

PHI 514: The Epistemology of Oppression
Princeton University, Spring 2022

Thursday 1:30-4:20pm

Marx Hall 201

Instructors:

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Course Description

This course will survey epistemological questions that are centered around living in a society with oppression, including: What is oppression? What epistemic harms and wrongs does oppression give rise to? How does oppression interact with a person's epistemic standing when it comes to understanding oppression? Should we expect the oppressed to suffer from false consciousness? Or should we expect the oppressed to be especially well-placed to acquire knowledge about their oppression? Conversely, should we expect people in dominant social groups to be badly placed to acquire knowledge relating to oppression, and if so, what role does motivated ignorance play? How does oppression affect what gets to count as knowledge in a society? What alternative epistemologies should we consider?

Required Texts:

PDFs of the readings will be available on the course Canvas site. There will also be other related readings on the Canvas site that are not on the syllabus.

Course Requirements:

- Give one class presentation.
- One final (15–20 page, double-spaced) paper.
 - Due Dean's Date: Tuesday, May 3rd. Email to instructor.

Accessibility Policy:

If you require any accommodation for a disability, please contact and register with Disability Services. Note that you can contact them directly by phone at (609) 258-8840 or by email at ods@princeton.edu. And please feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns.

Class Schedule

This schedule is tentative and may be revised during the semester.

Thursday, January 27th, Introduction:

“The Combahee River Collective Statement”

Marilyn Frye, “Oppression.” In *The Politics of Reality: Essays in Feminist Theory*
bell hooks, “Choosing the Margin as a Space of Radical Openness”

Thursday, February 3rd, Oppression:

Iris Marion Young, “Five Faces of Oppression”

Ann Cudd, “Oppression by Choice”

Thursday, February 10th, Submission [Class Visit from Manon Garcia]:

Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (Introduction)

Manon Garcia, *We Are Not Born Submissive* (Chapters 4 & 5)

Thursday, February 17th, Double Binds and Oppression [Class Visit from Sukaina Hirji]:

Sukaina Hirji, “Oppressive Double Binds”

Thursday, February 24th, Epistemic Injustice:

Miranda Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice* (Introduction)

Kristie Dotson, “A Cautionary Tale: On Limiting Epistemic Oppression”

Optional:

Miranda Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice* (Chapters 1 & 7)

Thursday, March 3rd, Willful Ignorance:

Charles Mills, “White Ignorance”

Linda Alcoff, “Epistemologies of Ignorance: Three Types”

Gaile Pohlhaus, “Relational Knowing and Epistemic Injustice: Toward a Theory of “Willful Hermeneutical Ignorance”

Thursday, March 10th, NO CLASS, SPRING BREAK

Thursday, March 17th, Marginalized Positions as Positions of Knowledge:

Charles Mills, “Alternative Epistemologies.” In *Blackness Visible*

Patricia Hill Collins, “Black Feminist Epistemology.” In *Black Feminist Thought*

W.E.B. Du Bois, “Of Our Spiritual Strivings.” In *The Souls of Black Folk*

Thursday, March 24th, Standpoint Theory:

Elizabeth Anderson, "Feminist Epistemology: An Interpretation and Defense"

Lidal Dror, "Is There an Epistemic Advantage to Being Oppressed?"

Optional:

Alison Wylie, "Feminist Philosophy of Science: Standpoint Matters"

Thursday, March 31st, Emotions:

Alison Jaggar, "Love and Knowledge: Emotion in Feminist Epistemology"

Myisha Cherry, "Love, Anger, and Racial Injustice"

Amia Srinivasan, "The Aptness of Anger"

Macalester Bell, "Anger, Virtue, and Oppression"

Thursday, April 7th, (Self-)Gaslighting [Class Visit from Sophia Dandele]:

Sophia Dandele, "Epistemic Coercion"

Thursday, April 14th, Ideology:

Tommie Shelby, "Ideology, Racism, and Critical Social Theory"

Sally Haslanger, "Racism, Ideology, and Social Movements"

Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels, *The German Ideology* (excerpts)

Thursday, April 21st, Ideology/False Consciousness

Lidal Dror, "Race, Crime and False Consciousness: Ideology and the Need for Emancipatory Theory"

Amia Srinivasan, "Radical Externalism"