

HONS1810W / PSCH 1817
Fall 2021
Tues. 12:45–3:15pm
Classroom: Furman 106

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Struggles for Recognition and Social Change

Course Description

This class is an intensive survey of recent work in ethics and political philosophy, focusing on the idea that *struggles for recognition* lie at the heart of human ethical life and social conflict. Although the philosophical roots of the concept, ‘recognition’, stretch back at least to nineteenth-century German idealism, this class will focus on contemporary approaches. Starting in the early 1990s, a group of philosophers and social critics, exemplified by Axel Honneth, Charles Taylor, and Nancy Fraser, attempted to develop contemporary theories of recognition that could make sense of social movements, multiculturalism, the rise of identity politics, demands for justice, and the implicit moral core of progressive social change. After a careful study of some foundational texts by these authors, we will consider a range of contemporary critical responses, including authors writing from the perspectives of feminist theory, the critique of capitalism, as well as indigenous, anti-racist, and anti-colonial political movements. Topics will range from the extremely concrete (e.g., discussions of specific contemporary social struggles) to the extremely abstract (e.g., questions concerning the ontological, epistemological, and moral psychological presuppositions of theories of recognition). Students will help determine the themes and readings to be discussed in the final weeks of class. Our overarching aim will be to arrive at a nuanced understanding of one of the most widely discussed ethical-political concepts of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Course Goals

By the end of the semester, students who have completed this course will:

- Become familiar with key texts, concepts, and figures in an influential strand of contemporary ethical and political philosophy.
- Develop a new set of conceptual tools for analyzing contemporary ethical life and social conflicts.
- Deepen their argumentative writing skills through writing assignments and instructor feedback.

Assignments, Activities, and Assessment

1. Class Participation (15%): Come to class having finished the reading and be ready to discuss it with your instructor and classmates.

2. Reading Notes (25%): A two-page set of Readings Notes will be due **Mondays at 5pm** each week, with some exceptions (see Course Schedule below). A template will be provided. Reading Notes will be graded on a scale of 1 to 10. I will use your seven highest scores when calculating your “Reading Notes” grade for the course
3. Midterm and Final Paper Prospectus (5% each): A week before the Midterm and Final Papers are each due, we will hold a paper writing workshop during class. Part of workshop will involve sharing and discussing ideas for the papers. To facilitate discussion, a Prospectus will be due **Monday at 5pm** the day before each class. A template will be provided. The Prospectus will be graded on a scale of 1 to 10.
4. Midterm Paper (25%): A 5- to 7-page midterm paper. It should be uploaded to Brightspace under “Assignments.” A grading rubric will be provided. Paper topics may include any of the readings covered during the first half of the course. Half grade penalty for each day late.
5. Final Paper (25%): A 6- to 8-page final paper. It should be uploaded to Brightspace under “Assignments.” A grading rubric will be provided. Paper topics may include any of the readings covered during the second half of the course. Half grade penalty for each day late.

Class Policies

Please observe the following class policies, violation of which may result in a grade penalty:

1. Always bring the assigned text to class with you.
2. Please silence all electronic devices.
3. No eating or drinking in class.
4. Come to class on time.
5. You are allowed two unexcused absences. Each unexcused absence beyond the second will result in a grade penalty.

COVID-19 Classroom Policies

1. Masks on: In our small seminar room, it is not possible for us to maintain six feet distance during class. Hence, masks must be worn at all times during class.
2. Stay home if feeling unwell or showing any symptoms: This goes not only for COVID-19, but any illness. Email your instructor to set up a plan for catching up the classes you miss.

Honor System

All students are expected to complete the course requirements while fulfilling the Vanderbilt Honor System. Information on the Honor System can be found here: www.vanderbilt.edu/student_handbook/the-honor-system/. All cases of plagiarism or cheating will

be handled through the Undergraduate Honor Council, and depending on severity may result in failure of the assignment, failure of the course, suspension, or expulsion.

Required Texts (The following books have been ordered to the university bookstore.)

1. Axel Honneth (1995) *The Struggle for Recognition: The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts*. Trans. Joel Anderson. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
2. Nancy Fraser and Axel Honneth (2004) *Redistribution or Recognition? A Political-Philosophical Exchange*. London: Verso.
3. Glen Sean Coulthard (2014) *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
4. All other readings will be provided as PDFs on Brightspace

Course Schedule

Week	Date	Readings	Assignments Due
Part I. Foundational Texts in Contemporary Recognition Theory			
1	8/31	Introduction to the Class Axel Honneth, “Between Aristotle and Kant” (PDF)	
2	9/7	Axel Honneth, <i>The Struggle for Recognition</i> , chap. 5	Reading Notes
3	9/14	Axel Honneth, <i>The Struggle for Recognition</i> , chap. 6, 8, and 9	Reading Notes
4	9/21	Charles Taylor, “The Politics of Recognition” (PDF)	Reading Notes
Part II. Redistribution or Recognition? The Fraser-Honneth Debate			
5	9/28	Nancy Fraser and Axel Honneth, “Introduction: Redistribution or Recognition?” in <i>Redistribution or Recognition?</i> pp. 1–5 Nancy Fraser, “Social Justice in the Age of Identity Politics: Redistribution, Recognition, and Participation,” in <i>Redistribution or Recognition?</i> pp. 7–94	Reading Notes
6	10/5	Axel Honneth, “Redistribution as Recognition: A Response to Nancy Fraser,” in <i>Redistribution or Recognition?</i> pp. 110–189 Midterm Paper Writing Workshop	Midterm Paper Prospectus
7	10/12	Nancy Fraser, “Distorted Beyond All Recognition: A Rejoinder to Axel Honneth,” in <i>Redistribution or Recognition?</i> pp. 198–233 Axel Honneth, “The Point of Recognition: A Rejoinder to the Rejoinder,” in <i>Redistribution or Recognition?</i> pp. 237–265	Midterm Paper

