

**Phil 332: Frantz Fanon**  
Seminar, Fall 2023



**When/Where:** Mondays, 1:30-4:10pm, Location TBD

**Instructor:** Prof. Carmen De Schryver

**Email:** [carmen.deschryver@trincoll.edu](mailto:carmen.deschryver@trincoll.edu)

**Office Hours:** Tuesdays, 2:00-3:00pm on Zoom (<https://trincoll.zoom.us/j/93350896804>)  
Wednesdays, 5:30-6:30pm in McCook 326

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**Course Description:**

This course explores Frantz Fanon's philosophical output, spanning 1951 to 1961. Through a series of close readings, we will consider Fanon's contributions to a range of philosophical areas of study. To complement our reading, we will engage with a number of Fanon commentators and thereby enter into ongoing debates surrounding Fanon's work. Some of the issues we will discuss include the nature of race; the legitimacy of violence in revolution; the connection between psychiatry and society; the place of women in anti-colonial struggle; the question of universal humanism; the meaning of decolonization; and Fanon's impacts on various fields including Marxism, feminism, psychoanalysis, Négritude, and phenomenology.

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**Learning Outcomes**

- Gain an advanced understanding of Frantz Fanon's philosophical oeuvre
- Learn to sensitively read texts from different historical and geographical contexts and cultivate skills in discussing the impact of context on philosophical thought
- Come to understand related philosophical subfields such as critical philosophy of race, Négritude, phenomenology, decolonial feminism, psychoanalysis, and Marxism
- Develop skills in philosophical argumentation, both orally and in writing
- Appreciate the scope of the scholarly field surrounding Fanon and ultimately make your own contribution to major debates within Fanon studies

## Course Elements

Grades for this course are based on:

- Participation (20%):
  - (i) Two one-on-one meetings with me in the beginning and the middle of the semester. These are low-stakes encounters – you will not be assessed on what you say. You just need to show up!
    - (i) Initial meeting to discuss your interests and familiarity with the course content. A sign-up sheet will be circulated during the first week of class.
    - (ii) Mid-semester check-in to discuss your experience and progress in the course to date.
  - (ii) Reading.
    - In order to get the most out of the course, **it is necessary that you read all of the required texts closely in advance of the class meeting on Monday**. This means reading the text twice and taking detailed notes. The texts in this course vary in length and difficulty. Don't be discouraged if you find the readings challenging or even confusing – philosophy is hard! I won't expect you to understand everything that you read, especially on the first try. I will expect you to make a good-faith effort to interpret the text on your own, and to participate in the class discussion on this basis. The lecture and the class discussion are designed to (i) collaboratively make sense of the text and (ii) equip you with the skills that you need to fully comprehend and critically interrogate the course material, and ultimately to engage difficult philosophical texts on your own. Don't hesitate to raise clarificatory questions and be upfront about elements of the reading you found challenging; if you are confused about something, it is likely your peers will be as well, and your questions will be welcomed!
  - (iii) Punctual weekly attendance.
    - If you can't make it to class, please message me in advance (if possible) to determine some way to make this up. If you miss more than three classes without providing an explanation, your participation grade will drop a letter grade. If you regularly show up to class 5 or more minutes late without an explanation, your participation grade will drop half a letter grade.
    - Please don't come to class if you have or suspect you might have COVID – we will determine some alternative way for you to participate.
  - (iv) In-class engagement and participation.
    - You should be prepared to positively contribute to some combination of lecture/seminar/office hours. A positive contribution can take on a variety of forms: asking a clarificatory question, raising a discussion point, weighing in on an interpretation, offering an opinion, pointing us back to the reading, etc. *At minimum, it requires that you be a respectful and engaged listener not just to what I say but to what your peers say.*
    - Speaking up in larger group settings will be more comfortable for some than for others. I encourage you to meet with me during office hours if speaking up in larger group settings is uncomfortable for you. If you tend to be more talkative, an important component of your contributing to a lively discussion will be making space for others to speak.
- Discussion Posts and Homework Assignments (15%):
  - Each week, I ask that you submit a post to the discussion board **before class**. Depending on the week, you will be asked to either pose a question of your own based on the readings, or answer the question posted on the discussion board. The point of this is to encourage you to gather your thoughts prior to our meeting so that you can get the most out of our discussion.
  - Occasionally, you will be given take-home worksheets from our class sessions to be completed on your own time. These should be handed back to me the following week.

