

**Philosophy 3334: Philosophy of Biology  
Spring 2020, Long Paper Assignment #5**

**Instructions:** Write an argumentative paper on some topic relevant to our discussion of in class. The paper should be between roughly 1200 and 1500 words. If you double space and have natural fonts and margins, this would be about 4-6 pages.

The paper must critically engage at least some assigned readings from the class. If you talk about a topic and one of our readings in class directly discusses that topic, you must discuss it. For example, if you argue that there is no meaningful biological category of race, you should say what is wrong with Andreasen's view that races are historical groups united by ancestry. If you agree with Andreasen, you should engage with Glasgow's criticisms. You may wish to read additional material that was not assigned, however, this is not necessary and not expected. But if you want to do that, I would be happy to help you find relevant readings. Several things that our authors reference or that I think would be helpful are already on the website as 'extra readings'.

**Due Date:** To maintain a quick pace, you would want to upload this paper into Blackboard by before Sunday, April 26th 11:59pm. However, I will be extremely generous with late papers (=no penalty for late work). But for your own good, you should try to get homework done on time so you can start the next section of the class. [There is one more paper due after this – due Sunday May 10th).

While I normally prefer to grade papers anonymously, I feel that this semester it is best if I am able to easily track who is turning in work when and grading anonymously slows this process down immensely. So please go ahead and put your name on your paper.

**Grading:** This paper will be worth 16 points (16% of your final grade).

**References:** All sources used in the writing of your paper must be properly referenced. Now that you are writing a longer paper dealing with issues discussed in multiple places in our class, it is more important to be careful in this regard. "Properly referenced" does not mean that there is any particular format that I care about, but it does mean that if you say "according to Andreasen" or have a formal or informal quote referring to something one of our authors wrote, I should be able to very easily find exactly what they did say. So page numbers are essential for example. And if you use the words of an author or even their direct ideas, you should say it is from them. To not say so is to imply they are your words and so this would constitute plagiarism.

**Topic:**

You may choose to write about any topic relevant to biology and race. The most natural thing to do (and probably the easiest) is to take two of our authors who disagree on some point, explain each of their views carefully, and then critically join in the debate by giving a further argument in favor of one of them and/or against one of them. For example, here are some natural topics:

- 1) Appiah and Mills seem to agree that there cannot be a biological underpinning to our ordinary concept of race. But Appiah thinks that means that there is no such thing as race while Mills thinks that race is real, this just shows that it is not biological. Who is right?
- 2) Look at Mills 10 problem cases. After making your judgments in several of the cases, what do you think this shows about what criteria underlie our concept of race?

- 3) Andreassen thinks that population history can underpin a scientific concept of race. But how? Which groups of humans are races on her view? She seems to think [from the interview] that there doesn't need to be a specific answer to this question. Does that makes sense?
- 4) Is pluralism about race possible? Could we have a scientific conception and a social conception that aren't exactly the same and yet both are real?
- 5) Is 'Hispanic' a race? Why or why not?
- 6) In addition to the papers we read and discussed in class, read, "How genetics is changing our understanding of race" by David Reich (an editorial in the NY Times on March 23, 2018). A link to the article can be found in the 'extras' for this week on the course website (or direct link: [http://joelvelasco.net/teaching/3334/reich18-Genetics\\_race\\_1.pdf](http://joelvelasco.net/teaching/3334/reich18-Genetics_race_1.pdf))

Do Reich's arguments show that race is real and biological? Why or why not?

If you are not sure if your chosen topic is relevant, ask me.