Part III. Coulthard's <i>Red Skin, White Masks</i>			
8	10/19	Glen Sean Coulthard, <i>Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition</i> , Acknowledgments and Introduction	Reading Notes
9	10/26	Glen Sean Coulthard, <i>Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition</i> , Chap. 1	Reading Notes
10	11/2	Glen Sean Coulthard, <i>Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition</i> , Chap. 2	Reading Notes
Part IV. Debates and Issues in Contemporary Recognition Theory			
11	11/9	Rachel Busbridge (2018) "Postcolonial Politics of Recognition?"	Reading Notes
12	11/16	Chris Chen (2018) "Race and the Politics of Recognition"	Reading Notes
	11/22–11/26	Thanksgiving Break	
13	11/30	Rosie Worsdale (2018) "Recognition, Ideology, and the Case of 'Invisible Suffering'"	Reading Notes
14	12/7	William Davies (2021) "The Politics of Recognition in the Age of Social Media" Final Paper Writing Workshop	Final Paper Prospectus

Final Paper due on Tuesday, Dec. 14 by 11:59pm

Thematic Reading Lists

Contemporary scholarship on recognition is vast and growing. The following represents just a small portion of recent work in this area. The following lists serve two purposes: first, to give us some options when deciding the readings and themes for the final weeks of class, and second, to give you some potential secondary literature to consult as you write your midterm and final papers.

Recognition and Climate Justice

1. Coolsaet, Brendan, and Pierre-Yves Néron (2020) "Recognition and Environmental Justice"
2. Hourdequin, Marion (2016) "Justice, Recognition, and Climate Change"
3. White, Kyle Powys (2011) "The Recognition Dimensions of Environmental Justice in Indian Country"

Recognition, Race, and Racism

4. Basevich, Elvira (2019) "W. E. B. Du Bois's Critique of American Democracy during the Jim Crow Era: On the Limitations of Rawls and Honneth"
5. Chen, Chris (2018) "Race and the Politics of Recognition"

6. Gallegos, Sergio (2018) “Epistemic Injustice and the Struggle for Recognition of Afro-Mexicans: A Model for Native Americans?”
7. Howarth, Caroline (2002) “‘So, you’re from Brixton?’: The struggle for Recognition and Esteem in a Stigmatized Community”
8. Neville, Helen A., Brigitte Viard, and Lou Turner (2014) “Race and Recognition: Pathways to an Affirmative Black Identity”
9. Rogers, Melvin (2009) “Rereading Honneth: Exodus Politics and the Paradox of Recognition”
10. Xie, Yarong, Steve Kirkwood, Eric Laurier, and Sue Widdicombe (2021) “Racism and Misrecognition”

Recognition, Gender-Based Oppression, and Feminism

11. Aboim, Sofia (2020) “Fragmented Recognition: Gender Identity between Moral and Legal Spheres”
12. Beauvoir, Simone de (1949) *The Second Sex* (selections)
13. Juang, Richard (2006) “Transgendering the Politics of Recognition”
14. Young, Iris Marion (2007) “Recognition of Love’s Labor: Considering Axel Honneth’s Feminism”

Recognition and Disability

15. Maia, Rousiley C.M., and Ana Carolina Vimieiro (2014) “Recognition and Moral Progress: Discourses on Disability in the Media”
16. Maia, Rousiley C.M. and Regiane L. O. Garcêz (2013) “Recognition, Feelings of Injustice and Claim Justification: A Case Study of Deaf People’s Storytelling on the Internet”
17. Silvers, Anita (1999) “Double Consciousness, Triple Difference: Disability, Race, Gender, and the Politics of Recognition”

Recognition and Ideology

18. Honneth, Axel (2007) “Recognition as Ideology”
19. Rosie Worsdale (2018) “Recognition, Ideology, and the Case of ‘Invisible Suffering’”

Recognition in the Digital Age

20. Davies, Wiliam (2021) “The Politics of Recognition in the Age of Social Media”
21. Maia, Rousiley C.M. (2014) “Struggles for Recognition in the Digital Era”

Recognition and Aesthetics

22. Cammarano, Cristina (2015) “I Know, You Know, We Know: Recognition and Misrecognition as Possibilities for Education in the Example of Kara Walker’s Art”

Recognition and Postcolonialism

23. Balaton-Chrimes, Samantha and Victoria Stead (2017) “Recognition, power and coloniality”
24. Fanon, Frantz (1952) *Black Skin, White Masks*, chap. 7

Recognition and Ambivalence

25. Allen, Amy (2021) "Recognizing Ambivalence: Honneth, Butler, and Philosophical Anthropology"
26. Celikates, Robin (2021) "Beyond Needs: Recognition, Conflict, and the Limits of Institutionalization"
27. Lepold, Kristina (2021) "How Should We Understand the Ambivalence of Recognition?"
28. McNay, Lois (2021) "Historicizing Recognition: From Ontology to Teleology"
29. Stahl, Titus (2021) "Recognition Constitutive Domination, and Emancipation"