

Knowledge, Ignorance, and Power Course Guide 2019-20

Course Organiser and Lecturer: Dr. Aidan McGlynn (amcglynn@staffmail.ed.ac.uk, DSB 6.12, he/him, office hour Thursday 11-12 or by appointment – no office hour in week 1)

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1. Course Aims and Objectives

This course will introduce and examine a range of topics at the intersection of epistemology and political/social/feminist philosophy, examining our actual epistemic practices in light of the relations of power and subordination that exist between differently placed groups in society, and looking at different proposals for how this should shape our theorizing about knowledge and ignorance. Topics covered will include standpoint theory in feminist epistemology, alternative standards for assessing claims to knowledge (such as those offered by Collins's black feminist epistemology), different varieties of epistemic injustice (including but not limited to the two varieties discussed in influential work by Miranda Fricker: testimonial injustice and hermeneutical injustice), epistemic exploitation, the epistemology of ignorance, the epistemological significance of pride movements, and the #MeToo movement.

2. Intended Learning Outcomes

This course will allow students to demonstrate core skills in philosophy, including interpreting and critically engaging with philosophical texts, evaluating arguments and theories, and developing one's own ideas in response to the issues discussed. Students will gain knowledge of some principal theories within analytic feminist epistemology, as well as the main accounts of phenomena such as epistemic injustice and active ignorance, and will be able to write short, clear papers on the topics covered in the class, manifesting the core philosophical skills listed above.

3. Course Content

There is no required text for the course – we will be reading much of Miranda Fricker's *Epistemic Injustice* and so you may find it convenient to own your own copy of that, but it's not necessary that you do so since an electronic version of the entire book is available through the library.

Suggested (but definitely not required) background reading:

bell hooks, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*, Pluto Press

Reni Eddo-Lodge, *Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People About Race*, Bloomsbury

Ijeoma Oluo, *So You Want to Talk About Race*, Seal Press

Lorna Finlayson, *An Introduction to Feminism*, Cambridge University Press

1. Introduction: Beyond ‘Malestream’ Epistemology

Background

Roxane Gay, 2012, ‘Peculiar Benefits’, *The Rumpus*. Available at:
<http://therumpus.net/2012/05/peculiar-benefits/>

Primary Reading

Rae Langton, 2000, ‘Feminism in Epistemology: Exclusion and Objectification’, reprinted in Rae Langton, *Sexual Solipsism*, Oxford University Press, 267-88, sections 1 and 2. Available online through the university library.

Advanced Reading

Alessandra Tanesini, 1999, *An Introduction to Feminist Epistemologies*, Blackwell Publishers, chapter 2.

2. Standpoint Epistemology

Background

Hypatia Author Interviews, interview with Sandra Harding, ‘On Standpoint Theory’s History and Controversial Reception’. Available at:
<https://youtu.be/xOAMc12Pqml>

Primary Reading

Elizabeth Potter, 2006, *Feminism and Philosophy of Science: An Introduction*, Routledge, chapter 5. Available online through the university library.

Aidan McGlynn, 2019, ‘Redrawing the Map’, *International Journal for the Study of Skepticism* 9, 261-83, read pages 263-5. Available online through library.

Advanced Readings

Jennifer Saul, 2003. *Feminism: Issues & Arguments*, Oxford University Press, chapter 8.

Sandra Harding, 1992, ‘Rethinking Standpoint Epistemology: What is “Strong Objectivity?”’, *The Centennial Review* 36: 437-70. Available online through JSTOR.

Patricia Hill Collins, 1986, 'Learning From the Outsider Within: The Sociological Significance of Black Feminist Thought', *Social Problems* 33, 14-32. Available at:
http://users.clas.ufl.edu/marilynm/Theorizing_Black_America_Syllabus_files/Learning_from_the_Outsider_Within.pdf

Alison Wylie, 2003, 'Why Standpoint Matters', in Robert Figueroa and Sandra Harding (eds.), *Science and Other Cultures*, Routledge, 26-48. Available at:
<http://www.staff.amu.edu.pl/~ewa/Wylie,%20WhyStandpointMatters.pdf>

Alessandra Tanesini, *An Introduction to Feminist Epistemologies*, chapter 6.

