University of Guelph tagline

PHIL\*4420/6930 - Major Texts in Philosophy/Selected Topics

Term: Fall 2023

Section(s): 01

Department of Philosophy

Credit Weight: 0.50

# Course Details

## Calendar Description

PHIL\*4420 Major Texts in Philosophy

Advanced study of a major text in philosophy not treated in either PHIL\*4400 or [PHIL\*4410](https://calendar.uoguelph.ca/search/?P=PHIL*4410).

**Prerequisite(s):**1.00 credits in Philosophy at the 3000 level

PHIL\*6930  Selected Topics I  Unspecified

Topics in this course will vary from offering to offering.

## Detailed Course Description

**Seminar Topic: Frantz Fanon’s Phenomenology from Psychiatry to Politics**

Over the past decade, studies of Frantz Fanon’s writings have focused on *Black Skin, White Masks* and *The Wretched of the Earth.* Only very recently has the place of Fanon’s psychiatric practice been investigated as pertinent to the development of his phenomenology and political philosophy. This interest is in part due to the publication of his psychiatric writings in 2015 (translated into English in 2018) in a volume entitled *Écrits sur l’aliénation et la liberté (Alienation and Freedom)*. This volume, which comprises Fanon’s psychiatric writings, including letters, journals, and articles in psychiatry, confirms Fanon’s commitment to psychiatry. This course suggests that Fanon’s psychiatric practice cannot be considered separately from his philosophical writings. Rather, his psychiatric practice constitutes a central facet of his philosophical approach. His psychiatric practice continued from the time of his medical studies in France (1949-1952) to his appointment to the psychiatric hospital in Blida-Joinville in Algeria in 1953 to his move to Tunisia in 1957, where he opened a psychiatric day unit.

This course will take as its starting point the idea that Fanon’s phenomenological and political philosophy cannot be thought apart from his psychiatric work. His psychiatric practice reveals intimations of racism and colonialism, which then forms the ground for the development of Fanon’s own phenomenological method. Fanon’s phenomenology is also importantly *decolonial* in its attempt to resist the injustices of oppression. Fanon’s concept of violence, well-known in philosophical analyses, I conclude, cannot be fully understood without reference to his psychiatric and psychopathological work. Without attentiveness to these psychiatric studies, little can be gleaned about how colonial pathologies are structured and how they impact the creation and maintenance of institutions, imaginaries, and selves in colonial society.

We will read Fanon as developing a way of doing phenomenology that arises out of his psychopathological understanding both as racialized subject and as colonial medical doctor.

In this seminar, we begin by reading sections of Fanon’s first major phenomenological work, *Black Skin, White Masks,*in order to set the groundwork for our study and to understand Fanon’s orientation in writing on racism and colonialism*.*We will read significant parts of both his psychiatric publications and his philosophical ‘psychopathological’ ones. Crucial here is Fanon’s “The ‘North African Syndrome,’” which was published in the same year as *BSWM.*Focusing on his articles during his time at Blida-Joinville and in Tunisia, we will ask after Fanon’s methods and his affective and epistemological understanding of the occlusions of racism and colonialism. And we will aim to read from sections of his last book, *The Wretched of the Earth*, to see how his engagement with psychopathology reveals colonial and racial violence.

## Timetable

Th 11:30 AM - 2:20 PM, MACS 129 In Person

# Instructional Support

Instructor: Dr. Sujaya Dhanvantari

Email: sdhanva@uoguelph.ca

Office Hours: Wed 4-5 pm

# Resources

Frantz Fanon, *Alienation and Freedom,* ed. Jean Khalfa and Robert Young, trans. Steven Corcoran (Bloomsbury, 2018). ISBN: 9781474250214. AVAILABLE ON ARES/COURSELINK.

\*Please note: This book has become expensive. However, it is available in e-book format at the University of Guelph library. The link to this book is found on the ARES list. You can print out the pages or bring the e-version to class. In either case, please arrange to have access to the text for the period of the seminar.

If you would prefer to have a hard copy, there are some available for purchase online. Please let me know if you would prefer to have a hard copy, and we will find a way for you to have one.

Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth,* trans. Richard Philcox (Grove Press, 2004). ISBN: 9780802141323. Available on ARES and available also in hard copy for purchase at the University of Guelph Bookstore.

Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks,* trans. Charles Markmann (Grove Press, 1967). ISBN: 9780802150845.  
[Note that there are two translations of this book. I strongly prefer the Charles Markmann translation. This is out-of-print but can still be but found online. I will also make the required chapters available in PDF]

If you want a hard copy, then only the Richard Philcox translation (Grove Press, 2008) is available at the University of Guelph Bookstore for purchase. We will also work with this edition if you bring it to class.

\*Please note that we will only read Markmann and/or Philcox translations in class.

