

## PHIL 28: Ethics and Society II

MW 1-1:50  
Solis Hall, Rm. 107

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Name	Email	Discussion Sections	Office Hours
Juan Carlos González (Professor)	jcg050@ucsd.edu		W 10-12, Mandeville Coffee Cart
Zack Brants (TA)	zbrants@ucsd.edu	<b>A08</b> (F 11-12, Center 203); <b>A09</b> (F 10-11 HSS 2152)	M 2-3:50, Mandeville Coffee Cart
Huadian Liu (TA)	hul010@ucsd.edu	<b>A07</b> (W 3-4, Center 220); <b>A10</b> (W 11-12, HSS 2321)	T 3-5, RWAC 0461
Marcus McGahhey (TA)	mmcgahhey@ucsd.edu	<b>A03</b> (T 5-6, York 4050A); <b>A04</b> (T 6-7, York 4050A)	TBA
Gabriel Nyberg (TA)	gnyberg@ucsd.edu	<b>A05</b> (Th 1-2, Center 201); <b>A12</b> (M 2-3, HSS 2321)	TBA
Andy Sin (TA)	osin@ucsd.edu	<b>A06</b> (W 10-11, HSS 2321); <b>A11</b> (W 9-10, Center 205)	W 11-1, RWAC 0439
Keyao Yang (TA)	k2yang@ucsd.edu	<b>A01</b> (M 6-7, York 4050A); <b>A02</b> (M 10-11, HSS 2152)	M 11-12, 5-6; RWAC 0441

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course, we will be thinking about social groups and social categories. We will spend the next 10 weeks grappling with the following questions:

- **What defines a social group or category?** Are the members of a social group/category bound together by convention? by nature? by something else altogether?
- **What rights do groups have?** Can groups perpetrate injustices? Can injustices be perpetrated against groups?
- **What are sex and gender?** Are these categories social constructs? determined by biology? both? neither?
- **What is race?** Is one's race determined by biology? Is race a social construct? How does this category differ from ethnicity? (Does it?)

- **What is racism?** We typically think of racism as a moral harm and even a political harm (i.e., an injustice). Who is it harming and how is it harming them?
- **How should we understand and respond to sex-, gender-, and race-based injustices?** How is justice in the face of these injustices even possible?

## OUTCOMES

We will encounter several complicated, abstract, and challenging ideas and arguments throughout the quarter. Throughout these encounters, I want us to be working toward a number of learning outcomes:

- We will develop our ability to express ourselves through many modalities (e.g., writing, speaking, listening, etc.).
- We will not only develop our own perspectives on important social and philosophical issues, but also refine our ability to support our perspectives with well-reasoned arguments.
- We will work on our ability to charitably interpret authors and our peers, learning how to respond only to the most generous version of what our interlocutors say.
- Nobody will tell you what you ought to think and why. Instead, we will actively consider (for ourselves and together) whether we ought to care about the issues discussed throughout the course and why we ought to care about them.

## ASSIGNMENTS

**Weekly discussion board posts:** 25% of grade

- Each week, you should craft a **a ~150-word write-up and (at least) one ~50-word reply to a classmate's write-up.**
- You'll be given prompts and detailed instructions for each post, and each of these prompts will directly contribute to preparing you for exams.
- Regardless of the differences in content each week, your posts should always cite and explain one relevant piece of textual evidence (could be a direct quote or a paraphrased idea).
- Initial posts are due **every Thursday at 11:59 PM**; responses are due **no later than Saturday at 11:59 PM.**
- *NOTE:* Extra credit available if you provide an additional (substantive) response to an extra post per week.

**Discussion section participation and attendance:** 15% of grade

- This portion of the grade is totally determined by your TA and their discussion section policies. Your role is to show up to section consistently and adhere by the participation standards set by your TA.

**Mandatory mid-term check-in:** 5% of grade

- **At some point on or before the Friday of Week 5**, I expect you to check in with me or your TA in office hours or via email.
- How is the course going? How can we help you succeed? Is there anything I am/we are doing that's working particularly well? That I/we can change? The TAs and I want to hear your thoughts on these questions and your course experience.
- **NOTE: You cannot pass the course unless you complete this check-in.**

**Mid-term:** 25% of grade

- On **Thursday Feb. 1** I will distribute a set of three short essay prompts. You will have until **Sunday Feb. 4 at 11:59 PM Pacific** to submit your short essays on Canvas.
- Your TAs will have early access to those prompts, and they will be preparing you to answer them in your discussion sections.
- **NOTE:** Barring extraordinary circumstances, **we will not accept late exams.**

**Final:** 30% of grade

- The final can be completed in one of two ways:
  - **Option 1: A take-home exam (focused on topics from Weeks 5–10).** For this option, you will be given a set of short answer and essay prompts when the window for our final opens. You will have the entire duration of the final window to complete the exam.
  - **NOTE:** Barring extraordinary circumstances, **we will not accept late exams.**
  - **Option 2: The video essay.** For this option, you should pick one or two readings and prepare a short (i.e., 5–10 minute), pre-recorded video essay. Your video essay should consist of a
    - \* clear main claim,
    - \* textual evidence that supports your claim and real-world examples that help illustrate your claim,
    - \* an objection to your main claim and a response to that objection, and
    - \* closing/concluding questions for further exploration.
  - This option is also **due at the end of the allotted final window.** However, you can begin preparing this video essay as early as you want in the quarter.
  - *A technology tip:* Though there are a bunch of different ways you can do this, I'd strongly recommend preparing slides that hit all of the relevant marks and recording yourself presenting those slides in an app like Zoom.
  - **NOTE:** If you want to take this option, **you must let your TA and me know by the end of Week 6.** Otherwise, I'll assume you're taking option 1.

