

## **Philosophy 366: African, Latin American, and Native American Philosophy**

**Catalog Description:** Introduction to philosophy from Africa, Latin America, and the indigenous peoples of North America, covering topics in ethics, metaphysics, epistemology, mind, and social and political philosophy. Philosophy from Akan, Andean, Aztec/Nahua, Dogon, Igbo, Iroquois, Lakota, Maya, Navajo, Ojibwa, and Yoruba traditions will be discussed. Meta-philosophical issues will also be discussed, including: written v. oral traditions, ethnophilosophy v. individualism, parochialism v. universalism.

**Professor Alexander Guerrero**

Email: alex.guerrero@rutgers.edu

Office: Department of Philosophy, 106 Somerset, Office 516

### **Course Description**

This course is an introduction to philosophical work from Africa, Latin America, and the indigenous peoples of North America, covering topics in ethics, metaphysics, epistemology, philosophy of mind, aesthetics, social philosophy, and political philosophy.

This philosophical work has largely been excluded from the study and practice of philosophy in North America, Europe, and Australia. The course aims to give work from these traditions greater exposure and to provide a chance for students to encounter work that might spark an interest in future research.

We will cover in some depth philosophical views from the Akan, Andean, Aztec/Nahua, Dogon, Igbo, Iroquois, Lakota, Maya, Navajo, Ojibwa, and Yoruba traditions.

We will read work by a variety of authors and philosophers, including:

*African Philosophy:* Kwame Gyekye, Barry Hallen, Ptah-hotep, Paulin Hountondji, Julius Nyerere, Nkiru Nzegwu, Henry Odera Oruka, J. Olubi Sodipo, Zera Yacob

*Latin American Philosophy:* Gloria Anzaldúa, Enrique Dussel, Jorge J.E. Gracia, James Maffie, Alexis McLeod, Susana Nuccetelli, Mariana Ortega, Carlos Alberto Sanchez, Ofelia Schutte, José Vasconcelos

*Native American Philosophy:* Sa-Go-Ye-Wet-Ha, John (Fire) Lame Deer, Vine Deloria, Jr., Frank Black Elk, Gregory Cajete, Irving Hallowell, George Hamell, Kent Nerburn, Marianne Nielsen, Anne Waters

Throughout, we will also engage with related meta-philosophical issues that emerge with work from all three areas, allowing for interesting cross-discussion. Are these really proper subfields of philosophy? How do we make sense of the idea of African (or Latin American, or Native American) Philosophy as a field? Are there philosophically important differences between oral traditions and written traditions? What kinds of texts and artifacts can present philosophical views? How should we understand ethnophilosophy and cultural worldviews as philosophical contributions? How should we distinguish philosophical views from religious ones? How should we think of the “sage” figure in relation to philosophy? How do these traditions engage discussions of identity, autonomy, and post-colonialism? Should this work be incorporated into the mainstream philosophical canon?

## Required Texts

There are no required texts. Readings will be made available online through the Sakai site for the course.

## Method of Assessment

- (A) 2 Short Papers (10% each, 20% total)
  - 1000 to 1500 words
  - details to follow in class
- (B) 3 Quizzes (10% each, 30% total)
  - multiple choice and true-false quizzes
- (C) In-Class Group and Individual Participation (25% total, roughly 1% for each day of class)
  - Attendance is necessary, but not sufficient!
  - Based on engagement and effort in argument groups (more on this in class)
- (D) Longer Paper (25% total)
  - 2000-2500 words
  - details to follow in class

## Learning Outcome Goals for the Course

- (1) to be able to read and understand philosophical views presented in a variety of forms
- (2) to be able to present (in discussion and in writing) views that differ from your own, and to do so in a way that is fair to the proponents of those views
- (3) to acquire the critical skills necessary for evaluating ideas and arguments
- (4) to be able to construct coherent arguments in support of your views
- (5) to be able to write clearly and in an organized manner
- (6) to be able to discuss complex philosophical ideas with others in ways that are respectful to each other and to the material

## Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

You are expected to be familiar with and adhere to the Rutgers University policies on plagiarism and academic integrity. Penalties for violations of these policies can be severe, including an automatic failing grade for the course and worse. This document provides a comprehensive overview of those policies:

[https://slwordpress.rutgers.edu/academicintegrity/wp-content/uploads/sites/41/2014/11/AI\\_Policy\\_2013.pdf](https://slwordpress.rutgers.edu/academicintegrity/wp-content/uploads/sites/41/2014/11/AI_Policy_2013.pdf)

## Accessibility

I want this class to be a great and educational experience for all of you, and all of you are entitled to equal access to educational opportunities at Rutgers.

Disabled students are encouraged to speak with me if that would be helpful and to avail themselves of the services provided by the Office of Disability Services: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/>

## Plan for Course and Readings

All readings are posted on Sakai on the course website.

Day	Topic	Reading
1	Introduction: What is Philosophy? Is there really _____ Philosophy?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪Susana Nuccetelli, “Latin American Philosophy,” in <u>A Companion to Latin American Philosophy</u></li> <li>▪Vine Deloria, Jr., “Philosophy and the Tribal Peoples,” in <u>American Indian Thought: Philosophical Essays</u></li> </ul>
<b>Part I – African Philosophy</b>		
2	The Long History: What is “African” Philosophy?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪Barry Hallen, <u>A Short History of African Philosophy</u>, Chapter 1, “The Historical Perspective”</li> <li>▪Ptah-hotep, “The Moral Teachings of Ptah-hotep”</li> <li>▪Zera Yacob, <u>Hatata</u> (excerpts)</li> </ul>
3	The Early 20 <sup>th</sup> Century: Anthropology and/or Philosophy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪Marcel Griaule, <u>Conversations with Ogotemmêli</u> (excerpts)</li> <li>▪Placide Tempels, <u>Bantu Philosophy</u> (excerpts)</li> </ul>
4	Independence and Ordinary Language Philosophy: Yoruba Epistemology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪J. Olubi Sodipo and Barry Hallen, <u>Knowledge, Belief, and Witchcraft</u> (excerpts)</li> </ul>
5	Independence and Ordinary Language Philosophy: Akan Philosophy of Mind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪Kwame Gyekye, <u>An Essay on African Philosophical Thought: The Akan Conceptual Scheme</u> (excerpts)</li> </ul>
6	Independence and Ordinary Language Philosophy: Yoruba Ethical Theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪Barry Hallen, <u>The Good, The Bad, and The Beautiful: Discourse about Values in Yoruba Culture</u> (excerpts)</li> </ul>
7	The Charge of “Ethnophilosophy”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪Paulin Hountondji, <u>African Philosophy: Myth and Reality</u> (excerpts)</li> </ul>
8	Response to “Ethnophilosophy”: Refined Method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪J. Olubi Sodipo and Barry Hallen, <u>Knowledge, Belief, and Witchcraft</u>, Afterword</li> </ul>
9	Response to “Ethnophilosophy”: Sage Philosophy and Philosophical Individualism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪Henry Odera Oruka, <u>Sage Philosophy: Indigenous Thinkers and the Modern Debate on African Philosophy</u> (excerpts)</li> <li>▪Henry Odera Oruka, “Sagacity in African Philosophy”</li> </ul>