Also, to be posted as PDFs:

Frantz Fanon, “The ‘North African Syndrome’” and “Racism and Culture” from *Toward the African Revolution,* trans. Haakon Chevalier (Grove Press, 1967).

Frantz Fanon, “Algeria Unveiled” from *A Dying Colonialism* (Grove Press, 1965).

# Course Learning Outcomes

The course is designed to help students:

1. Develop close reading skills of philosophical texts.
2. Identify and analyze some major ideas in continental philosophical thought related to Fanon’s phenomenology of colonial oppression.
3. Articulate and comment critically on key ideas related to course themes.
4. Write clearly and cogently on course related topics.

# Assessments

**ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADES:**

1. The **midterm test,** worth **20%** of your grade, will be held in class on Thursday, October 26th. It will be an open book test, covering readings up until October 19th. Please bring your computers to class for the test. If you do not bring a computer, you will be asked to submit a handwritten assignment. [LO 1,2,3,4].
2. The **TERM PAPER**, worth **40%** of your grade, should be approximately **15-20 pages** in length (closer to 15 pages for undergraduates; closer to 20 pages for graduate students). Formatting should be Times New Roman 12 font, double spaced. *The topic of this paper is to be designed by you, in consultation with the instructor.* It is recommended that you begin work on this paper early, since you should consult secondary sources for the purpose. ***The paper will be due at the end of the term (date TBA).*** [LO 1,2,34].
3. **Topic Proposal** (5%): Comments will be given in person or in writing. Submission of the topic proposal is mandatory. **PROPOSALS ARE DUE IN WEEK TEN.** [LO 3,4].

## **Short Weekly Questions** (15%): You should come to all weeks of class with ***one short written question/concept****,* designed to generate discussion. **You should be ready to contribute this orally if there is a lull in discussion or when called on.** Questions will not be individually graded, but I ask that you hand them in at the end of each class; I will grade them at the end of term taken as a whole. (As a rough guideline, short weekly questions should be about *75-100 words* in length.). [LO 1,2,3,4].

Hints: The aim is not to give an exhaustive interpretation of the reading; rather it is to interrogate as precisely and attentively as possible an issue in that week’s reading that you think is significant for understanding the text.

*Questions/concepts must be clearly formulated and elaborated in light of the text we are reading*. (Please motivate your question by referring to passage(s) from the text but avoid linear summaries of the text.)

1. Since this is a discussion-based seminar, **ATTENDANCE** and **PARTICIPATION** are crucial to your role in the seminar. Together they are worth **20%** of your grade. [LO 1,2,3].

**Expectations with respect to Participation and Attendance**

It is your responsibility as a member of this undergraduate upper-year and graduate seminar to come to each class, having done the readings and prepared for substantial and nuanced discussion. **You are expected to attend all sessions of the seminar** (unless you have a valid medical reason for absence).

You are expected to engage seriously with the questions, interventions, and presentations of your fellow students. Oral participation should be thoughtful, respectful of others, and constructively critical, as well as on-going.

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**TOPIC PROPOSALS are due in class IN WEEK TEN.** The professor will be available on ZOOM for meetings. We will schedule them in class prior to Week Ten.

**TERM PAPERS will be due at the end of the semester. Date TBA.**

**Ongoing Pandemic Considerations**

It is highly recommended to be masked in the classroom at all times, to protect both yourself and your fellow seminar participants from the potentially debilitating long-term effects of SARS- CoV-2.

IF YOU ARE NOT WELL, HAVE COVID OR IN CONTACT OR HAVE BEEN IN CLOSE CONTACT WITH SOMEONE WITH COVID, PLEASE DO NOT ATTEND THIS CLASS IN PERSON. PLEASE LET THE PROF KNOW THAT YOU ARE UNABLE TO ATTEND, AND STATE THE REASON WHY. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCE ARE YOU EXPECTED TO ATTEND IN-PERSON CLASSES WHEN YOU ARE NOT WELL. IF YOU REQUIRE ANY OTHER SORT OF ACCOMMODATION, PLEASE BE IN TOUCH (BY EMAIL OR PHONE) REGARDING THE SUPPORTS YOU MAY NEED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE CLASS.

# Late Policy

Late work  
For fairness reasons, there is a penalty for late work. A deduction of 2% per day, starting and including the day it is due, will normally be applied. There is no limit to the % that can be deducted. The date stamp on the Dropbox indicates the time the assignment was submitted, and you must submit your assignment in the correct format (\*.doc or .docx) by this time.

# 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.

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>

## AI Statement

The use of AI is **not authorized** for the completion of assignments. Turnitin may be used in the evaluation process for all assignments.

Please read the University statement on the use of AI in classrooms: <https://news.uoguelph.ca/2023/03/university-of-guelph-statement-on-artificial-intelligence-systems-chatgpt-academic-integrity/>

## 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.