

## **Bielefeld Guest Professorship in Philosophy of Gender**

23.-25. April 2024, Bielefeld University  
with Katharine Jenkins, Glasgow

### **Social Justice and Social Categories: How to be a Pluralist about Race and Gender**

**Blockseminar by Katharine Jenkins, Wednesday, 24.04.2024, 18-20 Uhr:  
Ontology and Oppression**

The way society is organised means that we all get made into members of various categories of people, such as judges, wives, or women. These categories of people may be brought into being by oppressive social arrangements; a clear case of this is the category of 'slave', which is brought into being by the unjust social practice of slavery. Understanding such cases of wrongful social construction is an interesting philosophical task. More complicated examples that may count as wrongful social construction include race and gender categories: some philosophers have argued that categories of people such as 'woman' and 'Black' are actually created by the unjust social practices of racism and sexism. However, many people value their membership in race and gender categories, even whilst acknowledging that they are bound up with oppression. This apparent tension is something that contemporary social justice movements must consider and respond to when they think about the ways in which social construction can be wrongful.



This seminar explores these issues in conversation with a recent book by Dr Jenkins, in which she argues that adopting a pluralist view about race and gender can solve this tension. A pluralist view is one that says that there is no single social category that corresponds to a gender label such as 'woman', but rather, various different social categories, each of which is important in a different way. For the pluralist, there is no one thing that it is to be a woman, but rather, many different things that we might have in mind on different occasions when we say that someone is a woman. Some of these are wrongful, but others are not, and some even support emancipatory politics. As well as examining Dr Jenkins' view, the seminar will support participants to develop their own responses to these questions in collaboration with each other and with reference to the contemporary context.

**Contact and further information:**

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