

Seminar in Social Epistemology: Injustice and Epistemologies of Ignorance
Phil 402/Phil 673/WS 422 meets Wed. 1-3:50
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Readings

Miranda Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing*. Oxford and NY: Oxford Univ. Press, 2007 (paperback 2009) [EI] Required. We are reading the entire book.

Shannon Sullivan and Nancy Tuana, eds. *Race and Epistemologies of Ignorance*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2007. [R&EI] Recommended, not required. Required essays will be on the seminar website.

Nancy Tuana and Shannon Sullivan, eds. *Feminist Epistemologies of Ignorance*, a special issue of *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy* 21:3 (Summer 2006). [HYP] Required essays will be all on the seminar website. Other essays in this or other issues of *Hypatia* (before 2008) can be easily obtained on the Project Muse database or, starting in 2009, on Wiley OnLine.

Background readings:

Relevant essays in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy <http://plato.stanford.edu> (e.g., Social Epistemology, Feminist Social Epistemology, Virtue Epistemology, Epistemological Problems of Testimony, or any other feminist or epistemology entries that look good to you). If a Stanford essay looks too long for a quick look on some topic, try the Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy <http://www.iep.utm.edu/>.

Anna Stubblefield, "Meditations on Postsupremacist Philosophy," on seminar website. [From *White on White/Black on Black*, ed. George Yancy. Rowman Littlefield.

Other background essays will be posted on the seminar website as needed.

Objectives, Outcomes, and Subject Matter of the Seminar

This is an epistemology seminar that also draws from ethics and social/political philosophy. It deals centrally with both gender and race/ethnicity. For those students accustomed to traditional philosophy it will "feel political" (and not just in sense that Alistair MacIntyre meant when he wrote "All philosophy is political philosophy," in "Relativism, Power and Philosophy"). Anglo-American epistemology often fails to attend to the location and characteristics of the knower as well as the social context in which knowledge claims are made, justified, and called into question. Social epistemology—under my interpretation, a form of naturalized epistemology—tries to remedy this inattention. Sometimes (and only sometimes) social epistemology concerns the relation of knowledge to power. More often it concerns testimony or other relations among knowers that might or might not explicitly be "political." Miranda Fricker has written in some detail about "testimonial injustice" and "hermeneutical injustice." Feminist epistemologists and epistemologists concerned with issues of race have been writing about the systematic ways in which ignorance, particularly on the part of those within dominant groups, is constructed. They are our focus. "Objectives" or "learning outcomes" for the seminar: an increased understanding of social epistemology in general and of the way power, knowledge, and ignorance are intricately related—especially in matters concerning gender, race/ethnicity, and other forms of marginalization; an increased ability to apply this understanding to new contexts; a fuller appreciation of the possible scope of epistemology.

Student Responsibilities/Requirements

The first thing is to fill out ASAP the questionnaire at the end of the syllabus (it's on our website if you prefer to type it and email it to me). Also note that those who pick their oral presentation topics by Mon. Sept 26 get first pick.

Requirements for all students

1. *Seminars require attendance and participation.* Regular, ongoing participation counts 20%. The form of participation varies from week to week, but it is always important. In addition, discussion on the website is part of "participation"; it will also be used to distribute material for presentations and for ongoing discussion as well. You need to check the seminar website regularly for material related to this course. [This requirement is *not* graded separately, but is a necessary condition for receiving your earned grade on the rest of your work. You can lose or gain approximately a + or - by your work in this section. I'll explain in more detail during our first meeting.]

2. *Oral presentations* count 25%. Your task is to explain the main ideas in your essay/chapter succinctly. A standard

presentation length is 20 minutes (I'm not a stickler about time—people just always want to know). If you develop your own views in the course of working on your presentation, it's fine to present them; however, your central task is expository.

- If there are two of you in one week, work with the other person. Ask me in advance if you're not clear on the division of labor. On the night of your presentation make sure that you're familiar with the parts of the reading that night that are not specifically "yours."
- By Tuesday noon preceding your presentation (and earlier is better!) post on the website what you plan to do, e.g., the minimum would be an outline. If you want students focus especially on certain pages or examples, say so. Try very hard not to "read a paper." Instead, decide how to present the main arguments of your chapter or essay in a clear and succinct manner.
- Because I'm worried about treating everyone fairly (e.g., you might have a shortage of time on your day because of lots of discussion or the like) it is a good idea to hand in something to me as well—not "a paper"-- but at least the notes you are using for your presentation.

