COURSE DESCRIPTION

In 2014, a recording was leaked in which L.A. Clippers’ team owner, Donald Sterling, is heard saying to his girlfriend: “It bothers me a lot that you want to broadcast that you’re associating with black people. Do you have to?” He then goes on to ask that she “not bring [black people] to his games.” In 2014, women make 77¢ to every $1.00 men make. 31 states ban same-sex marriage. What are we to make of these events and facts? To what extent do racism, sexism, and heterosexism still affect Americans’ personal, political, and economic lives? In this class, we will investigate the nature of oppression and privilege in the US with a specific focus on race, gender, and sexuality. We will also explore various possibilities for combating oppression and privilege. This class is an interdisciplinary course: while we will take a philosophical approach to such questions, we will engage with readings from philosophy, history, psychology, literature, and popular media.

Learning Goals

By the end of this course, I hope that students will a) have a strong understanding of various questions and theories about oppression and privilege, b) see their daily experiences in a different light and c) feel empowered to address various issues of oppression and privilege. In this course, we will work on developing specific skills that will help us meet these learning goals, such as:

1. **Ability to engage in difficult discussions**
   - Listen to others
   - Accurately and concisely summarize others’ arguments
   - Charitably evaluate the strengths and weaknesses in others’ arguments
   - Recognize one’s own assumptions and biases
   - Make positive contributions/help move the conversation forward

2. **Ability to use writing to express oneself and effectively communicate**
   - Cultivate active reading to comprehend dense and controversial texts
   - Accurately and concisely summarize others’ arguments
   - Charitably evaluate the strengths and weaknesses in others’ arguments
   - Develop one’s own arguments
   - Apply theoretical commitments to specific, concrete cases
   - Write clearly, concisely, and straightforwardly
   - Write persuasively

Required Texts

This course is interdisciplinary. Our main textbook (below) focuses on philosophical readings while supplementary readings (available online) draw from history, psychology, literature, and popular media.

*Oppression, Privilege, and Resistance: Theoretical Perspectives on Racism, Sexism, and Heterosexism.* By Lisa Heldke and Peg O’Connor. *Course Reader available at the bookstore. Listed as “OPR” in reading schedule*
COURSE GUIDELINES and EXPECTATIONS

Class Format:
We will spend much of our class time discussing the course topics and readings. Sometimes, we will have interactive lectures, do small group work, or in-class writing. Notice that this course is not aimed at a final exam; however, you will be held to a high standard for understanding the content and participating fully in the course via discussions, activities, and your writing.

Expectations:
• You should come to every class unless you are really sick, contagious, or you have a genuine emergency. All of the lectures, exercises, projects, and discussions are designed to help you learn, engage with the material, and deepen your understanding.
• You should come to every class on time. If you’re late, you’ll miss important announcements and material at the beginning of class and distract your classmates.
• Turn all assignments in on time. If you’re having trouble completing an assignment, contact me in advance of the due date so I can answer questions, help you organize thoughts, develop a plan, and give you an extension if you need it. Everyone has trouble with an assignment, sometimes, so ask for help if you need it!
• Make a sincere effort to engage with the material. Some of the ideas and writing we’ll be covering are complex and challenging; some are written in a style that’s more difficult to read. I will break things down into smaller pieces, and try to connect more abstract ideas to concrete questions so that it’s easier to follow and more immediately accessible. But there will be times when you’ll need to concentrate on difficult material for sustained periods. Given this, you should give yourself plenty of time to complete the reading and homework.
• Treat everyone else in the class with consideration and respect. This means not just listening quietly while others are speaking and responding politely, but also actively working to engage with their comments, along with the material we study in the class. You should also avoid using your cell phone, surfing the internet, talking with neighbors, or falling asleep during class. If you cannot avoid these things, you should leave class so as to not distract others.
• Check your email daily. I will send important announcements and notifications about the course to your IIT email, so you should make the habit of checking it daily.

Policy on Workload: We will be reading dense and complicated materials and I will ask you to spend a significant amount of time thinking about the issues we discuss. Given this, you should expect to spend 6-8 hours on homework outside of class.

