in this class. They divert your attention from what is going on in the class. If you feel that you need to use an electronic device, please see me to explain your situation and we can work to find an accommodation.

SYLLABUS: subject to change

**THE IDEA OF RACE. DO RACES EXIST?**

**Tuesday, Jan 23:** Introduction

**Thursday, Jan 25:** Read syllabus and note any questions you have!

1. Frederickson, Chapter 1: Religion and the Invention of Racism, 15-47

(Website under “The Idea of Race: Do Races Exist?”) NOTE: The Frederickson book (*Racism: A Short History*) from which this chapter is taken is also available in an “e-books” version at the Healey Library website

1. Blum, (*I’m Not a Racist, But…),* 109-111 [on Greeks]

**Tuesday, Jan 30:**

(1) Frederickson, Chapter 2, 51-61(end of bottom whole paragraph)

(2) Blum, chapter 6, 111-122 (not whole chapter)

**Thursday, Feb 1:**

(1) Blum, chapter 5, 98-108

(2) Blum, chapter 6, 122-130 (not whole chapter)

**Tuesday Feb 6:**

1. Blum, chapter 7, 131-146
2. Dorothy Roberts, Chapter 3: “Redefining Race in Genetic Terms,” 57-80 from *Fatal Invention: How Science, Politics, and Big Business Re-Create Race in the Twenty-First Century* [**website**: under The Idea of race; do races exist?]

[you may do a 1-pager on *either* of these readings; you don’t have to do both]

**Thursday, Feb 8:** [no new reading]

##### ++++++1st paper handed out+++++++

**LATINOS AND RACE**

**Tuesday Feb 13:**

Linda Martín Alcoff, “Is Latino/a Identity a Racial Identity?” 23-44, from *Hispanics/Latinos in the United States* (**website**: under Latinos and Race)

**Thursday, Feb 15:**

(1) Blum, Chapter 8: 147-156

(2) “Implicit Racism:” go to [www.implicit.harvard.edu](http://www.implicit.harvard.edu). The page is “Project Implicit.” Log on as a Guest; hit “Go.” Next page is “preliminary information.” If you are OK with what they say on that page, hit “I wish to proceed.” This takes you to a list of “Implicit Attitude Tests”. Take at least the “Race” one, and any others you want to. Each test takes about 10 minutes.

**RACIAL DISCRIMINATION**

**Tuesday, Feb 20:**

M. Bertrand and S. Mullainathan, “Are Emily and Greg More Employable than Lakisha and Jamal? A Field Experiment on Labor Market Discrimination?” *American Economic Review*, Sept 2004: 991-1013 (**website**: under Racial Discrimination)

**Thursday, Feb 22:**

(1) D. Kelly, E. Machery, R. Mallon, “Race and Racial Cognition,” *The Moral Psychology Handbook* (2010), 452-461

[**website** under Racial Discrimination]

**++++++1st paper due!!!++++++**

**WHITE SUPREMACY AND WHITE NATIONALISM**

**Tuesday, Feb 27:**

**Reading:** Charles Mills, “Revisionist Ontologies: Theorizing White Supremacy,” from *Blackness Visible: Essays on Philosophy and Race*, 97-118 (**website** under White Supremacy)

**Assignment:** 1-pager

**Thursday, Mar 1**: Christopher Lebron, “Shame and Method,” chapter 1 (16-28) of *The Color of Our Shame*

(**website** under White Supremacy)

**Tuesday, Mar 6**:

**Reading**: Lebron, “Shame and Method,” 35-42 (28-35 is not being assigned)

(**website** under White Supremacy)

**Thursday, Mar 8**: José Mendoza, “*Illegal*: White Supremacy and Immigration Status,” 201-220

(**website** under White Supremacy)

(VACATION: Mar 10-18)

**Tuesday, Mar 20:** (no new reading: start reading the long Thursday reading)

**THE LEGACY OF DISCRIMINATION**

**Thursday, Mar 22:** Melvin Oliver and Thomas Shapiro, *Black Wealth/White Wealth*, 11-45 (**website** under The Legacy of Discrimination)

**ASIANS BETWEEN BLACK AND WHITE: OUTSIDERS AND THE “MODEL MINORITY” STEREOTYPE**

**Tuesday**, **Mar 27**: **Reading**: Frank Wu, “The Model Minority: Asian American ‘Success’ as a Race Relations Failure,” from *Yellow: Race in America Beyond Black and White*, 39-78 (**website**: Asians Between Black and White: Outsiders and the ‘Model Minority’ Stereotype)

**Thursday, Mar 29:** Claire Jean Kim, “The Racial Triangulation of Asian Americans,” *Politics and Society*, 1999 (**website**: Asians Between Black and White: Outsiders and the ‘Model Minority’ Stereotype)

##### ++++++2nd paper handed out+++++++

**Tuesday, April 3:** (no new reading)

**GLENN LOURY’S PHILOSOPHY OF RACE**

**Thursday, April 5:** Loury, “Racial Stigma,” from *Anatomy of Racial Inequality,* pages to be determined (**website** under Glenn Loury’s Philosophy of Race)

**Tuesday, Apr 10:** AttendLoury’s talk on campus

**(you may do a 1-**pager on the talk. Turn in before class on Thursday 12th)

**Thursday, Apr 12:** (continue conversation on Loury)

##### ++++++2nd paper due+++++++

**THE REPARATIONS CONTROVERSY**

**Tuesday, Apr 17:**

**Reading**: Ta-Nehisi Coates, “The Case for Reparations,” *Atlantic Monthly*, June 2014, (**website**: The Reparations Controversy)

(a 1-pager on this reading is worth 2 points)

**Thursday, Apr 19:** no new reading

**Tuesday, Apr 24:**

**Reading**: Thomas McCarthy, “Coming to Terms With Our Past, Part II: On the Morality and Politics of Reparations for Slavery,” from *Political Theory*, Dec. 2004: 750-772 (**website**: The Reparations Controversy)

**Thursday, Apr 26:** (no new reading)

**Tuesday, May 1:** John Arthur, *Race, Equality, and the Burdens of History*, 210-227 (**website**: The Reparations Controversy)

**Thursday, May 3:** (no new reading) **Tuesday, May 8: (wrap-up) Final exam handed out!!**