

Phil 490/500: Epistemic Injustice

Syllabus

Instructor: Dr. Audrey Yap (ayap@uvic.ca)

Office/Phone: CLE B307 (721-7510)

Office Hours: Tue 11:30 - 12:30, Thu 10:30 -11:30, and by appointment

Class Information: TWF 10:30-11:20 in CLE B315

Course Website: Through CourseSpaces.

Textbooks: *Epistemic Injustice*, Miranda Fricker

The Epistemology of Resistance, José Medina

Other readings available online.

It will be helpful if you have read the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*, though it is not a required text for this class.

Accessibility: I do my best to make this course as accessible as possible for students, whether or not you are registered with the RCSD. If you notice any barriers to accessibility in the course, please let me know.

Course Content:

Epistemic injustice occurs as a result of systemic identity prejudice, and is the name of a particular kind of harm done to people in their capacity as a knower. The term is best known because of Miranda Fricker's book *Epistemic Injustice*, in which she identifies two distinct types of epistemic injustice: testimonial and hermeneutical. However, there have been criticisms of Fricker's framework that ought to be considered as well. For instance, it is sometimes suggested that her focus on credibility deficit ignores the complexities of the credibility economy overall, and that a structural approach rather than an individualistic one would be preferable. In this course, we will discuss the general concept of epistemic injustice, as well as several of its applications and extensions.

You might at various points find some of the course material challenging — not just intellectually, but also emotionally, since we will be doing our best to talk about the realities of injustice in our society. I encourage all of you to be mindful of the variety of experiences and backgrounds of other students in the class, and to let me know if you have any concerns.

Coursework:

60% of the grade for this course will be determined by a final research paper (12-14 pages for undergrads, 14-16 for grads), due after the end of classes. This will be written on a topic of your choice, double-spaced, with page numbers, using any standard citation format (see <http://library.uvic.ca/instruction/cite/> for help). A proposal, in the form of an extended outline (1-2 pages) for this paper will be due on the last day of classes, two weeks prior to the due date for the paper itself. This proposal will be worth 4% of your

grade, and I encourage you to discuss paper topics with me before the proposal is due. I expect the final paper to engage with the topic of epistemic injustice and at least two of the works on it that we will have read throughout the term. You are welcome to bring in other readings on the subject as well. This paper will not necessarily have to argue for one philosopher's view over another, but could, for example, talk about ways in which the concept of epistemic injustice could be fruitfully extended or applied in various domains. You are also encouraged to think about epistemic justice, and ways that we could find structural solutions for the problem of epistemic injustice.

You will also write 4 short critical response papers (2-4 pages), each worth 8%. Each one of these will discuss one of the articles we are reading alongside the main text. You will outline the main arguments or concepts in the text that are relevant to the article, as well as the ways in which the article is connected to them. You will also include at least one point of our own analysis at the end of your essay. The main criterion for these short papers will be clarity and accuracy. I will be looking at how clearly and carefully you represent the main arguments in both works. You can choose which articles you discuss, but the papers will be due in class the Tuesday after the article is assigned on the syllabus.

The remaining 4% of your grade will be for a journal that you will keep throughout the semester. It must have eight entries over the twelve weeks of the course, with two entries written every three weeks. Entries only need to be a page long; they can discuss your thoughts on some of the readings, or they can talk about ways in which you have thought about the concept of epistemic injustice in relation to ordinary life. I will suggest prompts for these entries during class discussions about the material. 1% will be assessed every three weeks on a pass/fail basis. Journal entries should touch on the discussions we have about the material in class. Although I will not formally take attendance, the journal will serve the function of an attendance mark by ensuring that you are keeping up with the readings and paying attention to class discussions.

Numbers will be converted to a letter grade in accordance with the following scale:
90-100 = A+; 85-89 = A; 80-84 = A-; 77-79 = B+; 73-76 = B; 70-72 = B-; 65-69 = C+; 60-64 = C; 50-59 = D; 0-49 = F.

Communication: Office hours are held on a drop-in basis. If you want to schedule an appointment outside my office hours, try emailing me with a few suggestions for times that would work for you. If you ask me a question over email, you can expect a reply within about 1 working day. If you don't hear back from me after that time frame, feel free to try again in case your message went astray. Email is the best way to get in touch with me. If you do email me, please make sure that I can tell from the email what your name is.

Schedule of Readings

- Week One: Jan 4, 6
Topic: Epistemic Injustice: Introduction.
Reading: *Epistemic Injustice*: Chap 1.
- Week Two: Jan 10, 11, 13
Topic: Testimonial injustice.
Reading: *Epistemic Injustice*: Chap 1, 2.
- Week Three: Jan 17, 18, 20
Topic: Testimonial Justice and Virtue Epistemology.
Reading: *Epistemic Injustice*: Chap 4.
Elizabeth Anderson, “Epistemic Justice as a Virtue of Social Institutions”
- Week Four: Jan 24, 25, 27
Topic: Hermeneutical Injustice.
Reading: *Epistemic Injustice*: Chap 7.
B. Lee Aultman, “Epistemic Injustice and the Construction of Transgender Legal Subjects”
- Week Five: Jan 31, Feb 1, 3
Topic: Epistemic Virtues.
Reading: *The Epistemology of Resistance*: Chap 1.
- Week Six: Feb 7, 8, 10
Topic: Active Ignorance and Epistemic Resistance.
Reading: *The Epistemology of Resistance*: Chap 2.
- Week Seven: Feb 21, 22, 24
Topic: Hermeneutical Resistance.
Reading: *The Epistemology of Resistance*: Chap 3.
Gail Pohlhaus, Jr, “Relational Knowing and Epistemic Injustice: Towards a Theory of Willful Hermeneutical Ignorance”
- Week Eight: Feb 28, Mar 1, 3
Topic: Culpable Ignorance.
Reading: *The Epistemology of Resistance*: Chap 4.
Shelley Tremain, “Knowing Disability, Differently”

- Week Nine: Mar 7, 8, 10
 Topic: Resistant Imagination.
 Reading: *The Epistemology of Resistance*: Chap 6.
 Barrett Emerick, “Love and Resistance: Moral Solidarity in the Face of Perceptual Failure”
- Week Ten: Mar 14, 15, 17
 Topic: Race and Epistemologies of Ignorance
 Reading: Charles Mills, “White Ignorance”
 Patricia Hill Collins, “Black Feminist Thought as Oppositional Knowledge,”
- Week Eleven: Mar 21, 22, 24
 Topic: Colonialism and Epistemic Injustice
 Reading: Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, “Land as pedagogy: Nishnaabeg intelligence and rebellious transformation”
 Taiaiake Alfred and Jeff Corntassel, “Being Indigenous: Resurgences against Contemporary Colonialism”
- Week Twelve: Mar 28, 29, 31, Apr 4.
 Topic: Open.
 Paper Proposals due April 4th.
 Final Papers Due April 18th.

Note: This syllabus is tentative, and should only be used to give a rough guide to the course schedule. Additional readings may be assigned, and dates may be changed if necessary.