

# Feminism and Philosophy

Autumn 2019

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## 1. Course Aims and Objectives

This course will examine numerous timely topics related to feminism from a philosophical perspective, including oppression, the nature of gender, intersectionality, capitalism and feminism, bodies and feminist aesthetics, sex, pornography, false consciousness, and the politics of thought. The course will utilise contemporary sources to investigate these topics. We will critically evaluate some of the most prominent philosophical positions pertaining to these topics, and you are encouraged to develop your own thoughts about the arguments and positions covered.

## 2. Intended Learning Outcomes

On completion of this course students will be able to:

1. Display knowledge and understanding of feminist philosophy.
2. Analyse the various theoretical and practical challenges presented by feminist philosophical scholarship, and evaluate the strengths and weakness of the various approaches made to resolving them.
3. Demonstrate core skills in philosophy, including the ability to interpret and engage with philosophical texts, to evaluate arguments, and to develop one's own critical ideas in response.
4. Better contribute to discussion of issues related to feminism and feminist philosophy, in both academic and non-academic contexts.

## 3. Contact Time

The course content will be delivered via two types of classes. We will meet all together once a week for a two hour seminar; in addition we will meet in smaller groups once a week for a one hour tutorial. The seminar will run from week 1 to week 11, and the tutorials will start in week 2. You are expected to read the set text(s) in advance of the seminar each week. The seminar will take place on Thursday, 11am – 1pm. Please check your personal timetable to see to which tutorial you've been assigned.

In addition to the seminar and tutorials, I will be available to answer any questions about the course or the readings at my office hours. My drop-in office hours will be communicated once term starts. If it's not possible to attend to office hours, please drop me an email and we can arrange another time to talk.

#### 4. Assessment

The course will primarily be assessed by two essays. The first is a 1,500 word midterm essay, which is due on Thursday the 24<sup>th</sup> of October, by 12noon. This midterm essay accounts for 40% of your final grade. The second is a 2,500 word essay and it will be due after the end of the course, on Thursday the 12<sup>th</sup> of December, by 12noon. This final essay accounts for 55% of your final grade. Essays questions for the midterm essay will be distributed by week 3.

In addition to these essays you will be assessed on your participation in class. This will take the form of an in-class presentation, and will account for 5% of your final grade. In week one we will discuss the requirements of the presentation, and devise a schedule. (If you have concerns about presenting in class, please come and chat to me and we'll work something out.)

#### 5. Course Content and Reading

All of the required readings for this course are available online, via Learn.

Below are the details of required readings for each topic, as well as some suggested further reading. As this is an honours course, I expect you to utilise your own research skills to find further resources. PhilPapers is a fantastic place to start.

A note about course content: Some of the texts in this class contain content that people might find uncomfortable, offensive, or triggering. Some of the articles are sexually explicit; many include descriptions, more or less graphic, of various kinds of abuse (both physical and psychological), rape and other forms of sexual assault, harassment, or degradation. Please feel free to discuss concerns about this content with me.

##### General and Background Reading

Crasnow, S. & Superson, A. (2012) *Out of the Shadows: Analytic Feminist Contributions to Traditional Philosophy*. OUP.

Finlayson, L. (2016) *Feminism: An Introduction*. CUP.

Fricke, M. and Hornsby, J. (2000). *The Cambridge Companion to Feminism in Philosophy*. CUP.

Hackett, E. & Haslanger, S. (2000) *Theorizing Feminisms*. OUP.

Manne, K. (2017) *Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny*. OUP.

Saul, J. (2003) *Feminism: Issues and Arguments*. OUP.

Witt, C. (2011) *Feminist Metaphysics. Explorations in the Ontology of Sex, Gender and the Self*. Springer Verlag.

**Week 1: Introduction to the course and feminist philosophy**

Required Reading:

bell hooks (1984) 'Black Women: Shaping Feminist Theory', in *Feminist Theory from Margin to Centre*. South End Press.

Finlayson, Lorna (2018) 'The Third Shift: the Politics of Representation and the Psychological Turn.' *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 43 (4)

**Week 2: Race, Gender, and Intersectionality**

Required reading:

Hill Collins, Patricia (1998) 'It's All in the Family: Intersections of Gender, Race, and Nation'. *Hypatia* 13 (3).

Further reading:

Audre Lorde, Sister Outsider, 'The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House'. Available online: <http://www.historyisaweapon.com/defcon1/lordedismantle.html>

Cooper, Brittney (2016) 'Intersectionality', in Disch & Hawkesworth (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Feminist Theory*. OUP.

Carastathis, Anna (2014) 'The Concept of Intersectionality in Feminist Theory'. *Philosophy Compass*, 9 (5).

**Week 3: Oppression**

Required reading:

Haslanger, Sally (2012) 'Oppressions', in *Resisting Reality*. OUP.

Further reading:

Frye, Marilyn (1993) 'Oppression', in *The Politics of Reality*. Crossing Press.

Young, Iris Marion (2012) 'Five Faces of Oppression', in *Justice and the Politics of Difference*. Princeton University Press.

bell hooks (1984) 'Feminism: A Movement to End Sexist Oppression', in *Feminist Theory from Margin to Centre*. South End Press.