## COURSE POLICIES

### Email policy:

- Your first point of email contact is your TA. The TAs are happy to answer brief logistical questions via email, generally within 48 hours. However, if you have questions that would take more than a few sentences to answer, please bring them to your discussion section or to office hours with either your TA or me.

**COVID policies:**

- If you have any COVID symptoms, do not attend class in-person. Recordings of course sessions will be available on the course website.
- If I have any COVID symptoms, lectures will be covered by a TA, held remotely (via Zoom), or held asynchronously (via video recording).

**Late work:**

- You are allowed **two unexcused late discussion posts**. Note that all replies must be submitted on time.
- The mid-term check-in **must be completed at any point on or prior to the Friday of Week 5**.
- We will not be accepting late exams.

**A plea for academic integrity:**

- Any suspected violations of academic integrity will be turned over to the Dean of Judicial Affairs. Details regarding what counts as cheating can be found at [academicintegrity.ucsd.edu](https://academicintegrity.ucsd.edu). Please consult the site (or contact me or your TA) if you have any questions about what counts as plagiarism (this is not always straightforward, so I encourage everyone to give the linked website a once-over).
- With the advent of ChatGPT and other LLMs, I know it will be tempting to plug writing prompts into a chat and copy-paste the results into a text box. I understand that many of you are taking several courses at once and are under a ton of pressure to perform well in all your courses. While the stress you're under may lead you to succumb to that temptation, I want to urge you to resist it. If the weight of course readings or assignments begins to feel too great, please reach out to me or to your TA. We want to work with you to help you succeed, and we are glad to provide guidance (and even grant emergency extensions) whenever the situation demands it. Moreover, I promise you that you'll get more out of the course if you resist the temptation to turn to LLMs and take a shot at composing written posts yourself. Please never hesitate to reach out for additional help, advice, or guidance on any assignment.

## **ACCOMMODATIONS**

Students requesting accommodations for this course due to a disability must provide a current Authorization for Accommodation letter issued by the Office for Students with Disabilities. Please have your AFA letter sent as soon as possible. Students are required to present their AFA letters to faculty and to the OSD liaison in the department at least one week in advance of affected assignments so that accommodations may be arranged.

## COURSE SCHEDULE & READINGS

*All readings are available on the Canvas page under the Module for their week. When you see the label “[\*optional reading\*]” next to a reading, it means that the reading will be covered in lecture, but you don’t need to be familiar with it to pass the exam. These optional readings will provide more depth/insight into the week’s topic. I recommend giving them a read if that week’s topic interests you or if you plan on composing a video essay on that week’s topic.*

### *PART 1: (GROUP) IDENTITY*

#### *Week 1:*

- Mon. (Jan. 8): Syllabus and course intro
- Wed. (Jan. 10): Jorge J.E. Gracia, “Identities: General and Particular”

#### *Week 2:*

- Mon. (Jan. 15): NO LECTURE OR SECTION (MLK Day)
- Wed. (Jan. 17): José Medina, “Identity Trouble: Disidentification and the Problem of Difference” (Section 3 is optional)

### *PART 2: FEMINISM, SEX, & GENDER*

#### *Week 3:*

- Mon. (Jan. 22): Susan Moller Okin, “Feminism and Multiculturalism: Some Tensions”
- Wed. (Jan. 24): Diemut Bubeck, “Feminism in Political Philosophy” [*\*optional reading\**]

#### *Week 4:*

- Mon. (Jan. 29): Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, Introduction
- Wed. (Jan. 31): Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, Chapter 1, pp. 21-26 & 44-48 [*\*optional reading\**]
- *Mid-term exam will be distributed the evening of Thursday Feb. 1 and is due Sunday Feb. 4 at 11:59 PM Pacific.*

### *PART 3: RACE, ETHNICITY, & RACISM*

#### *Week 5:*

- Mon. (Feb. 5): Paul Taylor, “What Race-Thinking Is”
- Wed. (Feb. 7): Albert Atkin, “Is Race Real?” [*\*optional reading\**]
- *If you haven’t already, complete your mandatory mid-term check-in by Friday of this week.*

#### *Week 6:*

- Mon. (Feb. 12): Sally Haslanger, “Tracing the Sociopolitical Reality of Race”
- Wed. (Feb. 14): Chike Jeffers, “Cultural Constructionism,” pages 47-58 [*\*optional reading\**]
- *If you want to pursue the video essay option for the final, you must notify your TA and me by Friday Feb. 16.*

**Week 7:**

- Mon. (Feb. 19): NO LECTURE OR SECTION (Presidents' Day)
- Wed. (Feb. 21): Quayshawn Spencer, "How to Be a Biological Racial Realist"

**Week 8:**

- Mon. (Feb. 26): Jorge J.E. Gracia, "What Makes Hispanics/Latinos Who We Are? The Key to Unity in Diversity" [*optional reading*]
- Wed. (Feb. 28): Linda Martín Alcoff, "Latinos and the Category of Race"

**Week 9:**

- Mon. (Mar. 4): Lawrence Blum, "Racism: What It Is and Isn't"
- Wed. (Mar. 6): Tommie Shelby, "Racism, Moralism, and Social Criticism"

**PART 4: RESTORATIVE JUSTICE & REPARATIONS**

**Week 10:**

- Mon. (Mar. 11): Robert Fullinwider, "The Case for Reparations"
- Wed. (Mar. 13): Lucy Allais, "Restorative Justice, Retributive Justice, and the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission" [*optional reading*]

**Finals Week:**

- **FINAL DUE FRIDAY MARCH 22 @ 2:30 PM Pacific**
- Final exam prompts will be released at 11:30 AM Pacific the morning of the 15<sup>th</sup>.