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PHIL 3350 Selected Topics —Fanonian Practical Philosophy

Department of Philosophy, College of Arts

Fall 2023

Section 01

0.5 credit

## Prerequisites

1.50 credits in Philosophy or 7.50 credits - Must be completed prior to taking this course.

## Instructional Support

Please see Web Advisor for instructor information.

Office Hours: Thursdays 12:00-1:00, or by appointment; Mackinnon 361

## Timetable

The course is scheduled to take place on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1:00-2:20 PM and will be held in person. Please consult Courselink for the classroom location.

## Course Description

This course allows students to explore topics and texts not usually covered in other courses.

Frantz Fanon's works have had a lasting impact on thought on anti-black racism worldwide for over fifty years. At the crux of his scholarship is the notion that racism is the root cause of Black neurosis. However, in a world that is divided along Manichean lines of white vs. non-white, it is impossible to rid oneself of racism in a simple inter-human encounter. Instead, violence must be utilized, according to Fanon, to initiate dialogue. The first half of the session will be devoted to studying Fanon, carefully examining his theories on the lived experience of individuals in a racist universe. This will include exploring the concepts of neurosis, inferiority complex, racial epidermal schema, and agency. In the second half of the course, we will shift our focus to Frank B. Wilderson III, a contemporary American scholar whose writings elaborate on the central themes of Fanon's work. We will analyze his books Afro-Pessimism and Red, White & Black, with particular attention to psychoanalysis, violence, social movements, and their role in Black liberation.

## Schedule of Readings

Read the specified reading in advance of the class and come to class prepared to discuss it. Always bring your text with you to class.

1. Week 1, Sep 7
* Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks, Introduction
1. Week 2, Sep 12, 14
* Fanon, A Dying Colonialism, Algeria Unveiled
1. Week 3, Sep 19,21
* Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks, The Lived Experience of the Black Man
1. Week 4, Sep 26, 28
	* Fanon, Toward the African Revolution, The Problem of the Colonized
2. Week 5, Oct 3, 5
	* Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, On National Culture
3. Week 6, Oct 10 (Break, no class), Oct 12
	* Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, On Violence
4. Week 7, Oct 18, 20
	* Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, On Violence
5. Week 8, Oct 24, 26
	* Wilderson, Afro-Pessimism, Introduction
6. Week 9, Oct 31, Nov 2.
	* Wilderson, Afro-Pessimism, Blacks and the Master/Slave Relation
7. Week 10, Nov 7, 9
	* Wilderson, Afro-Pessimism, The Prison Slave as Hegemony’s (silent) scandal.
8. Week 11, Nov 14, 16
	* Wilderson, Afro-Pessimism, The Vengeance of Vertigo: Aphasia and Abjection in the Political Trials of Black Insurgents
9. Week 12, Nov 21, 23
	* Wilderson, Red, White & Black, The Narcissistic Slave
10. Week 13, Nov 28, 30
	* Afropessimism: A Conversation with Frank B. Wilderson III (one hour 26 minutes video)

## Texts

It is important to note that all the necessary readings for this course are available online.

Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. Translated by Richard Philcox. New York: Grove Press, 2004.

Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks*. Translated by Richard Philcox. 1st ed., new ed. Get Political. New York: Grove Press, 2008.

Fanon, Frantz. *A Dying Colonialism*. Translated by Haakon Chevalier. Grove Press, 1994.

Fanon, Frantz. *Toward the African Revolution: Political Essays*. Translated by Haakon Chevalier. Fanon, Frantz Series. Grove Press, 1988.

Wilderson, F. B., S. V. Hartman, S. Martinot, J. Y. Sexton, and H. J. Spillers. *Afro-Pessimism: An Introduction*. Racked & Dispatched, 2017.

Frank B Wilderson III. *Red, White & Black*. Duke University Press, 2010.

Recommended Resources

Davis, Angela Y., Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, and Nikita Dhawan. “Planetary Utopias.” *Radical Philosophy*, no. 205 (2019): 67–78.

Gordon, Lewis R., Annie Menzel, George Shulman, and Jasmine Syedullah. “Critical Exchange Afro Pessimism.” *Contemporary Political Theory* 17, no. 1 (2017): 105–37.

