

SALLY HASLANGER'S SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONISM

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Course developed as an advanced BA/MA seminar

Taught Winter 2023/24 at University of Hamburg Institute of Philosophy

Course Description

It has become common in discussions of racism, sexism, and other forms of social inequality to talk about “social structures” and the “social construction” of race and gender. But what do these terms really mean? Sally Haslanger has become the most influential feminist philosopher working in analytic philosophy largely because of her contribution to clarifying these terms and locating them within a wider metaphysics of the social world. This seminar explores her contributions to social philosophy and metaphysics through a close reading of essays from her 2012 book, *Resisting Reality: Social Construction and Social Critique*, and more recent essays. Students will gain insight into key discussions in philosophy of race, philosophy of gender, social ontology, ideology critique, and the philosophy of the social sciences. We will also explore methodological questions of how philosophy should make sense out of the social world.

Reading Schedule

All readings by Sally Haslanger unless otherwise marked.

Week 1 Introduction: Read and discuss syllabus

Unit I—Race, Gender, and Conceptual Engineering

Week 2 Reading: “Gender and Race: (What) Are They? (What) Do We Want Them to Be?” (2000) in *Resisting Reality*, 221–246

Week 3 Reading: “Social Construction: The ‘Debunking’ Project” (2003) in *Resisting Reality*, 113–137

Week 4 Reading: [1] “You Mixed? Racial Identity without Racial Biology” (2005) in *Resisting Reality*, 273–296
[2] “Oppressions: Racial and Other” (2004) in *Resisting Reality*, 311–336
[3] “Race, Intersectionality, and Method: A Reply to Critics,” *Philosophical Studies* 171, no. 1 (2014): 109–119

Unit II—Haslanger as Critical Theorist: Ideology and the Social World

Week 5 Reading: [1] “‘But Mom, Crop-Tops Are Cute!’ Social Knowledge, Social Structure, and Ideology Critique” (2007) in *Resisting Reality*, 406–427
[2] “Racism, Ideology, and Social Movements,” *Res Philosophica* 94 (2017): 1–22

Week 6 Reading: [1] “What Is a (Social) Structural Explanation?” *Philosophical Studies* 173 (2016): 113–130
[2] “Social Structure, Narrative and Explanation,” *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 45, no. 1 (2015): 1–13

Optional: “Social Explanation: Structures, Stories, and Ontology: A Reply to Díaz León, Saul, and Sterken,” *Disputatio* 10, no. 50 (2018): 245–273

- Week 7 *With special guest Daniel James, TU-Dresden*
Reading: Daniel James, “Nachwort” in *Der Wirklichkeit widerstehen* (2021), 234–276
- Week 8 Reading: [1] “What Is a Social Practice?” *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement* 82 (2018): 231–247
[2] “Culture and Critique,” *Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume* 91, no. 1 (2017): 149–169
- Week 9 *With special guest Sally Haslanger, Massachusetts Institute of Technology*
Reading: “Vorwort” in *Der Wirklichkeit widerstehen* (2021), 7–16

Unit III: Haslanger on How to Do Philosophy, and How We Can Use Her Work

- Week 10 Reading: “Going On, not in the Same Way” in *Conceptual Ethics and Conceptual Engineering*, ed. Burgess et al. (2020), 230–257
- Week 11 Reading: Lily Hu, “What is ‘Race’ in Algorithmic Discrimination on the Basis of Race?” *Journal of Moral Philosophy* (forthcoming): 1–24
- Week 12 Reading: Katharine Jenkins, “Toward an Account of Gender Identity,” *Ergo* 5, no. 27 (2018): 713–742
- Week 13 Workshop on student final paper exposés