Kristen Intemann, 2010, '25 Years of Feminist Empiricism and Standpoint Theory: Where Are We Now?', *Hypatia* 25, 778-96. Available at:
https://www.academia.edu/1914570/25_Years_of_Feminist_Empiricism_and_Standpoint_Theory_Where_Are_We_Now

3. Black Feminist Epistemology

Background

Race Matters, audio interview (plus transcript) with Patricia Hill Collins. Available at: <http://kgou.org/post/doctor-patricia-hill-collins-works-expand-platform-black-womens-voices>

Patricia Hill Collins, 1990, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*, preface to the first edition and chapter 1.

Primary Reading

Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, chapters 4 and 11.

Advanced Readings

A number of the things we'll read later on the course will build on Collins's work, particularly in week 6.

4. Active Ignorance

Background

Ta-Nehisi Coates, 2014, 'The Case for Reparations', *The Atlantic*. Available to listen or read at: <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/the-case-for-reparations/361631/>

Afua Hirsch, 2018, *Brit(ish): On Race, Identity, and Belonging*, Jonathan Cape Publishing, chapter 2 ('Origins').

Primary Readings

Charles Mills, 2007, 'White Ignorance', in Shannon Sullivan and Nancy Tuana (eds.), *Race and Epistemologies of Ignorance*, SUNY Press, 13-38. Reprinted in Charles Mills, 2017, *Black Rights/White Wrongs: The Critique of Racial Liberalism*, Oxford University Press: 49-71. Reprint available online through the University Library.

Aidan McGlynn, 2019, 'Redrawing the Map', *International Journal for the Study of Skepticism* 9, 261-83, sections 1-4. Available online through library.

Advanced Readings

José Medina, 2013, *The Epistemology of Resistance: Gender and Racial Oppression, Epistemic Injustice, and Resistant Imaginations*, Oxford University Press, chapter 1. Available online through the University Library.

Alessandra Tanesini, 'Collective Amnesia and Epistemic Injustice', in Adam Carter, Andy Clark, Jesper Kallestrup, S. Orestis Palermos, and Duncan Pritchard (eds.), *Socially Extended Epistemology*, Oxford University Press, 195-219. Available online through library.

Zara Bain, 2018. 'Is There Such a Thing as 'White Ignorance' in British Education?', *Ethics and Education* 13: 4-21. Available online through library.

Charles Mills, 1995, *The Racial Contract*, Cornell University Press.

5. Testimonial Injustice (Video lecture and midterm essay guidance)

Background

Rachel McKinnon, 2016. 'Epistemic Injustice', *Philosophy Compass* 11, 437-46. Available online through the University library.

Primary Reading

Miranda Fricker, 2007, *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing*, Oxford University Press, intro and chapters 1 and 2. Available online through University library.

Advanced Reading

José Medina, 2013, *The Epistemology of Resistance*, chapter 2.

Additional Literature on Testimonial Injustice

Krista Hyde, 2016, 'Testimonial Injustice and Mindreading', *Hypatia* 31: 858-73. Available online through the University library.

Emmalon Davis, 2016, 'Typecasts, Tokens, and Spokespersons: A Case for Credibility Excess as Testimonial Injustice', *Hypatia* 31: 485-501. Available online through University library.

Federico Luzzi, 2016, 'Testimonial Injustice Without Credibility Deficit (or Excess)', *Thought* 5: 203-11. Available online through the University library.

Rachel McKinnon, 2017, 'Allies Behaving Badly: Gaslighting As Epistemic Injustice', in Ian James Kidd, Gaile Pohlhaus Jr. and José Medina (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Epistemic Injustice*, Routledge: 167-74. Available online through university library, but if you have difficulties try here: https://www.academia.edu/8423524/_Allies_behaving_badly_Gaslighting_as_epistemic_injustice

Gaile Pohlhaus, Jr., 2014, 'Discerning the Primary Epistemic Harm in Cases of Testimonial Injustice', *Social Epistemology* 28, 99-114. Available online through the University library.

Aidan McGlynn, 2019, 'Epistemic Objectification as the Primary Harm of Testimonial Injustice', *Episteme*. Available online through library.

Aidan McGlynn, 2019, 'Testimonial Injustice, Pornography, and Silencing', *Analytic Philosophy*. Available online through library.

6. Epistemic Violence and Silencing

Background

The Unmute Podcast, episode 9, interview with Kristie Dotson. Available at: <http://unmutetalk.podbean.com/e/episode-009-kristie-dotson-on-ignorance/>

Primary Reading

Kristie Dotson, 2011, 'Tracking Epistemic Violence, Tracking Practices of Silencing', *Hypatia* 26: 236-57. Available online through University library.