## Course Learning Outcomes

1. The primary objective of this course is to delve into the literature assigned for study. While I will strive to make our time together engaging, it is ultimately the texts themselves that serve as the primary source of instruction. By studying the texts provided, you will acquire knowledge and understanding. Conversely, a lack of engagement with the texts will result in limited learning.
2. In order to ensure a productive and fruitful learning experience, it is essential that you come to class well-prepared and with a willingness to actively participate in collaborative discussions centered on various ideas that arise. Your contributions are integral to the success and effectiveness of the class.
3. Additionally, I will assign writing tasks to encourage the development of your thought process. The act of putting your thoughts into words and subjecting them to the critique of others is an effective way to enhance your cognitive abilities.

## Assignments

Your final grade will be determined by two factors, which are participation and two essays.

1. Participation accounts for 20% of your grade. To have a participation point, you must attend and participate.
	1. The learning outcome of your participation is to improve your oral communication abilities (e.g., actively listening and speaking to a variety of people).
2. The two essays make up 80%. I will provide you with specific details regarding the essays as we progress through the course. Essentially, you will be required to write an essay on both Fanon and Wilderson. In addition to defending a critical thesis, your essay must also include a careful exegesis of selected textual passages from the relevant text.
	1. The learning outcomes of these assignments are to improve 1) your writing skills, especially your ability to compose texts with logical flow and organization and to paraphrase source material with a high degree of content accuracy; and 2) your critical thinking skills, especially your ability to apply concepts and ideas to solve a problem or interpret phenomena, to define the ethical implications of ideas or concepts, and to identify bias in challenging texts.

The first essay on Fanon is due on October 19 and must be submitted through CourseLink.

The second essay on Wilderson is due on November 30 and must be submitted through CourseLink.

### Allowable Generative AI Functions for Both Essays

For both the first and the second essay, you can use artificial intelligence (such as Chat GPT or Jasper) to

* Create a plain-language summary of the source material.
* Create an outline for the writing.
* Submit your own outline to AI and ask for constructive feedback.
* Submit the whole text to AI for constructive feedback.

Do not use artificial intelligence (such as Chat GPT or Jasper) to

* + Classify and categorize information.
	+ Offer an opposing position to an argument.
	+ Generate or advance ideas.
	+ Make connections between two themes or ideas.
	+ Structure unstructured data (e.g., a variety of written sources) for further analysis
	+ Write a text that will be central to a learning activity.
	+ Modify sentences or suggest alternative phrasing.
	+ Summarize or paraphrase a source to include in the assignment.
	+ Paraphrase or quote written content from generative AI (note: cite content using style guide)
	+ Simplify or clarify the language in the text.
	+ Remove jargon from text.

Please refrain from reading commentaries on Fanon or Wilderson unless I explicitly instruct you to do so.

Additionally, it is imperative that you pay close attention to the issue of academic integrity. Any work submitted must be your original creation, and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Please refer to the undergraduate calendar for a more detailed discussion on this matter.

Note: I am open to the possibility of substituting a classroom presentation for a paper. If you are interested, we can discuss this further. As previously stated, the purpose of this class is for you to engage with the assigned readings. This will be the measure of success in the course. However, your grade will primarily be based on two essays that you will be required to write.

## Objectives

My goal for this course is to give you a chance to dive deeper into the works of two great philosophers. In your previous philosophy courses, you may have only read short sections of their works, but in this class, we will spend more time with their ideas.

By spending more time with the philosophers' works, I hope you will develop a deeper understanding of their ideas. This class will challenge you to think analytically and synthetically as you work through their rigorous arguments and connect their insights with each other.

Additionally, this course will cover a range of important topics such as agency, freedom, non-being, social death, body schema, and ego-ideal. By the end of the class, you should have a better grasp of these concepts.

Finally, the assignments for this course will help you improve your reading, writing, and critical thinking skills.

## Late Policy

If you submit your paper late, and the lateness is not justified on medical, psychological, or compassionate grounds, I will apply a 2%/working day late-penalty policy.