Policy on Academic Integrity:
All students are required to familiarize themselves with IIT’s academic integrity policy:

Academic dishonesty occurs when you present ideas from somewhere else as your own. Plagiarism is often unintentional and usually happens when students are unsure about the material and rely too heavily on other sources. I have seen plagiarism in the form of copying text and ideas from the internet, lifting text from our readings, relying too heavily on tutors, working together on papers and assignments, and buying papers from the internet. All suspected plagiarism will be reported to the academichonesty@iit.edu for an investigation and final decision, even when the plagiarism is accidental. Hence, if you have questions about your work, you should talk with me before turning in a paper or homework that could be taken as relying too heavily on outside sources. If it is determined that your work is in violation of the Policy on Academic Integrity, possible disciplinary measures include:
• **Reduction in grade:** you will be given a 0.0 for the assignment and possibly a 0.0 for the course.

• **Expulsion from a course:** you will be assigned a punitive failing grade of ‘E’ for the course and can no longer participate in the course or receive evaluation of coursework.

**ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING**

Assignments are designed to help us develop the skills needed to meet the course learning goals. The assignments for this course are:

1. **Reading Questions and Free-writing:** For each class, you will bring a small amount of writing. On Tuesdays, you will answer a set of questions designed to assist with reading comprehension. On Thursdays, you will bring a free-writing assignment designed to help you begin the process of thinking critically about the text (*free-writing can be in a language other than English*). Reading questions (RQ) and free-writing (FW) must be typed and will be due at the beginning of each class. **To get full credit for these assignments, you must bring a hard copy to class with you and submit a copy online at our course website.** RQ and FW submitted online but not brought to class, or vice versa, will get half credit. Late RQ and FW will not be accepted; your two lowest scores will be dropped. Sometimes, volunteers will be asked to share their free-write in class. (40%)

2. **Class discussions:** The skills we will practice in this class to help us develop the ability to engage in difficult conversations include: listening to others, accurately and concisely summarizing others’ arguments, charitably evaluating arguments, recognizing your own assumptions and biases, and making positive contributions to discussion. Throughout the quarter, we will complete brief evaluations of our progress on these skills. The evaluations will be three-part: you will evaluate yourself, be anonymously evaluated by a peer, and be evaluated by me. (10%)

3. **Formal writing:** You will be required to write two short papers that exhibit several of the key writing skills that we will be practicing in class such as summarizing, raising objections, and offering solutions. We will discuss the writing guidelines and the rubric for the papers in the first few weeks of class. At the end of the semester, you will revise, integrate, and build upon these two short papers for one longer final paper. Late work will not be accepted unless due to a documented emergency. (Papers = 35%)

4. **Letter to the Editor/Opinion Piece:** The final assignment for this class will be to write a letter to the editor or opinion piece for a newspaper, magazine, or online blog. We will see several examples of such writing in our readings early in the quarter. Later in the quarter, you will be required to select, read, and share with the class opinion pieces that you find in newspapers, magazines, or online blogs. You will turn a draft of your opinion piece in on Thursday, November 20. I will give feedback, which you will incorporate in your revised and final version to be submitted in finals week. It is my hope that you will submit your opinion piece to a public venue and let us know what kind of feedback/comments it receives. (15%)

**Grade scale:**

600-650 points = A (excellent)
525-599 points = B (above average)
450-524 points = C (average)
400-499 points = D (below average)
< 399 points = E (fail)
### READING and ASSIGNMENTS SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, August 26</td>
<td>No reading due</td>
<td>None</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, August 28</td>
<td>• “How to Read Philosophy” handout&lt;br&gt;• Preface and Part I Introduction <em>(OPR)</em>&lt;br&gt;• Villarreal, Jose Antonio. <em>Pocho</em></td>
<td>Free-write (FW) # 1</td>
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<td>Tuesday, September 2</td>
<td>• Yamato, Gloria. <em>Something About the Subject Makes it Hard to Name</em> <em>(OPR)</em>&lt;br&gt;• hooks, bell. <em>overcoming white supremacy: a comment</em> <em>(OPR)</em></td>
<td>Reading Questions (RQ) #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday, September 4</td>
<td>• Tatum, Beverly Daniel. <em>Why are all the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?</em></td>
<td>FW #2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, September 9</td>
<td>• Ezorsky, Gertrude. <em>Overt and Institutional Racism</em> <em>(OPR)</em>&lt;br&gt;• Acuña, Rodolfo. <em>Occupied America</em> <em>(OPR)</em></td>
<td>RQ #2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, September 11</td>
<td>• Ojito, Mirta. <em>Best of Friends, Worlds Apart</em>&lt;br&gt;• Demby, Gene. <em>Study Reveals Worse Outcomes For Black And Latino Defendants</em></td>
<td>FW #3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, September 16</td>
<td>• Hartmann, Heidi. <em>Towards a Definition of Patriarchy</em> <em>(OPR)</em>&lt;br&gt;• Sheffield, Carole J. <em>Sexual Terrorism: The Social Control of Women</em> <em>(OPR)</em></td>
<td>RQ #3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, September 18</td>
<td>• 5 Ways Girls Are Taught to Avoid ‘Smart’ (And What We Can Do About It)&lt;br&gt;• <em>The Campus Sexual Assault (CSA) Study</em> (pages viii-xiii)</td>
<td>FW #4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, September 23</td>
<td>• Frye, Marilyn. <em>Oppression</em> <em>(OPR)</em></td>
<td>RQ #4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, September 25</td>
<td>• Writing a philosophy paper handout</td>
<td>FW #5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, September 30</td>
<td>• Hopkins, Patrick D. <em>Gender Treachery: Homophobia, Masculinity, and Threatened Identities</em></td>
<td>RQ #5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, October 2</td>
<td>Student Selection #1</td>
<td>FW #6</td>
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### SECTION 1: OPPRESSION

