

## Philosophy 315: Introduction to Feminist Philosophies

**Instructor:** Lauren Eichler

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**Office Hours:** MW 1:00 pm – 1:50 pm

**Office Location:** Susan Campbell Hall 158a

**Time:** MW 10:00 am – 11:50 am

**Location:** Eslinger 199

**Course Description:** This course introduces some key concepts and questions within feminist philosophy. We'll begin by reading the work of early feminist activists and feminist collectives in order to think about the various ways we can do feminist philosophy and why this philosophy matters. Next, we'll consider the historical place of women within philosophy and some of the responses to the exclusion or disavowal of women's voices in the discipline.

The second section of the course will explore the following questions: what is it to be a woman? How does this identity function philosophically and culturally to facilitate oppression of women, and the production and control of difference? This section of the course will engage primarily with white feminist texts.

The next section of the course will build on and critique the dominant white feminist narrative through an introduction to Black, Latina, and Native American feminists. We'll strive to understand their criticisms of white feminism and their claims about the way differences like race, sex, nationality, geography, and colonialism relate to gender and uniquely effect women. One question we'll consider is if and how the insights of white feminism and the critiques of people-of-color feminisms can work together to advance feminist initiatives as a whole.

Finally, in the last three weeks, we will consider the way philosophers have deployed feminist perspectives to connect problems of gender oppression with other areas of concern: the environment, animals, technology, science, genetics, and land. Through the lens of feminist new materialism and animal ethics, we'll see how feminist philosophy can help think through the intersections of oppression that shape not just women, but perhaps all of our relations with nature.

Throughout the term, we will grapple with broad philosophical questions such as: What does it mean to be a woman? What is a feminist or what is feminist analysis? What is the relationship between feminist theory and practice? And what can feminist philosophy uniquely bring to other areas of concern—like race, the environment, animals, ethics, and science? Rather than trying to answer these questions once and for all, we'll find meaning in different kinds of answers and from very different perspectives. I hope we discover that the plurality of our perspectives—and our ability to sit comfortably with multiple answers—is a unique strength of feminist philosophy.

### Course Goals:

- Gain exposure to feminist appropriations and criticisms of the Western philosophical tradition as well as debates within feminist thinking
- Become fluent in various approaches to feminist philosophy and get into the habit of reflecting critically on gender, sexuality, and related concerns

- Develop intellectual generosity and critical skills
- Develop written and verbal clarity in expression and rigor in argument
- Connect the problems raised in academic research and the problems as they exist in our everyday lives

### **Assignment Breakdown**

Participation:	80 points	20%
Reading checks:	40 points	10%
Journal Entries:	60 points	15%
Midterm Paper:	80 points	20%
Final paper prospectus:	40 points	10%
Final Paper:	100 points	25%

### **Participation (20%):**

*Attend:* You are expected to attend classes regularly and promptly. More than 3 absences will result in a grade no higher than a C. More than 4 absences will result in a failing grade unless proof of a medical or other emergency is provided.

*Speak:* We will be doing philosophy *together*. So it is imperative that you come to class prepared to actively and vocally engage the material in discussions and also to listen carefully to your classroom comrades.

*Read:* The classroom is a two way street. My commitment is to show up prepared to lecture and guide us through these materials and questions. Part of your commitment is to read the texts each week and come to class ready to raise questions and think critically. Nobody expects you to understand each reading the first run through. But putting in the effort is a minimum requirement. Note that the university policy is that for every hour a student spends in class, she is expected to spend two hours on coursework outside of class. That's a good bar for thinking through the time it will take to do these readings.

Sometime during weeks 5 or 6 I will provide you with a midterm participation update.

### *Participation Rubric:*

A – Misses no more than one class, consistently contributes to and brings the discussion to a deeper level, does not dominate the discussion or inhibit other students from participating, and does not use their cellphone in class

B – Misses no more than two classes, takes an active role in discussion with on-topic and thoughtful remarks, and does not use their cellphone in class

C – Misses no more than three class sessions, will sometimes participate in discussion, and is sometimes seen using cellphones or other technology without permission

D – Misses no more than four classes, participates in discussion infrequently, and uses cellphones and other technology without permission

F – Misses more than four classes, and/or is not a positive contributor in discussions, and uses cellphones and other technology without permission

### **Reading Checks (5 = 2% each or 10% total):**

There will be five random reading checks throughout the quarter. During a reading check I will ask you to show me the texts you have brought to class to make sure that you have highlighted, taken notes, written questions, or otherwise engaged in the material you've read. You will lose points if you do not bring the readings or if they are not marked up.