- In-class presentation (20%):
  - For our first meeting, you should come prepared to select a week in which you would like to present. The presentations will take place during the latter half of our seminar meeting and will concern that week's secondary literature on the aspect of Fanon up for discussion.
  - The presentation should be about 10 minutes and include a PowerPoint presentation or handout. You should introduce and provide a detailed summary of your chosen reading (selected from that week's secondary literature), highlighting the text's key themes and arguments. Your presentation should aim to include some commentary as to how the secondary literature helps shed light on the Fanon text we read for that week. You should, finally, be prepared to field questions from the rest of the group. You might think of yourself as a "co-teacher" for this part of the seminar.
    - N.B. I am available to help you make sense of the reading – this is always the case, but may be especially relevant for the week that you are presenting. Please don't hesitate to come to office hours if you find any aspect of the weekly reading difficult to make sense of.
- Term paper of 8 pages, double-spaced (20%):
  - Prompts and a guide to writing philosophy papers will be circulated online. We will also devote a class session to a philosophy paper writing workshop. Papers should include significant references to the relevant week's secondary literature. So, if you are writing about *e.g.* Fanon and Marxism, you will need to integrate references to Robinson and Gibson.
- Final paper of 10 pages, double-spaced (25%):
  - Final papers may be devoted to a topic of your own choosing (to be discussed with me during office hours or via email). I will also provide prompts for those who prefer them.
  - The penultimate week of the semester will be devoted to final paper presentations and peer feedback (10% of final paper grade). You should come to class prepared to present a detailed outline of your paper, including a thesis statement and a break-down of the various sections. You should plan to present for 10 minutes (please time yourself in advance). Your assessment on this portion of the final paper will incorporate your engagement with your peers, so you should plan to offer feedback and/or ask questions during your peers' presentations.
- Extra Credit Opportunities
  - Opportunities for extra credit will be announced in class over the course of the semester. These may involve attending events, watching philosophy talks online, reworking assignments in light of comments, submitting additional reflection papers, etc. etc.

### **Note on Office Hours**

Office hours are a time for us to meet privately to discuss any aspect of your course experience. I encourage you to come to office hours regularly – this is a time that I am just sitting in my office waiting to chat with you. You can come to my office hours with any questions, ideas, or worries that were raised for you during the lectures or discussions; any difficulties that you are experiencing with the material or your own learning process; or any additional help and guidance you might need for assignments... or anything else! Anything pertaining to the course and your experience of it is on the table. If my office hours conflict with your course schedule, please do not hesitate to message me in order to set up an alternative meeting time.

## Course Materials

### Required Texts:

There are two required texts for this course, available at the TC bookshop and online. If you require financial assistance to obtain the course texts, this is available through the [Student Emergency and Equity Fund](#).

- Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lamm Markmann (New York: Grove Press, 1967)
- Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 2004)

### Further Texts:

All other readings, both required and optional, will be made available in PDF on the Moodle course page at least one week prior to class. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any trouble accessing the material.

If you would like to get a hard copy, some of the other books we will draw on include:

- Frantz Fanon, *A Dying Colonialism*, trans. Haakon Chevalier (New York: Grove Press, 1965)
- Frantz Fanon, *Toward the African Revolution*, trans. Haakon Chevalier (New York: Grove Press, 1967)
- Frantz Fanon, *Alienation and Freedom*, ed. Jean Khalfa trans. Steven Corcoran (London: Bloomsbury, 2019)
- Nigel C. Gibson (ed.), *Living Fanon: Global Perspectives* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011)
- Lewis R. Gordon, T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting and Renée T. White (eds.), *Fanon: A Critical Reader* (New York: Blackwell Publishers, 1996)

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## Course Schedule

*N.B. The following is a working course schedule for the semester. Any changes to the schedule will be announced in class. The syllabus posted at the top of the Moodle page will always be the latest version, so when in doubt please refer to that document.*

### Note on the Readings

All of the reading for this class is required. The texts below are listed in the order in which you should read them; that is, you should always begin with (and prioritize) the Fanon reading, and then go on to read the secondary literature. The secondary literature is intended to (i) help you digest that week's Fanon and (ii) bring into view the conversation around Fanon's thinking on that week's topic in order to encourage you to begin to develop your own take. Although the discussion posts will be based largely on the Fanon texts, you should come to class prepared to contribute to a discussion of all the readings.

