



SCHOOL OF SANSKRIT, PHILOSOPHY AND INDIC STUDIES • GOA UNIVERSITY

**WHAT IS PHILOSOPHY?  
EXAMPLE: RACISM  
(NECRO-BEING AS  
MORALLY WORST FORM)**

AN ONLINE LECTURE BY

**PROF. LEONARD HARRIS**

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PURDUE UNIVERSITY, INDIANA, USA

**FRIDAY, 30 SEPTEMBER 2022  
5:00 TO 7:00 PM IST**

**[MEET.GOOGLE.COM/NYZ-KFPC-EPT](https://meet.google.com/NYZ-KFPC-EPT)**

The School of Sanskrit, Philosophy and Indic Studies (SSPIS) at Goa University cordially invites you to the online guest lecture titled "What is Philosophy? Example: Racism (Necro-being as morally worst form)" by Dr. Leonard Harris. Kindly join us on **30 September 2022** (Friday) from **5:00 to 7:00 PM IST** at [meet.google.com/nyz-kfpc-ept](https://meet.google.com/nyz-kfpc-ept).

### **Abstract**

In "Necro-Being," Dr. Harris describes racism [and ethnocentrism] as an instantiation of necro-being (i.e., that which makes living a kind of death), a seminal form of oppression, its corporal being. Racialized populations are subjected to conditions of life that confer upon them the status of living dead; necro-tragedy (utter suffering and irredeemable loss in this non-moral universe) and undue death. Despite races being anabsolute (unstable groups often treated as objectively stable entities), populations can be seen to suffer unduly. This view is contrary to the definitions of racism as:

- racism as racial disrespect,
- racism as racial antipathy or racial inferiorization,
- racism as a fundamentally vicious kind of racially based disregard for the welfare of certain people,
- racism in terms of inappropriate contracts and institutions,
- racism as a function of exploitation and associated systems,
- racism as a "dogma that one ethnic group is condemned by nature to congenital superiority,"
- racism as a doctrine that situates stable inherited character traits derived from separate racial stocks having distinctive attributes.

This view is also contrary to volitionist and existentialist approaches (the view that individual choice to be prejudicial) and thereby the moral wrongness of racism is a matter of a particular type of consciousness. This approach is intended to be compatible with a view of "philosophy" that places emphasis on the importance of corporal existence rather than metaphysical questions or questions about the nature of the self or the pursuit of wisdom.

### **Speaker**

[Dr. Leonard Harris](#) is a Professor at the Department of Philosophy, Purdue University, Indiana, USA. He is the author of "struggle philosophy," the ethics of insurrection, critical pragmatism, advocacy aesthetics, and the concept of racism as "necro-being." Dr. Harris is a graduate of Central State University, Ohio, and Cornell University and a board member of the

Philosophy Born of Struggle Association and the Alain L. Locke Society. He was a Visiting Scholar at The Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium, in 2020. He delivered a seminal lecture series for the Indian Council of Philosophical Research (ICPR) in 2012. Dr. Harris has received several awards such as the Herbert Schneider Award for "Distinguished contributions to the understanding of American Philosophy" in 2018, the College of Liberal Arts Discovery Excellence Award for the Humanities in 2017, and the Franz Fanon Lifetime Achievement Award, Caribbean Philosophical Association, in 2014. He is the editor of *Philosophy Born of Struggle* (Kendall/Hunt Publishing, 1983) and three books on the philosopher Alain L. Locke. He is the author of several works including "Necro-Being: An Actuarial Account of Racism" (*Res Philosophica* 95, No. 2, 2018). His new book is [\*A Philosophy of Struggle: The Leonard Harris Reader\*](#) (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2020).