

Reading Questions for November 3

These questions cover a book chapter by Charles W. Mills called “White Ignorance.” The answers do not have to be turned in. You will probably have to read parts of it more than once to get the answers.

*Background:*

This book chapter is from a book called *Race and Epistemologies of Ignorance*. As you can probably guess from the title, the book as a whole looks at connections between race and ignorance. In his article, Mills tries to do several things: first he offers some historical context for the project he is engaged in, then he explains what he means by “white ignorance” and then he discusses some of the ways it arises. I have given you the whole chapter just in case you’re curious, but to answer my questions you only need to look at certain parts of the article.

*Questions:*

1. In section III, (pages 20-3) Mills explains what he means by “white ignorance.” What does he mean by “white ignorance.” Can you think of any examples of what he has in mind, either from your own life, or that you’ve heard about?
2. On pages 24-7, starting with “Starting with perception ...” Mills describes some connections between our concepts and the way we perceive the world. What does Mills think the connection is and why is this important for his project? Can you think of any examples that connect with what he says? What do you think – do you agree with him? Why or why not?
3. On pages 28 - 31, starting with “What makes such denial possible ...” Mills makes some claims about memory. What does he think and why does he think it? Can you think of any examples that connect with what he says? What do you think – do you agree with him? Why or why not?

4. On pages 31-34, starting with “But forgetting...” Mills makes some claims about testimony. What does he think and why does he think it? Can you think of any examples that connect with what he says? What do you think – do you agree with him? Why or why not?