<table>
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<td>Reading Questions (RQ) #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday, September 11</td>
<td>• Ojito, Mirta. <em>Best of Friends, Worlds Apart</em>&lt;br&gt;• Demby, Gene. <em>Study Reveals Worse Outcomes For Black And Latino Defendants</em></td>
<td>FW #3</td>
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### SECTION 2: PRIVILEGE

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, October 7</td>
<td>• McIntosh, Peggy. <em>White Privilege and Male Privilege</em> (Online)</td>
<td>• RQ # 6&lt;br&gt;• Paper #1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, October 9</td>
<td>• Edgington, Amy. <em>Growing up in Little Rock</em></td>
<td>FW #7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, October 14</td>
<td>• Part II Intro <em>(OPR)</em>&lt;br&gt;• Bailey, Alison. <em>Expanding on Marilyn Frye’s</em></td>
<td>RQ #7</td>
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## “Oppression” (OPR)

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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| Thursday, October 16  | • *Income vs. Wealth: How Privilege Is Passed Down from Generation to Generation*  
                        | • *What Losing My Job Taught Me About Privilege, Sexism, and Oppression*     |
| Tuesday, October 21   | • Stotlenberg, John. *How Men Have (A) Sex (online)*  
                        | RQ #8                                                                    |
| Thursday, October 23  | • 30+ Examples of Heterosexual Privilege in the US  
                        | FW #9                                                                    |
| Tuesday, October 28   | • Part III Intro (OPR)  
                        | • Hill Collins, Patricia. *Toward a New Vision: Race, Class, and Gender as Categories of Analysis and Connection (OPR)*  
                        | RQ #9                                                                    |
| Thursday, October 30  | Student selection #2  
                        | FW #10                                                                   |

### SECTION 3: RESISTANCE

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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| Tuesday, November 4   | • Ryan, William. *Blaming the Victim (OPR)*  
                        | • RQ #10  
                        | • Paper #2                                                                   |
| Thursday, November 6  | • Martin Luther King Biography  
                        | • King, Martin Luther. *Letter from Birmingham Jail*  
                        | FW #11                                                                    |
| Tuesday, November 11  | • Part IV Intro (OPR)  
                        | • Ignatiev, Noel. *Treason to Whiteness is Loyalty to Humanity (OPR)*  
                        | • Coates, Ta-Nehisi. *The Case for Reparations: An Intellectual Autopsy*  
                        | RQ #11                                                                    |
| Thursday, November 13 | • Malcolm X Biography  
                        | • Top 5 Malcolm X Speeches  
                        | FW #12                                                                    |
| Tuesday, November 18  | • Boggs, James. *Black Power: A Scientific Concept Whose Time Has Come (OPR)*  
                        | • Frye, Marilyn. *Willful Virgin or Do You Have to be a Lesbian to be a Feminist? (OPR)*  
                        | RQ #12                                                                    |
| Thursday, November 20 | Student selection #3  
                        | • FW #13  
                        | • Opinion piece draft                                                       |
| Tuesday, November 25  | • Parker, Pat. *Revolution: It’s Not Neat or Pretty or Quick (OPR)*  
                        | • hooks, bell. *Feminist Revolution: Development Through Struggle (OPR)*   |
| Thursday, November 27 | Thanksgiving Break. No class  
                        | RQ #13                                                                    |
| Tuesday, December 2   | • Bulkin, Elly. *Breaking a Cycle (OPR)*  
                        | • Matsuda, Mari J. *Standing Beside My Sister,*  
                        | RQ #14                                                                    |
Facing the Enemy (OPR)