*Week 4: **The Nature of Gender***

Required reading:

Dembroff, Robin (2019) 'Beyond Binary: Genderqueer as a Critical Social Kind'. *Philosophers' Imprint*.

Further reading:

Mikkola, Mari (2009) 'Gender Concepts and Intuitions'. *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 39 (4).

Stoljar, Natalie, (2011) 'Different Women. Gender and the Realism-Nominalism Debate', in C. Witt (ed.) *Feminist Metaphysics. Explorations in the Ontology of Sex, Gender and the Self*. Springer Verlag.

Haslanger, Sally (2012) 'Race and Gender: (What) Are they? (What) Do we Want Them to be?', in *Resisting Reality*. OUP.

*Week 5: **Bodies and Feminist Aesthetics***

Required reading:

Eaton, A. W. (2016) 'Taste in Bodies and Fat Oppression', in Sherri Irvin (eds.) *Body Aesthetics*. OUP.

Further reading:

Protasi, Sara (2017) 'The Perfect Bikini Body: Can We All Really Have It? Loving Gaze as an Antioppressive Beauty Ideal'. *Thought: A Journal of Philosophy*, 6 (2).

Taylor, Paul C. (2016) 'Dark Lovely Yet And; Or, How To Love Black Bodies While Hating Black People', in *Black is Beautiful: A Philosophy of Black Aesthetics*. Wiley-Blackwell.

Van Dyke, Christina (2017) 'Eat Y'self Fitter: Orthorexia, Health, and Gender', in Barnhill, Budolfson & Doggett (eds.) *Oxford Handbook of Food Ethics*. OUP.

*Week 6: **Sex***

Required reading:

Kukla, Rebecca (2018) 'That's What She Said: The Language of Sexual Negotiation'. *Ethics*, 129 (1).

Amia Srinivasan, "Does anyone have the right to sex?" (London Review of Books, March 2018)

Further reading:

Roupenian, Kristen, "Cat Person" (New Yorker, December 2018)

Dougherty, Tom (2015) 'Yes Means Yes: Consent as Communication'. *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 43 (3).

Zheng, Robin (2016) 'Why Yellow Fever isn't Flattering: A Case Against Racial Fetishes'. *Journal of the American Philosophical Association*, 2 (3).

### **Week 7: Pornography**

Required reading:

Langton, Rae (2009) 'Speech Acts and Unspeakable Acts', in *Sexual Solipsism*. OUP.

Further reading:

Finlayson, Lorna (2014) 'How to Screw Things with Words'. *Hypatia*, 29 (4).

McGowan, M.K. (2009) 'On Silencing and Sexual Refusal'. *Journal of Political Philosophy*, 17 (4).

MacKinnon, Catherine (1989), "Sexuality, Pornography, and Method: 'Pleasure Under Patriarchy'" *Ethics* 314.

### **Week 8: False Consciousness and Ideology**

Required reading:

Shelby, Tommie (2003) 'Ideology, Racism, and Critical Social Theory'. *Philosophical Forum*, 34 (2).

Further reading:

Haslanger, Sally, (2012) 'Ideology, Generics and Common Ground', in *Resisting Reality*. OUP.

Tietjens Meyers, Diana (2002) *Gender in the Mirror: Cultural Imagery and Women's Agency*. OUP. (See especially chapter one.)

Khader, Serene J. (2011) *Adaptive Preferences and Women's Empowerment*. OUP.

### **Week 9: Capitalism and Feminism**

Required reading:

Cudd, Ann E., and Nancy Holmstrom (2011) *Capitalism, For and Against: A Feminist Debate*. Cambridge University Press. Sections 4 and 6 of part 1.

Fraser, Nancy (2014) 'Behind Marx's 'hidden abode': Toward an expanded conception of Capitalism', in the *New Left Review*.

Further reading:

Holmstrom, N. (1981) "Women's Work," the Family and Capitalism. *Science & Society*, 45(2), 186-211.

James, Selma, (2012) *Sex, Race, and Class*. PM Press.

Angela Y. Davis, "The Approaching Obsolescence of Housework: A Working-Class Perspective," in Davis, *Women, Race and Class* (1981) online at:  
<https://www.marxists.org/subject/women/authors/davis-angela/housework.htm>

#### **Week 10: The Politics of Thought**

Required reading:

Basu, Rima (2019) 'What We Epistemically Owe Each Other'. *Philosophical Studies*, 176 (4).

Ritchie, Katherine (2019) 'Should We Use Racial and Gender Generics?'. *Thought: A Journal of Philosophy*, 8 (1).

Further reading:

Basu, Rima (2019) 'The Wrongs of Racist Beliefs'. *Philosophical Studies*, 176 (9).

Leslie, Sarah-Jane (2017) 'The Original Sin of Cognition: Fear, Prejudice, and Generalization'. *Journal of Philosophy*, 114 (8).

Wodak, Leslie, and Rhodes (2015) 'What a loaded Generalization: Generics and Social Cognition'. *Philosophy Compass*, 10 (9).

#### **Week 11: Course Round-Up and Essay Workshop**

No reading!