3. A standard philosophical paper of 10-15 pp. (counts 55%) due at the beginning of class on **Nov 30** (and submitted to *turnitin.com*). It is also OK to email it to me (and submit to *turnitin.com*) by Saturday Dec 3. If you want to turn in a draft ahead of time for my comments, I must have it no later than Wednesday, Nov 23. If you're doing a draft I want both a hard copy and an emailed copy.

Undergraduates have the option of writing two short papers. If anyone chooses this option, the first paper would be due by **Nov 2**, the second paper at the due dates noted above in (3). I'll discuss this in more detail with anyone who is considering it.

Order of Readings:

If we get behind, announcements of any revised reading schedule will be made on the website as well as announced at the end of the seminar meeting. Except for Fricker's book, all required readings will be on the seminar website.

- 9-14 Introduction and overview. Readings that you should do afterward include **Sullivan and Tuana's Intro to R&EI** and **Tuana and Sullivan, Intro to HYP** (2 pp --mostly for the refs) plus any background sources of which you feel the need (see p. 1 of the syllabus).
- 9-21 **Mills, White Ignorance** [R&EI] and **Tuana, The Speculum of Ignorance** [HYP]
- 9-28 **Alcoff, Epistemologies of Ignorance, Three Types** [R&EI], and **Fricker, EI Intro & Chapter 1**
In conjunction with Fricker's book, it's good to watch *To Kill a Mockingbird* (if you haven't read or seen it recently), also *The Talented Mr. Ripley*. Fricker uses scenes from both as central examples.
- 10-5 **Fricker, EI Chapter 2**
- 10-12 **Fricker, EI Chapters 3-4**
- 10-19 **Fricker, EI Chapter 5-6**
- 10-26 **Fricker, EI Chapter 7** and wrap up discussion of Fricker.
- 11-2 [R&EI]: **Bailey, Strategic Ignorance**, and **Hoagland, Denying Relationality: Epist. and Ethics and Ignorance**
- 11-9 [HYP]: **Townley, Toward a Reevaluation of Ignorance**, and **Ortega, Being Knowingly, Lovingly Ignorant: White Feminism and Women of Color**
- 11-16 Professor Alexis **Shotwell** will be our guest this week. We'll read the Prologue and Ch 2. (No oral presentation this week. We'll just discuss this work with her.)
- 11-18 *FRIDAY Professor Shotwell is giving a Philosophy Dept Colloquium talk this Friday at 3:30. Try very hard to attend!*
- 11-23 I want to add an essay from the Spring 2011 issue of *Hypatia*. Not yet chosen.
- 11-30 Wrap up and catch up if needed

The points that the University asks that we include in a syllabus are below.

Academic Integrity:

Academic Integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline, <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm>

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4, <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm>

Appeals: A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than regarding a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline if a ground for an appeal can be established. Read Policy 72 - Student Appeals, <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm>

Academic Integrity website (Arts): http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html

Academic Integrity Office (UW): <http://uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/>

Turnitin.com: We are using it in the seminar. <http://uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/Turnitin/index.html> for more information. There are alternatives for those who object strongly to having their papers screened in this manner.

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:

Note for students with disabilities: The Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD), located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the OPD at the beginning of each academic term.

Cross-listed course:

Please note that a cross-listed course will count in all respective averages no matter under which rubric it has been taken. For example, a PHIL/PSCI cross-list will count in a Philosophy major average, even if the course was taken under the Political Science rubric.

Turn this sheet in today or asap (it's ok if you don't know what chapter or essay you want)

Name:

Registered for [course number]:

Email address you look at regularly (printed VERY clearly):

GRAD STUDENTS: Undergraduate institution, major/minor, date graduated. UNDERGRADS: major/minor, Jr? Sr?

GRAD STUDENTS: If you already have a special focus in or favorite areas of philosophy, what are they? (If you don't, that is fine, just say that.) Also indicate whether you're interested in feminist philosophy or philosophy of race.

UNDERGRADS: same question about interests, including, if pertinent, women/gender studies or race issues

If you have a *special* interest that led you to sign up for the seminar (other than, "hmm, that sounds good"), what is it?

What among the following courses have you taken? If you've had seminars or special topics courses in the areas, please mention the topics.

Theory of Knowledge

Feminist Philosophy

Other Women/Gender Studies courses

Courses from any dept on race or ethnic studies

Other courses somehow relevant to the ones just listed

If you already know which article/chapter you want to give your oral presentation on, write it here. Please rank 2-3. **If you don't know yet, email me asap (definitely w/in 10 days).** For those who like doing it early—you can start next week!

What else would you like me to know about you?