# University Standard Statements

## Email Communication

As per university regulations, all students are required to check their <uoguelph.ca> e- mail account regularly: e-mail is the official route of communication between the University and its students.

## When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons, please advise the course instructor (or designated person, such as a teaching assistant) in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact.

Undergraduate Calendar - Academic Consideration and Appeals <https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-ac.shtml>

Graduate Calendar - Grounds for Academic Consideration <https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/index.shtml>

## Drop Date

Courses that are one semester long must be dropped by the end of the last day of classes; two-semester courses must be dropped by the last day of classes in the second semester. The regulations and procedures for course registration are available in their respective Academic Calendars.

Undergraduate Calendar - Dropping Courses [https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08- drop.shtml](https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-%20drop.shtml)

Graduate Calendar - Registration Changes [https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/genreg-reg- regchg.shtml](https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/genreg-reg-%20regchg.shtml)

## Copies of Out-Of-Class Assignments

Keep paper and/or other reliable back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

## Accessibility

The University promotes the full participation of students who experience disabilities in their academic programs. To that end, the provision of academic accommodation is a shared responsibility between the University and the student.

When accommodations are needed, the student is required to first register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS). Documentation to substantiate the existence of a disability is required, however, interim accommodations may be possible while that process is underway.

Accommodations are available for both permanent and temporary disabilities. It should be noted that common illnesses such as a cold or the flu do not constitute a disability.

Use of the SAS Exam Centre requires students to make a booking at least 14 days in advance, and no later than November 1 (fall), March 1 (winter) or July 1 (summer).

Similarly, new or changed accommodations for online quizzes, tests and exams must be approved at least a week ahead of time.

More information: [www.uoguelph.ca/sas](http://www.uoguelph.ca/sas)

## Academic Misconduct

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and it is the responsibility of all members of the University community – faculty, staff, and students – to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that discourages misconduct. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection.

Please note: Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor.

Undergraduate Calendar - Academic Misconduct [https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08- amisconduct.shtml](https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-%20amisconduct.shtml)

Graduate Calendar - Academic Misconduct <https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/index.shtml>

## Turnitin

In this course, your instructor will be using Turnitin, integrated with the CourseLink Dropbox tool, to detect possible plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration or copying as part of the ongoing efforts to maintain academic integrity at the University of Guelph.

All submitted assignments will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the Usage Policy posted on the Turnitin.com site.

A major benefit of using Turnitin is that students will be able to educate and empower themselves in preventing academic misconduct. In this course, you may screen your own assignments through Turnitin as many times as you wish before the due date. You will be able to see and print reports that show you exactly where you have properly and improperly referenced the outside sources and materials in your assignment.

## Recording of Materials

Presentations which are made in relation to course work—including lectures—cannot be recorded or copied without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a classmate or guest lecturer. Material recorded with permission is restricted to use for that course unless further permission is granted.

## Resources

The Academic Calendars are the source of information about the University of Guelph’s procedures, policies and regulations which apply to undergraduate, graduate and diploma programs.

## Disclaimer

Please note that the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic may necessitate a revision of the format of course offerings, changes in classroom protocols, and academic schedules. Any such changes will be announced via Courselink and/or class email.

This includes on-campus scheduling during the semester, mid-terms and final examination schedules. All University-wide decisions will be posted on the COVID-19 website (https://news.uoguelph.ca/2019-novel-coronavirus-information/) and circulated by email.

## Illness

Medical notes will not normally be required for singular instances of academic consideration, although students may be required to provide supporting documentation for multiple missed assessments or when involving a large part of a course (e.g., final exam or major assignment).

## COVID-19 Safety Protocols

For information on current safety protocols, follow these links:

* [https://news.uoguelph.ca/return-to-campuses/how-u-of-g-is-preparing-for-your- safe-return/](https://news.uoguelph.ca/return-to-campuses/how-u-of-g-is-preparing-for-your-%20safe-return/)
* <https://news.uoguelph.ca/return-to-campuses/spaces/#ClassroomSpaces>

Please note, that these guidelines may be updated as required in response to evolving University, Public Health or government directives.