### Week 1 (September 11): Who Was Frantz Fanon? The Role and Limits of Biography

- Lewis Gordon, *What Fanon Said*, pp. 8-18 [PDF]

Sunday, September 17: Viewing of *Frantz Fanon: Black Skin, White Masks* at the Wadsworth Atheneum, 2:00-3:30pm

*We will arrange to go to the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford on Sunday, September 17<sup>th</sup> for a viewing of a documentary film on Fanon. Attendance is required in lieu of our cancelled class meeting during week 3; if you cannot make it, please be in touch with me to arrange for some way to make this up.*

## Week 2 (September 18): Fanon Here and Now (... and for 'us')

- Fanon, "Introduction" in *Black Skin, White Masks* [henceforth *BSWM*], pp. 7-14
- Fanon, "Conclusion" in *Wretched of the Earth* [henceforth *WE*], pp. 235-239
- Nigel Gibson, "Living Fanon?" in *Living Fanon*, pp. 3-6 [PDF]
- Alice Cherki, "Fanon, Fifty Years Later: Resisting the Air of Our Present Time" in *Living Fanon*, pp. 131-138 [PDF]

## Week 3 (September 25): No Class Meeting [Yom Kippur]

- Souleymane Bachir Diagne, "[Négritude](#)" in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*
  - Focus on "The Genesis of the Concept"; "Négritude as Revolt/Négritude as Philosophy" and "The Inescapable Disappearance of Eurydice"
- David Woodruff Smith, "[Phenomenology](#)" in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*
  - Focus on "What is Phenomenology" and "The History and Varieties of Phenomenology"

## Week 4 (October 2): Fanon and Race I: The Lived Experience of Racialization

- Fanon, "The Lived Experience of the Black Man" (*BSWM*), pp. 89-119
- David Macey, "Fanon, Phenomenology and Race", pp. 8-14 [PDF] **Lily McGuirk**
- Axelle Karera, "The Racial-Epidermal Schema", pp. 289-293 [PDF] **Becky Irakiza**

## Week 5 (October 9): No Class Meeting [Trinity Days]

- Listen to "[Frantz Fanon, Racism and the Alienation of Reason](#)", *What's Left of Philosophy Podcast*

## Week 6 (October 16): Anticolonial Revolution I: The Question of Violence

- Fanon, excerpts from "On Violence" (*WE*), pp. 1-25; 44-62
- Fanon, "Why We Use Violence" in *Alienation and Freedom* pp. 653-661 [PDF]
- Lewis Gordon, "Fanon's Tragic Revolutionary Violence" in *Fanon: A Critical Reader*, pp. 297-307 [PDF] **George Hult**
- Immanuel Wallerstein, "Frantz Fanon: Reason and Violence", pp. 222-231 [PDF] **Ben Lundy**

## Week 7 (October 23): Fanon and Race II: The Négritude Movement

- Watch "[What is Négritude](#)"
- Fanon, excerpts from "Grandeur and Weakness of Spontaneity" and "On National Culture" (*WE*), pp. 88-96 and pp. 146-163; 167-170
- Robert Bernasconi, "The Great White Error and the Great Black Mirage: Fanon's Critical Philosophy of Race" in *Living Fanon*, pp. 85-92 [PDF] **Sofia Musicco**
- Reiland Rabaka, excerpts from "Fanonian Négritude", pp. 247-258; 290-305 [PDF] **Merrick Wallace**

## Week 8 (October 30): Paper Writing Workshop

- Read through "paper writing guide" and select the prompt you want to work on. Please bring relevant texts to the class session (e.g. if you are writing on the Négritude movement you should bring your copy of *Wretched of the Earth* as well as printouts of the Bernasconi and Rabaka articles).

