Phil 10022: Feminism and Philosophy
Dr Elinor Mason

“Feminism is a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression.” bell hooks

In this class we will look at moral and political issues concerning gender and patriarchy.

**Classes:** Thursdays 11pm - 1pm, Dugald Stewart Building, 1.20.

**Office hours:** Thursdays 1.30pm-2.30pm and by appointment, Rm 6.06 DSB.

**Respect and Sensitivity**
We will discuss lots of upsetting things in this class. Please bear in mind that some of the things we talk about are things that other students may have had personal experiences with. Talk to each other with this in mind. Be respectful at all times. It is not disrespectful to disagree with someone’s views, but the expression of that disagreement must be polite and impersonal, and based on argument. I will not offer trigger warnings before each potentially upsetting topic. Please look at the syllabus and if you feel uncomfortable, come and talk to me in confidence and we can discuss an alternative to attending class on that day.

**Expectations**
Violations of university policies on plagiarism will be taken extremely seriously and will result in a failing grade for the course and possible disciplinary action.

**Assessment**
Mid-term essay of 1,500 words (40%) due on …

End-of-semester essay of 2,500 words (60%) due on …

**4th Year**
Coursework dissertations are submitted on …, **by 4pm**, please check with the departmental office (G.06) for further details. The title of your coursework dissertation must be approved in advance by submitting it to me in person or by email. After your title is approved you will complete a form confirming this title and submit it to the departmental office on …, **by 4pm**. Generally, any question listed for discussion in a seminar is a suitable short dissertation title.
If you have a disability please make sure that I am the relevant offices are aware of necessary provisions in good time. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities.

Readings
Most of the readings are available online through the library. It is your responsibility to track them down.

The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy has very useful entries on feminist topics, some are linked here but there are many others that you may find relevant. The best use of the SEP is to get an overview of a topic and find further reading.

Hypatia is a journal of feminist philosophy and women’s studies – the last ten years or so are available online. Be aware that most but not all of the articles are philosophy.

Introductory books/Collections:
Finlayson, Lorna, 2016, Feminism: An Introduction (CUP)

Schedule
Week 1 Liberal Feminism
Mill, J.S. The Subjection of Women (esp ch.s 1-3)
Mary Wollstonecraft, A Vindication of the Rights of Woman (esp. ch.s 2 and 3)

Additional Resources
http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminism-liberal/
http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/wollstonecraft/

Discussion/Essay topics:
What is feminism?
Is neutrality all that justice requires?
Can a liberal conception of feminism make sense of intersectionality?
Are we justified in concluding from observed differences between men and women that these differences are innate?

**Week 2 Implicit Bias**
Selections from Michael Brownstein & Jennifer Saul (eds.), *Implicit Bias and Philosophy*. OUP.

**Additional Resources**
*Journal of Social Philosophy* vol. 43 has a special edition on implicit bias.
Harvard tests: [https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html](https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html)
Implicit Bias project at the University of Sheffield: [http://www.biasproject.org/](http://www.biasproject.org/)

**Discussion/Essay topics:**
Are we responsible for our implicit biases?
Given that implicit bias is not directly under our control, what should we do about it?

**Week 3 Family and Work**

**Additional Resources**
Miss Representation: https://www.kanopystreaming.com/product/miss-representation-0
http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminism-class/
http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminism-family/

Discussion/Essay topics:
Have white middle class feminists misunderstood the relation of work to feminism?
How does the nature of the family interact with feminist issues?
Is having children simply a personal choice that women must shoulder the burdens of?

Week 4 Global Feminism

Additional Resources
http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminism-globalization/

Discussion/Essay topics:
What responsibilities do first work feminists have qua feminists to other groups?
Can the challenges of cultural differences be overcome without being patronising?

Week 5 Sex and Love
Selections from Shrage, Laurie J. Stewart, Robert Scott (ed.s) 2016, Philosophizing About Sex.
Produced, directed, and edited by Sut Jhally and Andrew Killoy.
https://www.kanopystreaming.com/product/flirting-danger-power-choice-heterosexual-
Discussion/Essay topics:
Is it possible to think about sex and love without thinking about gender?
In what ways are our constructions of gender and our constructions of sexuality and sex interwined?

Week 6 Pornography

Additional Resources
Pornland: https://www.kanopystreaming.com/product/pornland
http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminist-sex-markets/
http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/freedom-speech/
http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/pornography-censorship/

Discussion/Essay topics:
Does pornography construct sexuality?
Which is more important, the right to free speech or the right not to be harmed?

Week 7 Prostitution

*Additional Resources*


Gauthier, Jeffrey (2010), ‘Prostitution, Sexual Autonomy, and Sex Discrimination’ *Hypatia* 25 (3).


*Discussion/Essay topics:*

Is prostitution wage labour like any other?

Is there an important difference between direct and indirect harms of prostitution?

Is the autonomy of the prostitute damaged by the act of prostitution?

*Week 8 Sexual Harrassment*


Pre-print on her website:
https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.263832!/file/V8StopThinking.pdf


*Additional Resources*


Selections from Soble (ed.) *The Philosophy of Sex*

*Discussion/Essay topics:*

What are the complexities around the notion of consent?

Does ‘provocative dress’ constitute an excuse for harassment?

*Week 9 The Body*

Susan Bordo, ‘Reading the Slender Body’ in *Unbearable Weight*.

Young, Iris M. “Throwing like a Girl” (from Throwing Like a Girl and Other Essays in Feminist Philosophy and Social Theory: Indianapolis: Indiana University Press) reprinted in Welton op.cit..

Additional Resources
http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminist-body/

Discussion/Essay topics:
Are ideal body shapes determined by patriarchal structures?
Are women disabled by patriarchy?

Week 10 Femininities and Masculinities
Main Reading TBA

Additional Resources
https://www.kanopystreaming.com/product/tough-guise-2?pos=1

http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminism-trans/
http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminism-gender/

Discussion/Essay topics:
Is gender socially constructed?
Is there a tension between feminism and transgender experience?

Week 11 Conclusions and Reflections