

PHI 4938: Seminar for Majors (Topic: Othered Minds)
Florida State University

Course Description

This course offers the opportunity to explore philosophical questions related to othered minds. 'Othered' minds are those that historically have been regarded as flatly alien and inferior, the legacy of which is a contemporary landscape of interdisciplinary work wrestling with a host of provocative and difficult issues related to our conceptions of the minds of women, persons of color, children, neurodivergent persons, and non-human animals.

To offer more detail regarding the specific sections into which I have divided this course –

- Minds & Sex will explore questions like: Do the minds of women and men differ? Are such claims (always) a form of neuro-sexism? How does neuro-sexism impact philosophy's difficulty in retaining women as majors?
- Minds & Race will explore questions like: What are we to make of arguments that suggest cognitive skills vary by race? Are such claims (always) a form of neuro-racism? How does racism affect the mental health of persons of color?
- Child Minds will explore questions like: To what extent are children autonomous? Relatedly, to what extent is paternalism justified? What should we say about moral development, motivation, and responsibility in children?
- Neurodivergent Minds will explore questions like: Should we adopt a model of 'mental illness' as a disease of the mind, or is there some better way to characterize neurodivergent minds? What does society owe neurodivergent persons? What is the phenomenology of depression like?
- Animal Minds will explore questions like: Is human cognition somehow importantly different from that of non-human animals? If so, how? Can other animals appreciate complex concepts like normativity, morality, and justice?