

Solidarity and Social Change (YHU4256)

M R 18:00–19:30

Programme Room 2

Instructor: Prof. Robin Zheng

Contact information

email: robin.zheng@yale-nus.edu.sg

website: on Canvas, via <http://yale-nus.instructure.com/>

office hours: W 13:30–15:30 (Cendana RC3–02–05D)

to book an appointment, visit: <https://calendly.com/prof-zheng>

Please don't hesitate to contact me; I am here for you and happy to help insofar as I can. However, note that I do **not** respond instantaneously to emails, especially on evenings and weekends, and I cannot guarantee meetings without *at least* 24 hours' advance notice, so make sure you allow plenty of time to get in touch.

Course description

This course undertakes an in-depth study of the concept, value, and practices of solidarity in connection with social change. What different things are meant by “solidarity,” and how do they motivate social change? Must solidarity be grounded in a shared social identity, e.g. race or gender? Do we have moral duties to stand in solidarity with others? What principles should govern solidary groups? In addressing these questions, we will also develop and practice a number of skills needed for graduate-level seminars.

Course requirements

Seminar attendance and engagement	20%	
Discussion facilitation	10%	
Conference in the Classroom	30%	April 5-15 in class (20% talk/draft, 10% commentary)
Course paper (9-12pp)	40%	11:59p, April 29

Required Texts

All texts should be read *in advance* of seminar. Texts other than the books below are available through E-Reserves or Files on Canvas.

- Tommie Shelby (2005), [We Who Are Dark: The Philosophical Foundations of Black Solidarity](#) (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005) [*Yale-NUS e-book*]
- Jodi Dean (1996), [Solidarity of Strangers: Feminism After Identity Politics](#) (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press) [[UC Press E-Books Collection](#)]
- Avery Kolers (2016), [A Moral Theory of Solidarity](#) [*Yale-NUS e-book*]
- Sally Scholz (2008), [Political Solidarity](#) [*Yale-NUS e-book*]

Attendance and Engagement

Attendance is mandatory, because engaging in seminar discussion is a crucial part of your own and your classmates' learning. If you must miss class, please obtain an Assistant Dean's note or Medical Certificate to excuse your absence, and consult your classmates to catch up on any material you miss. Note: An inordinate record of unexcused absences is enough reason to fail the class.

The engagement grade will consist of your contributions (both quantity and quality) to seminar discussion, as well as any time spent on Canvas, office hours, etc. A steady record of high or low participation can make a difference when it comes to borderline grades.

Discussion Facilitation

Each of you will facilitate at least one seminar discussion. You are encouraged to organize the discussion however you think is most appropriate to the material, where that might include things like identifying the main arguments of the text, generating discussion questions, distributing handouts, etc.

Conference in the Classroom

Prepared talk: 10-12 mins

or

Precirculated draft: 5-6pp (1500-1800 words)

Commentary: 3-5 mins

The last two weeks of class will be devoted to a writing workshop on your course papers. Each session will include three components:

- 1) *Talk/Draft*: You may choose either to pre-circulate a draft for discussion, using the whole of your session for comments and Q&A, or to deliver a prepared talk as you prefer (e.g. reading a draft, talking from notes or slides, distributing a handout).
- 2) *Comments*: You will prepare and deliver some brief comments, on the work of one of your classmates, providing a summary and raising some questions.
- 3) *Q&A*

Detailed instructions will be distributed closer to deadline.

Course Paper

9–12 pp (4000–8000 words), due 11:59p, Saturday, 14 November

Your paper should be submitted through Canvas. You do not need a cover page. Do not use any nonstandard fonts or formatting. Please number all your pages.

Writing a good paper is in some ways like writing any other good paper, but there are certain standards and demands that are particular to philosophy. You are advised to read through this handout: <https://tinyurl.com/WritePhilPaper>. I will not read drafts of your papers, but I am happy to talk through outlines and ideas. To get feedback on drafts, you should ask your peers or make an appointment at the Writers' Centre: <https://writerscentre.yale-nus.edu.sg/>.

Detailed instructions will be distributed closer to deadline.

