

## ***Knowledge, Ignorance, and Power Course Guide 2020-21***

Course Organiser and Lecturer: Dr. Aidan McGlynn ([amcglynn@staffmail.ed.ac.uk](mailto:amcglynn@staffmail.ed.ac.uk), he/him, office hour online by appointment, so please email to arrange)

Course Secretary: Ann-Marie Cowe ([philinfo@ed.ac.uk](mailto:philinfo@ed.ac.uk), Undergraduate Teaching Office DSB G.06)

Information about class format and timing is available on the Learn page for the course.

### ***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 Mainstream 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.

Linda Alcoff. 1991. 'The Problem of Speaking For Others.' *Cultural Critique* 20: 5-32.

## **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](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](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

### Background

Veronica Ivy (published as 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.

Veronica Ivy (published as 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.

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, 'Testimonial Injustice, Pornography, and Silencing', *Analytic Philosophy* 60: 405-17. Available online through library.

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

Aidan McGlynn. Forthcoming-b. 'Objects or Others? Epistemic Agency and the Primary Harm of Testimonial Injustice.' *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*. Available online.

## **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.

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>

## **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](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.

Shelley Tremain, 2018, *Foucault and Feminist Philosophy of Disability*, University of Michigan Press. Available online through university library.

## 10. Epistemic Injustice and #MeToo

### *Background*

Kate Manne, 2020, *Entitled: How Male Privilege Hurts Women*, Penguin Random House, chapter 8.

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, 2018, *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.

Rachel Fraser, 2018, 'The Ethics of Metaphor', *Ethics* 128: 728-55. Available online through the University library.

Kate Manne, 2018, *Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny*, Oxford University Press.

## 11. Revision