Advanced Readings

Kristie Dotson, 2014, 'Conceptualizing Epistemic Oppression', *Social Epistemology* 28: 115-38. Available online through University library.

7. Hermeneutical Injustice

Background

Lin Farley, 2017, 'I Coined the Term "Sexual Harassment." Corporations Stole It.', *New York Times*. Available online at:
<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/18/opinion/sexual-harassment-corporations-steal.html>

Primary Reading

Miranda Fricker, 2007, *Epistemic Injustice*, chapter 7.

José Medina, 2013, *The Epistemology of Resistance*, chapter 3.

(If you only have time to read one, make it the Fricker chapter.)

Advanced Reading

Kristie Dotson, 2012, 'A Cautionary Tale: On Limiting Epistemic Oppression', *Frontiers* 33: 24-47. Available at
https://www.academia.edu/3609574/A_Cautionary_Tale_On_Limiting_Epistemic_Oppression

Gaile Pohlhaus, Jr., 2012, 'Relational Knowing and Epistemic Injustice: Towards a Theory of *Willful Hermeneutical Ignorance*', *Hypatia* 27: 715-35. Available online through the University library.

8. Epistemic Exploitation

Background

Reni Eddo-Lodge, 2017, 'Why I Am No Longer Talking to White People About Race', *The Guardian*. Available to listen or read at:
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/may/30/why-im-no-longer-talking-to-white-people-about-race>

Primary Readings

Nora Berenstain, 2016, 'Epistemic Exploitation', *Ergo* 3, 569-90. Available at: <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/p/pod/dod-idx/epistemic-exploitation.pdf>

Advanced Readings

Emmalon Davis, 2016, 'Typecasts, Tokens, and Spokespersons: A Case for Credibility Excess as Testimonial Injustice', *Hypatia* 31: 485-501. Available online through University library.

9. Disability Pride

Background

What is it Like to be a Philosopher, interview with Elizabeth Barnes, available here: <http://www.whatisitliketobeaphilosopher.com/elizabeth-barnes/>

The Unmute Podcast, episode 26, interview with Elizabeth Barnes. Available at: <https://unmutetalk.podbean.com/e/episode-026-elizabeth-barnes-on-disability-and-well-being/>

Primary Readings

Elizabeth Barnes, 2016, *The Minority Body*, chapters 4 and 6. Available online through University library.

Advanced Readings

Shelley Tremain, 2017, 'Knowing Disability, Differently', in Ian James Kidd, Gaile Pohlhaus Jr. and José Medina (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Epistemic Injustice*, Routledge: 175-84. Available online through university library, but if you have difficulties try here: <https://philpapers.org/archive/TREKDD.pdf>

Shelley Tremain, 2018, *Foucault and Feminist Philosophy of Disability*, University of Michigan Press

10. Epistemic Injustice and #MeToo

Background

Kate Manne, 2018, 'Open Your Ears—and your Mind—to Christine Blasey Ford', *CNN*. Available online at: <https://edition.cnn.com/2018/09/24/opinions/christine-blasey-ford-whyididntreport-what-listening-means-kate-manne/index.html>

There are various interviews with Kate Manne that give a good introduction to her work – *The Ezra Klein Show*, *Vox*, the *Unmute Podcast*, and so on.

Primary Reading

Kate Manne, 2017, *Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny*, Oxford University Press, chapter 6. Available online through the University library, but can also be bought as an audiobook.

Audrey Yap, 2017, 'Credibility Excess and the Social Imaginary in Cases of Sexual Assault', *Feminist Philosophy Quarterly* 3: 1-24. Available online at: <https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/fpq/vol3/iss4/1/>

Advanced Reading

Katharine Jenkins, 2016, 'Rape Myths and Domestic Abuse Myths as Hermeneutical Injustices', *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 34: 191-205. Available online through the University library.

Kate Manne, 2017, *Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny*, Oxford University Press.

Rosa Vince, 2018, 'Testimonial Smothering and Pornography: Silencing Refusing Sex and Reporting Assault.', *Feminist Philosophy Quarterly* 4: 1-25. Available online at: <https://ojs.lib.uwo.ca/index.php/fpq/article/view/5784>

11. Revision