Late Policy

You are expected to plan and manage your workloads, allowing sufficient time so that you do not lose work through IT malfunction or poor planning. Late papers will be marked down 1/3 of a letter

grade for the first 24 hours they are late (e.g., A- to B+), or by a whole letter grade (e.g., B to C) for submission any time later.

Classroom Climate, Access and Inclusion

Maintaining a respectful, safe, and inclusive classroom is a necessary condition for the co-creation of knowledge, which constitutes the aim of a liberal arts education. Note that “inclusive” here alludes not only to the importance of bringing together a generally diverse range of backgrounds and perspectives, but also more specifically to redressing the historical injustice of groups who have been systemically excluded and marginalized. For this reason, it is particularly important to avoid racist, sexist, ableist or other discriminatory language in class discussions or written work – while recognizing compassionately that people may make mistakes or lack relevant background knowledge, and that language, concepts, and discourse are constantly evolving and always context-dependent.

If you have any physical, psychiatric or learning conditions that may impact your performance in this course, please let me know as soon as possible, so that we may arrange for the appropriate accommodations. If you observe any religious or cultural practices that may interfere with this course, please also let me know.

As the instructor, I take final responsibility for what happens in my classroom, so if you have suggestions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out. More generally, the College is committed to providing a respectful, safe, and inclusive learning environment for all community members regardless of race, religion, nationality, culture, gender identity, sexual orientation, and socio-economic class. If you or someone you know has been subject to bias, discrimination, sexual harassment, misconduct, or assault in or outside class, I encourage you to follow up with one or more of these authorities as appropriate: me (YHU4256), your faculty advisor, or your Assistant Dean.

Language Policy

The word “n----r” should NEVER be used OR mentioned (i.e. it should not be uttered at all) in class, whether in oral or written communication. When directly citing (orally or in writing) texts that use or mention it, the word “the n-word” or dashes should be substituted instead. Similarly, we should NEVER use the word “N----o” or “colored,” substituting with “Black” instead.

Additionally, we have agreed that in this classroom we will also refrain from mentioning the word “N----o.” We have also agreed that in the classroom contexts, we will capitalise both “White” and “Black” in reference to racial groups, but individuals may choose to adopt their own capitalisation style in their own writing.

Intellectual Property and Privacy

To help ensure that we may all freely engage in rigorous intellectual discussion and disagreement, you may not record and/or distribute course discussions, lectures, lecture slides or handouts, readings, videos, or other course-related materials without obtaining my permission. This includes audio recording, video, transcription, and photography. Lectures and seminars that are delivered in-person, online, or as a pre-recorded videos should never be recorded or distributed beyond the course for which it was intended.

Though you are encouraged to reflect upon and share their own learning experiences and ideas in whatever forum you wish, you should not share course content produced by myself or your peers (e.g.

a peer’s essay, comments made in class, posts to a Canvas discussion thread) without prior permission. Violation of this policy is addressed in the Student Code of Conduct and could result in disciplinary and/or legal consequences.

Academic Integrity

I will hold you to the highest standards of academic integrity. The library provides examples, tips, and resources on plagiarism at <http://library.yale-nus.edu.sg/plagiarism/>. If I suspect any kind of academic dishonesty, I am required to report you to the Academic Disciplinary Committee. Any assignment on which that the Academic Disciplinary Committee judges that plagiarism has occurred will receive zero credit.

If you are in any way unclear as to what constitutes plagiarism, come talk to me *before* you write your papers. Ignorance or confusion will not be accepted as excuses for plagiarism or other academic misconduct.

Health and Wellness

If you are experiencing undue stress or feel you might benefit from private counseling, please contact the Yale-NUS Health and Wellness Center. You may also wish to reach out to your Assistant Dean or Residential Life Officers in your Residential College. For more information on this and other kinds of support, visit <https://studentlife.yale-nus.edu.sg/wellness/>.