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<tr>
<th>Thursday, December 4</th>
<th>Last day of class. No reading assigned.</th>
<th>FW #14</th>
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</table>
| Final                | No reading assigned. You must attend class to submit final assignments. | • Final Paper  
• Final Opinion piece |
| Tuesday, December 9  |                                        |        |
| 5pm-7pm              |                                        |        |

STUDENT RESOURCES

Help with Writing
We will do a significant amount of writing in this course. The IIT Writing Center offers FREE one-on-one tutoring, which can be helpful at any stage of writing—from brainstorming to polishing—and for students at various skill levels—from beginning to more advanced writers. The writing center is located in Siegel Hall, Rooms 232-233

Center for Disability Resources
The mission of the Center for Disability Resources (CDR) at Illinois Institute of Technology is to ensure that qualified individuals with disabilities are provided an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from the academic and vocational opportunities available at IIT. The CDR provides reasonable accommodations and support services to qualified students, faculty, staff, and guests with disabilities on an individualized case-by-case basis and in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Persons with disabilities are recognized for their abilities, rather than their disabilities, or stereotypical attributes ascribed to their respective impairments regardless of what they may be. The CDR strives to foster equal access, self-determination, and cultural inclusion. This is sought through coordinating the provision of academic modifications and accommodations, auxiliary aids and services and environmental adaptations for qualified individuals with disabilities while providing advocacy support, technical assistance, and outreach on disability-related issues to the IIT community.

The CDR is the designated office of Illinois Institute of Technology that obtains and files disability-related documents, certifies eligibility for disability services, determines reasonable accommodations, and develops and coordinates plans for the provision of such accommodations for students, faculty, staff, and guests with disabilities. The Center is housed within and affiliated with Illinois Institute of Technology's College of Psychology.

Please contact the CDR to begin the process of receiving disability accommodations:
• Those requesting text in alternate formats should allow a minimum of 5 weeks prior to the beginning of each semester.
• Students should register during priority registration and check access to each course and immediately inform the Center for Disability Resources of the class schedule.
• The CDR is open from 8:30 am - 5:00 pm Monday through Friday. To make an appointment, email Aggie McGrane at disabilities@iit.edu or call 312.567.5744.

Sexual Harassment:
Illinois Institute of Technology is committed to ensuring an environment for all members of the university community that is fair, humane, and respectful - an environment which supports and rewards student, faculty and staff performance on the basis of relevant considerations such as
ability and effort. Behaviors that inappropriately assert sexuality as relevant to student, faculty or staff performance damage this environment. Therefore, IIT will provide for its students, faculty and staff an educational and employment environment free of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct or communications constituting sexual harassment as defined and otherwise prohibited by local, state and federal law. **Sexual harassment by any member of the university community is prohibited.** Sexual harassment can take many forms. Some of these are overt and unambiguous, while others may be more subtle and indirect. Direct forms of sexual harassment include sexual assault and sexual advances accompanied by an offer or reward or threats of reprisal. Such behavior constitutes serious misconduct, and a single incident establishes grounds for a complaint. Other forms of sexual harassment include sexual advances, physical or verbal, that are repeated and unwanted.

Advice on how to deal with the situation may be sought from:
- The Title Nine Coordinator, 312.567.5725, foster@iit.edu;
- The Director of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, 312.567.3134, miranda@iit.edu;
- The Dean of Students, 312.567.3080, kstetz@iit.edu; 
[https://www.iit.edu/student_affairs/handbook/information_and_regulations/sexual_harassment.shtml](https://www.iit.edu/student_affairs/handbook/information_and_regulations/sexual_harassment.shtml)

You may also come to me if you would like advice on how to handle a situation involving sexual harassment. My door is always open.

**Sexual Misconduct:**
Sexual misconduct occurs when an individual is forced or threatened with force to engage in unwanted sexual activity. It is never the fault of the victim. As a community of respect, Illinois Institute of Technology considers sexual assault a serious crime and does not tolerate sexual misconduct. The University offers several resources for students who may be the victim of sexual misconduct. A list of contacts and resources is available at:
[http://www.iit.edu/student_affairs/Resources.shtml](http://www.iit.edu/student_affairs/Resources.shtml)

**Concerns Regarding Discrimination:**
If you believe that you have received discriminatory treatment in violation of IIT’s stated policy of equal opportunity in education, please talk to either myself, an advisor, or some other faculty or staff member **as soon as possible.** Official complaints must be filed in writing with the Director of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action **within 15 days** of the occurrence of discriminatory event.