

Philosophy 232

Take-home mid-term exam (worth 20% of your final grade)

3-5 pages (900 words minimum)

Due Thursday, March 26 [lateness penalty: .3 if by March 29; .5 if by March 31; .7 if by April 2; 1.0 if by April 9; 1.5 if any time after that]

Write an essay on **one** of the following topics, covering *every* part of the topic:

PLEASE INDICATE WHICH QUESTION YOU HAVE ANSWERED ON THE COVER OR FIRST PAGE OF YOUR PAPER!!!!

1. **ALCOFF AND DU BOIS:** Both Linda Martín Alcoff (“Mestizo Identity”) and W.E.B. DuBois discuss forms of consciousness that are in some way divided.

- (a) Explain Alcoff’s view of the kind of “mixed” identity she thinks that many Latin Americans and other people of mixed ancestry have. Explain what she sees as the psychological character of these identities, and explain how they can be healthy even though they are not internally unified. This explanation will probably have to make reference to some other people’s theories of mixed consciousness, that she discusses toward the end of her article.
- (b) You already wrote on DuBois’s idea of “double consciousness”. In this paper I want you to say what you think Alcoff would say about DuBois’s idea of double consciousness as a kind of problem.

2. **TELLES AND DAVIS on being “black”:** Edward Telles (“Rethinking Brazilian Race Relations”) discusses the status of persons of mixed ancestry (“brown”) and of “purer” African ancestry (“black”) in Brazilian society.

- (a) Explain his view about that status, taking into account both the “horizontal” and “vertical” dimensions that he distinguishes.
- (b) People who are considered “black” in Brazilian society are classified as such under very different rules than are American blacks under the “one drop” rule, a rule that F. James Davis explains in his article, “The Hawaiian Alternative to the One-Drop Rule.” Explain the differences between the two different ways of classifying someone as “black.”
- (c) Finally, say one advantage and one disadvantage of the two different systems of racial/ancestral classification, in Brazil and the United States.

3. **WATERS, GUGLIELMO, on white ethnicity:** Waters (“The Costs of a Costless Community”), and Guglielmo (“‘No color barrier’: Italians, Race, and Power in the United States”) both address two related issues:

- (i) the character of ethnicity for white ethnic groups: What is it? What is its meaning to the white people who claim or feel that they have an ethnicity?
- (ii) the relationship of white ethnicity to race in the United States.

Compare and contrast Waters and Guglielmo on their views about *both* (i) *and* (ii). Keep in mind that Guglielmo is discussing Italian-Americans historically (from the 1890’s on into the first few decades of the 20th century), although he also makes some remarks about the present. Waters is talking about the present. You can compare the authors while still recognizing that they are dealing with distinct periods in U.S. history.

4. **DU BOIS, CARTER, AND ASANTE on Black racial identity:** W.E.B. Du Bois ([Souls of Black Folk](#)), Molefi Asante (“Racism, Consciousness, and Afrocentricity”), and Stephen Carter (“The Black Table, The Empty Seat, and the Tie”) all advocate and defend an attachment to Black identity. In doing so, they each propose distinct ways for Black Americans to think about themselves and their collective Black identity; some of the authors also advocate demands that blacks should make of the wider society of which they are a part. To put it another way, each of the three authors suggests forms of ethical/political identity and self-understandings for Black people, which that author regards as healthy, accurate, valid, and/or useful.

Compare and **contrast** these *three* authors with regard to the issue just described. (You must deal with all three authors.) Do *not* focus very much on their different personal biographies; talk about what they *say*, not where they came from.

Keep in mind that Du Bois is writing for and in a different historical era than the other two; do not treat him as a contemporary.