Schedule of Readings

Week	Day	Text(s)
1	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Robin Zheng [unpublished manuscript, in Files] Ch. 1, “The Power of Solidarity: What We Have and What We’re Up Against” (pp. 1–24)
	R	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Shelby, Introduction, “Political Philosophy and the Black Experience” (pp. 1–23) ○ Shelby Ch. 1 “Two Conceptions of Black Nationalism” (pp. 24–59)
2	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Shelby Ch. 2 “Class, Poverty, and Shame” (pp. 60–100) ○ Shelby Ch. 3 “Black Power Nationalism” (pp. 101–135)
	R	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Shelby Ch. 4 “Black Solidarity After Black Power” (pp. 136–160) ○ Shelby Ch. 5 “Race, Culture, and Politics” (pp. 161–200)
3	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Shelby Ch. 6 “Social Identity and Group Solidarity” (pp. 201–242) ○ Shelby, Conclusion, “The Political Morality of Black Solidarity” (pp. 243–258)
	R	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Bernice Johnson Reagon (1983), “Coalition Politics,” in <i>Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology</i>, ed. Barbara Smith (New York: Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press), pp. 356–368. ○ Chandra Mohanty (2003), “Sisterhood, Coalition, and the Politics of Experience,” in <i>Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity</i> (Durham, NC: Duke University Press), pp. 106–123. ○ Nira Yuval-Davis (1997), “Women, Ethnicity, and Empowerment: Toward Transversal Politics” from <i>Gender and Nation</i> (London: SAGE Publications) ○ Optional: Christine (Cricket) Keating (2018), “The Politics of Everyday Coalition-Building,” <i>New Political Science</i> 40(1): 177–183.
4	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dean, Introduction, “The ‘WE’ of Identity Politics” (pp. 1–12)

		o Dean Ch. 1, “Reflective Solidarity” (pp. 13–46)
	R	o Dean Ch. 2, “Struggling for Recognition: Identity Politics and Democracy” (pp. 47–74)
5	M	o Dean Ch. 5 “Feminism and Universalism” (pp. 140–174) o Dean, Epilogue, “The Risky Business of Reflective Solidarity” (pp. 175–182)
	R	o <i>No class</i>
6	M	o Jodi Dean (2019), “From Allies to Comrades,” from <i>Comrade: An Essay on Political Belonging</i> (London: Verso Books), pp. 1–23.
	R	o Allison Weir (2008), “Global Feminism and Transformative Identity Politics,” <i>Hypatia</i> 23(4), 110–133.
<i>Recess Week</i>		
7	M	o Kolers, “Introduction” (pp. 1–8) o Kolers Ch. 1, “Politics and the Limits of Conscience” (pp. 9–26) o Kolers Ch. 2, “Loyalty and Justice” (pp. 27–48)
	R	o Kolers Ch. 3, “Solidarity in Action” (pp. 49–71) o Kolers Ch. 4, “Autonomy and Deference” (pp. 72–91)
8	M	o Kolers Ch. 5, “The Dilemma of Deference” (pp. 92–117) o Kolers Ch. 6, “Solidarity as Equity” (pp. 118–140)
	R	o Kolers Ch. 7, “The Ethics of Solidarity” (pp. 141–165) o Kolers Ch. 8, “Equity and the Limits of Solidarity” (pp. 166–180)
9	M	o Scholz, “Introduction” (pp. 1–16) o Scholz, Ch. 1 “Solidarities” (pp. 17–50)
	R	o Scholz, Ch. 2 “Toward a Theory of Political Solidarity” (pp. 50–70) o Scholz, Ch. 3 “The Moral Relations and Obligations of Political Solidarity” (pp. 71–112)
10	M	o Scholz, Ch. 4 “The Solidarity Collective” (pp. 113–150) o Scholz, Ch. 5 “The Paradox of the Participation of the Privileged” (pp. 151–188)
	R	o Scholz, Ch. 6 “The Social Justice Ends of Political Solidarity” (pp. 189–230) o Scholz, Ch. 7 “On Human Solidarity and the Challenge of Global Solidarity” (pp. 231–264)
11	M	o Robin Zheng [unpublished manuscript, in Files] Ch. 5, “Solidaristic Pluralism: How to Make Transformative Social Change”
	R	o Robin Zheng [unpublished manuscript, in Files] Ch. 6, “Solidaristic Disagreement: How to Criticize Our Own”
12	MR	Conference in the Classroom
13	MR	Conference in the Classroom