10	Response to “Ethnophilosophy”: Contemporary Philosophical Individualism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪Julius Nyerere, “Ujamaa: The Basis of African Socialism”</li> <li>▪Nkiru Nzegwu, <u>Family Matters: Feminist Concepts in African Philosophy of Culture</u> (excerpts)</li> </ul>
<b>Part II – Latin American Philosophy</b>		
11	Pre-Columbian Philosophy: Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪James Maffie, “Pre-Columbian Philosophies,” in <u>A Companion to Latin American Philosophy</u></li> <li>▪Alexus McLeod, <u>Philosophy of the Ancient Maya: Lords of Time</u> (excerpts)</li> </ul>
12	Maya Philosophy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪Alexus McLeod, <u>Philosophy of the Ancient Maya: Lords of Time</u> (excerpts)</li> </ul>
13	Aztec Philosophy (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪James Maffie, <u>Aztec Philosophy: Understanding a World in Motion</u> (excerpts)</li> </ul>
14	Aztec Philosophy (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪James Maffie, <u>Aztec Philosophy: Understanding a World in Motion</u> (excerpts)</li> </ul>
15	Mexican Existentialism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪Carlos Alberto Sanchez, <u>Contingency and Commitment: Mexican Existentialism and the Place of Philosophy</u> (excerpts)</li> </ul>
16	Philosophy and Liberation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪Enrique Dussel, <u>Philosophy of Liberation</u> (excerpts)</li> <li>▪David Ignatius Gandolfo, “Liberation Philosophy” in <u>A Companion to Latin American Philosophy</u></li> </ul>
17	Philosophy and Liberation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪Ofelia Schutte, <u>Cultural Identity and Social Liberation in Latin American Thought</u> (excerpts)</li> </ul>
18	The Complexity of Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪Jose Vasconcelos, <u>The Cosmic Race</u> (excerpts)</li> </ul>
19	The Complexity of Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪Jorge J.E. Gracia, “What Makes Hispanics/Latinos Who We Are? The Key to Our Unity in Diversity,” in <u>Latin American Philosophy for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century</u></li> </ul>
20	The Complexity of Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪Gloria Anzaldúa, <u>Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza</u> (excerpts)</li> <li>▪Mariana Ortega, <u>In-Between: Latina Feminist Phenomenology, Multiplicity, and the Self</u> (excerpts)</li> </ul>

**Part III – Native American Philosophy**

21	Approaching Native American Philosophy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪Sa-Go-Ye-Wet-Ha, “Speech at Council at Buffalo Creek,” in <u>American Philosophies: An Anthology</u></li> <li>▪Anne Waters, “Language Matters — A Metaphysic of NonDiscreet NonBinary Dualism”</li> </ul>
22	Native American Epistemology and “Eco-Philosophy”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪Gregory Cajete, <u>Native Science: Natural Laws of Interdependence</u> (excerpts)</li> </ul>
23	“Eco-Philosophy” and Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪Gregory Cajete, <u>Native Science: Natural Laws of Interdependence</u> (excerpts)</li> </ul>
24	Iroquois Metaphysical Views	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪George Hamell, “The Iroquois and the World’s Rim: Speculations on Color, Culture, &amp; Contact”</li> </ul>
25	Ojibwa Views on Existence and Personhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪Irving Hallowell, “Ojibwa Ontology, Behavior, and World View”</li> </ul>
26	Lakota Ethical Theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪Frank Black Elk, “Observations on Marxism and Lakota Tradition”</li> <li>▪John (Fire) Lame Deer, <u>Lame Deer: Seeker of Visions</u> (excerpts)</li> <li>▪Kent Nerburn, <u>Neither Wolf Nor Dog: On Forgotten Roads with an Indian Elder</u> (excerpts)</li> </ul>
27	Navajo Legal and Political Philosophy: Peacemaking and Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪Marianne Nielsen and James Zion, <u>Navajo Nation Peacemaking</u> (excerpts)</li> </ul>
28	The Future of Indigenous Philosophy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪Anne Waters, “Structural Disadvantage and a Place at the Table”</li> <li>▪Linda Tuhiwai Smith, “The Indigenous Peoples’ Project: Setting a New Agenda,” “Articulating an Indigenous Research Agenda,” and “Twenty-Five Indigenous Projects” in <u>Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples</u></li> </ul>