**\*\*\*First Paper Due: Wednesday, November 1<sup>st</sup> at 11:59pm\*\*\***

### **Week 9 (November 6): Fanon and Race III: The Past and Future of Race**

- Watch “[Phenomenology and Philosophy Today](#)”, 1:33-4:19
- Fanon, “West Indians and Africans” in *Toward the African Revolution*, pp. 17-27 [PDF]
- Fanon, “Racism and Culture” in *Toward the African Revolution*, pp. 31-44 [PDF]
- Ato Sekyi-Otu, “Fanon and the Possibility of the Postcolonial Critical Imagination” in *Living Fanon*, pp. 52-59 [PDF] **Moira Weinstein**
- Alia Al-Saji, “Fanon, the Dismembered Past, and a Phenomenology of Racialized Time”, pp. 177-193 [PDF] **Jessica Bartel**

### **Week 10 (November 13): Fanon and Gender**

- Fanon, excerpts from “The Woman of Color and the White Man” and “The Man of Color and the White Woman” (*BSWM*), pp. TBD
- Fanon, excerpts from “Algeria Unveiled” and “The Algerian Family” in *A Dying Colonialism*, pp. TBD [PDF]
- Tracy Denean Sharpley-Whiting, “Anti-black Femininity and Mixed-Race Identity” in *Fanon: A Critical Reader*, pp. 155-162 [PDF] **Frieda Seo**
- Seloua Luste Boulbina, “Sexed Space and Veiled Gender”, pp. 139-148 [PDF] **Cassie Lee**

### **Week 11 (November 20): Fanon, Psychiatry and Psychoanalysis**

- Fanon, excerpts from “The Black Man and Psychopathology” (*BSWM*), pp. TBD
- Fanon, excerpts from “Colonial War and Mental Disorders” (*WE*), pp. TBD
- Fanon, “Letter to the Resident Minister” in *Alienation and Freedom*, pp. 433-435 [PDF]
- Françoise Vergès, “To Cure and to Free: The Fanonian Project of ‘Decolonized Psychiatry’” in *Fanon: A Critical Reader*, pp. 85-99 [PDF] **Ishaa Sohail**
- David Marriott, *Whither Fanon*, pp. 41-56 [PDF] **Shreyasi Oli**

### **Week 12 (November 27): Anticolonial Revolution II: Fanon’s “Stretching” of Marxism**

- Aimé Césaire, “Letter to Maurice Thorez”, pp. 145-152 [PDF]
- Fanon, “Testament of a ‘Man on the Left’” in *Alienation and Freedom*, pp. 599-600 [PDF]
- Cedric Robinson, “The Appropriation of Frantz Fanon”, pp. 79-91 [PDF] **Kevin Doyle**
- Nigel Gibson, “Fanon and Marx Revisited”, pp. 320-336 [PDF] **Pedro Olivas**

### **Week 13 (December 4): Final Paper Presentations**

No Reading, but prepare presentation and send a copy to me before class

### **Week 14 (December 11): Fanon’s Futures: “Reaching for the Light”**

Required:

- Fanon, “By Way of Conclusion” (*BSWM*), pp. 223-232
- Fanon, “Conclusion” (*WE*), pp. 235-239

**\*\*\*Final Paper Due: Wednesday, December 13<sup>th</sup>, 11:59pm\*\*\***

## Course Policies

### Community Norms

Each of you will be coming into the classroom with your unique background, opinions and insights. This diversity of perspective is precisely what makes philosophical discussion exciting; throughout the semester, you are likely to encounter viewpoints, both in the texts and in our discussion, which will strike you as unfamiliar. At times, you may disagree strongly with what someone else has to say on an issue. In order to navigate these differences respectfully and productively, we will discuss, write up and ratify a set of community norms for how we engage with one another as well as with the material we are dealing with. Our aim will be to build a hospitable environment in which everyone feels safe to share and trusts that their contributions be taken up in good faith. This is especially critical given the sensitivity of some of the material we will be discussing, which impacts each of us differently. It is therefore imperative that you be thoughtful in how you engage with one another in this class. The document we come up with is to be open-ended: we will revisit it as need be throughout the semester add or amend our guidelines as needed.

### Note on Religious Holidays

Trinity College does not observe all religious holidays. If you cannot attend a session because of a religious holiday, please let me know at least a day in advance and we can work out some alternate form of engagement for that week.

