

Syllabus

PHIL 607/CRN
Feminist Philosophy: Proseminar
T/Th 10:00-11:50 pm

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Purpose

The purpose of this course is twofold: 1) to give students an opportunity to reflect on what it means to study and practice philosophy as a woman, i.e. from a position of alterity in relation to the dominant traditions in Western philosophy and 2) to introduce students to basic texts and basic topics in feminist philosophy. By the end of the term students should be able to speak competently about important themes in feminist philosophy, such as identity, the self-other relation, sexuality, gendered embodiment, agency and freedom; and about the contributions of a number of important thinkers in feminist philosophy. Students will gain exposure to feminist appropriations and criticisms of the Western philosophical tradition as well as debates within feminist thinking.

Description

Feminist philosophy is philosophical thought that emerges out of and in relation to social movements for women's emancipation. It works toward the recuperation of women's and feminist thought in the history of philosophy, an understanding of the human condition as it is lived by women, an articulation of women's ways of knowing in relation to epistemologies that have implicitly or explicitly excluded women, and interrogating political and ethical practices from a feminist perspective. Though we commonly think of "feminist philosophy" as a recent development, scholars agree that philosophical work that exhibits a feminist sensibility has been a critical counter-voice to the mainstream Western tradition since its inception. Nevertheless, philosophy today is often referred to as "the physics of the humanities" since it remains the most male dominated field in the humanities. Yet feminist philosophers have been passionate in their claims that the discipline of philosophy prepares us to ask the questions we need to ask and address the problems that we confront—even as philosophy is transformed in the process. These are some of the questions we will explore in the course: How does feminist thinking both appropriate and change the practice of philosophy? What questions are opened up by feminist philosophical inquiry that are not opened by more traditional approaches? How does feminist philosophy invite us to challenge some of our most deeply held assumptions about knowledge, human nature, and political and ethical practices?

I employ a variety of strategies to engage students in classroom discussions and reflection about the topics for the course. In addition to listening to lectures, you can expect to participate in small group discussions in class, to be called on to explain key concepts to a group of your peers, to do short, in-class writings as a kick-off for discussion, and to actively respond to lectures. This term we will start each class with a student led discussion (the first ½ hour), this will generally be followed by a lecture, with more discussion at the end of the class period.

Course Requirements

Discussion Leadership: Each graduate student taking the course for credit will take responsibility for leading a ½ hour discussion of the materials for one day's class. When more than one essay is assigned, discussions should be introduced in such a way that the themes of the essays are linked, and students are invited to respond to and discuss any of the readings for the day.

Paper Proposal: Due week 8. Guidelines will be handed out in class.

Final Paper: Due Wednesday of finals week.

Texts

Course Reader

Readings will be available on the Canvas Site for the course.

Students with Disabilities

If you have a documented disability please let me know right away what accommodations are needed.

Course Calendar***Women and Philosophy***

Week 1

1.1(9/27) Opening Class: Lecture: Xanthippe and The Apology of Socrates

1.2(9/29) Tuana, "Reading Philosophy as a Woman" (11 pp)

Le Doeuff, selections from "First Notebook" (31 pp)

Alcoff "Of Philosophy and Guerilla Wars" (9 pp)

?Moraga "Preface to 4th Edition of ..." or Schutte, Incommensurability....

Discussion Leadership _____

Knowing: Women and the Life of the Mind

Week 2

2.1(10/4) Rousseau Selections from "Sophie," in Emile (19 pp)

Wollstonecraft, "Introduction," "Dedication" "Chapters 1,2" (47 pp)

Discussion Leadership _____

2.2(10/6) GUEST LECTURE: DR. MANN WILL BE OUT OF THE COUNTRY OR RESCHEDULE ON THE 20TH OF OCTOBER....PUSH SYLLABUS BACK, STAY IN ORDER

Woolf A Room of One's Own (Ch. 1-2) (35 pp)

Frye "To Be and Be Seen: The Politics of Reality" (15 pp)

Discussion Leadership _____

Week 3

3.1(10/11) Lloyd "The Man of Reason" (16 pp)

Fox Keller "Feminism and Science" (11 pp)

Bordo Selections from *Flight to Objectivity* (20pp)

Discussion Leadership _____

3.2(10/13) Harding "'Strong Objectivity' and Socially Situated Knowledge" (18pp)

Code "Taking Subjectivity into Account" (20pp)

Haraway "Situated Knowledges" (21 pp)

Discussion Leadership _____

Week 4

4.1(10/18) Collins "The Social Construction of Black Feminist Thought" (11pp)

Ruddick "Maternal Thinking" (14 pp)
Wittig "The Straight Mind" (12 pp)

Discussion Leadership _____

4.2(10/20)

Alcoff "Epistemologies of Ignorance" (18pp)
Fricker "Testimonial Injustice," "Hermeneutical Injustice" (47pp)

Discussion Leadership _____

Being: What is a Woman?

Week 5

5.1(10/25) Gilman "As to Humanness" (17pp)
Bederman "Not to Sex—But to Race!" Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *Civilized Anglo-Saxon Womanhood, and the Return of the Primitive Rapist*" (48pp)
Beauvoir "Introduction" to *The Second Sex* (15 pp)

Discussion Leadership _____

5.2(10/27) Rubin, "The Traffic in Women" (26 pp)

Discussion Leadership _____

Week 6

6.1(11/1) Irigaray Excerpts from "The Question of the Other" (12 pp)
Irigaray "Human Nature is Two" (6pp)
Irigaray "Sexual Difference is Universal" (6pp)
Wittig "The Category of Sex" (8 pp)
Wittig "One is Not Born a Woman" (12 pp)

Discussion Leadership _____

6.2(11/3) Mohanty "Under Western Eyes" (24 pp)
Hooks "Reconstructing Black Masculinity" (16pp)

Week 7

7.1(11/8) MacKinnon "Difference and Dominance" (13 pp)
Butler "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution" (10 pp)

Discussion Leadership _____

7.2(11/10) Extended Session (Session will meet for 3 hours)

Heinämaa "Woman: Nature, Product, Style" (15 pp)
Young "Throwing Like a Girl" (18 pp)
Scott, "Experience" (16 pp)

Alcoff “Phenomenology, Poststructuralism and Feminist Theory on the Concept of Experience” (17 pp)

Discussion Leadership _____

Doing: Feminist Politics and Ethics

Week 8

8.1(11/15) Addams “Women’s Conscience and Social Amelioration” (12pp)

Kittay “Introduction” to *Love’s Labor* (18pp)

Discussion Leadership _____

8.2(11/17) Bartky “Feeding Egos and Tending Wounds” (20 pp)

Pateman “Contracting In” (18 pp)

Discussion Leadership _____

Week 9

9.1(11/22) Davis “Rape, Racism and the Myth of the Black Rapist” (29 pp)

Crenshaw “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity...etc.” (22pp)

Discussion Leadership _____

9.2(11/24) *THANKSGIVING*

Week 10

10.1(11/29) MacKinnon “Genocide’s Sexuality” (24 pp)

Smith “Sexual Violence as a Tool of Genocide” (15 pp)

Discussion Leadership _____

10.2(12/1) Fraser, “Multiculturalism, Antiessentialism, and Radical Democracy” from TF (9 pp)

Nussbaum, “Human Capabilities, Female Human Beings” from TF (17 pp)

Discussion Leadership _____