### Accessibility and Accommodations

Trinity College is committed to creating an inclusive and accessible learning environment consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Like many things, the need for disability accommodations and the process for arranging them may be altered by the COVID-19 changes we are experiencing and the safety protocols currently in place. Students who may need some accommodation in order to fully participate in this class are asked to contact the Student Accessibility Resource Center, as soon as possible, to explore what arrangements need to be made to assure access. Student Accessibility Resources can be reached by emailing [SARC@trincoll.edu](mailto:SARC@trincoll.edu). If you already have academic accommodations, please reach out to me by the end of week two of classes to let me know. For those students with accommodations approved after the start of the semester, a minimum of 10 days' notice is required.

### Technology Policy

The general rule for notetaking in this class is that all notes are to be taken on paper. This helps facilitate better listening, comprehension, and class discussion—for the person taking the notes and for everyone else. I understand that taking notes on paper is not a possibility for everyone; I also understand that, for many of us, it requires an effort to cultivate the habit of notetaking on paper. Experimenting with this older form of classroom technology for this course will contribute in many positive ways to our conversations and to our thinking. If, however, you feel that you need to use a computer to take notes for this course – whether or not you have relevant accommodations – then simply get in touch with me.

### Policy on Late Submissions

If you think you won't be able to complete the assignment by the deadline, please contact me **24 hours** before the deadline to discuss your situation and to arrange an alternate schedule for completion. If you simply submit an assignment late without an explanation this will result in a late penalty. Depending on the circumstances, late submissions may not receive detailed commentary.

## Academic Integrity

Any written work you submit should be your own: you should not copy/paste, paraphrase or borrow ideas from a text, internet source or generative AI (see below) without proper citation. In other words, you should never present ideas taken from elsewhere as though they are your own. Failure to do so amounts to plagiarism, and the college takes violations of plagiarism very seriously, with possible consequences ranging from censure to expulsion. For further information, you should consult the [Student Handbook's](#) policies and procedures regarding academic integrity and plagiarism. If you have any questions about how to use/cite material appropriately, please do not hesitate to ask – it is better to be sure than to risk a violation. You are welcome to use either parenthetical or footnote citations in this course, in either Chicago or MLA format.

## Statement on the Use of Generative AI

As noted above, any written work you should submit should be your own. This means that any attempt to pass off AI writing as though it is your own will count as a violation of Trinity College's academic integrity policy. Some additional reasons to refrain from using generative AI in this course include:

- As with any other kind of cheating, **you're doing yourself a disservice**. One of the aims of the course is to encourage you to think for yourself and to develop writing skills in order to refine your ability to engage in sophisticated argument. Using generative AI in your writing assignments very simply means that you will not be getting the most out of the course.
- **AI writing is oftentimes insensitive to context, inconsistent and risky to use**. In this class, written work will (i) largely draw on class discussion and (ii) encourage you to develop your own view on the issues at hand. AI technology cannot consistently perform these tasks for you, since it often generates generic responses that lack the ability to meaningfully integrate contextual detail. I have tested the writing prompts we will be using this semester and the responses generated fall significantly short of the standards required for this course. Finally, many AI generators cannot properly cite source – in fact, these are often fabricated, which is a major academic integrity violation.
- There are prudential reasons to refrain from using generative AI tools in your written assignments: **enough violations and we will wind up with a return to blue-book exams**, which deprive you of the opportunity to develop your writing skills at an advanced level.
- Finally, as a human being and your philosophical interlocutor, it is depressing to read what a robot has to say about the most profound questions human beings have been asking themselves through millennia. **I want to help you discover and refine your own perspective on these issues**, and I want you to walk away from this class with a deepened understanding not only of philosophy but of yourself. Using AI helps us achieve neither, and it makes me sad.

## Policy on Recording of Class Lectures

In keeping with Trinity College's Academic Policy on Recording of Class Lectures, you may not record any class session without express written permission from the instructor. Student requests must include a brief rationale for the recording, the date(s) of recording, and its intended use. In addition, before a class can be recorded, a student must sign this [Student Pledge regarding Recording of Class Sessions](#), which affirms that any approved recording will be for personal use only (i.e., learning) and not circulated to anyone else. They should submit this form to their professor. Exceptions apply to students who have an ADA-approved accommodation follow a different process, as some students who receive ADA-approved accommodations from the Student Accessibility Resource Center (SARC) also receive permission to record class sessions as part of their accommodation. Nothing will change for these students as a result of this policy. In such cases,



students follow SARC's [Audio Recording Policy](#) and sign the [Student Pledge regarding Audio Recording of Class Lectures](#).