**Journal Entries (3 submissions = 5% each or 15% total):**

Throughout the course you will be assigned short, reflective writing assignments in class and as homework. These should be compiled into a journal that I will periodically collect. This means *you must bring your journal to class* so that you can engage in any in-class writing assignments. Thoughtful in-class writing responses may affect your participation grade.

*Journal Homework:*

You will turn in your journals three times during the term. Prior to each submission, you will write a personal reflection on one of the readings. In these reflections, you will *briefly* summarize one of the readings then discuss questions or concerns with the material, etc. You are encouraged to reflect on how the material relates to your own experiences. I may also ask you to complete additional *short* writing assignments depending on levels of engagement, how well I believe the class is grasping the material, and if a particularly intense or gripping discussion arises.

*Journal Rubric:*

A – Completed all entries, made thoughtful responses that referred accurately to specific details of the readings or discussion, demonstrated an effort to listen to classmates and understand the texts, expressed original thoughts on the topics

B – Completed most entries, made thoughtful responses that referred to the texts and readings, demonstrated an effort to listen to classmates and understand the texts

C – Completed some entries, made responses that were more general, at times engaged with the readings or class discussion, had vague or inaccurate responses to the text

D – Did not complete many entries, entries were too short and showed a lack of engagement with the course, inaccurate or vague responses to the texts

F – Missed numerous entries, entries were too short and showed a lack of engagement with the course, referred to texts inaccurately and demonstrated a lack of understanding of the texts or class discussion

**Midterm Paper (20%):**

The midterm will be 1200-1500 words long, **due at 11:59 pm on Friday, February 7 during week 5** on Canvas. More details on the paper will be provided closer to the due date.

**Final Paper (Prospectus + Paper = 35%):**

*Prospectus (10%):*

As this is an upper-level class, you will be expected to come up with your own argument for your final paper. To help you prepare to write, I would like you to submit a one-page prospectus that states the topic of your paper, the argument that you intend to pursue, and the resources you're going to use to prove your argument. The prospectus is due on Wednesday March 7 at 11:59 pm on Canvas. **Feedback on your prospectus is required before you begin your final paper.**

### *Final Paper (25%):*

The final paper should be 1400-1700 words long and is **due 11:59 pm, Wednesday, March 21** during finals week. Papers should be submitted on Canvas. More details will be provided.

### *Paper Grading Standard:*

A – Excellent. No mistakes, well-written, and distinctive in some way or other.

B – Good. No significant mistakes, well-written, but not distinctive in any way.

C – OK. Some errors, but basic grasp of the material.

D – Poor. Several errors. A tenuous grasp of the material.

F – Failing. Problematic on all fronts indicating either no real grasp of the material or complete lack of effort.

### **Accommodations for a Disability:**

If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please make arrangements to meet with me ASAP.

### **Email Etiquette:**

Please engage in proper email etiquette when contacting me or fellow students in the course. Note that it may take me 24 hours to respond to emails during the week and up to 48 hours to respond to emails on the weekends. I won't respond to emails I receive after 9 pm until the following morning except before a paper is due. I'll do my best to reply to you promptly. However, I won't respond to emails if the information you're requesting can be found on the syllabus or Canvas.

### **Academic Honesty:**

Plagiarism will not be tolerated in this course. If you are caught plagiarizing you will fail the assignment and fail the course. Plagiarism includes copying a classmate or instructor's work, using another person's writing as your own, failing to cite your sources accurately, using uncited secondary sources from the internet or elsewhere. To learn more about the university's plagiarism policy and how to avoid plagiarizing, visit:

<http://pages.uoregon.edu/tpayne/EG595/plagiarism.pdf>

### **Sexual Violence and Survivor Support:**

The UO is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic and dating violence and gender-based stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or experiences gender-based violence, know that you are not alone. UO has staff members trained to support survivors in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more: [safe.uoregon.edu](http://safe.uoregon.edu) or 541-346-SAFE.

### **Required Materials:**

*Composition Notebook* – for your journal; you must bring your notebook to class for in-class writing assignments

*Texts* – All texts are available on Canvas. You must bring a physical copy of each text to class with you the day we discuss it. I suggest you print them all out at the beginning and bring them in one big reader.

Please note that I reserve the right to change the schedule as necessary. Changes will be announced in class and posted on Canvas. You are responsible for being aware of these changes.  
***No computers, tablets, or cellphones without my permission.***

### **Unit 1: What Is Feminist Philosophy?**

**M 1/8:** Introductions and reading of Syllabus;

Sojourner Truth, "Ain't I a Woman?" (1 page – handed out in class)

The Combahee River Collective, "A Black Feminist Statement" (5 pages)

**W 1/10:** Iris Marion Young, "The Five Faces of Oppression" (26)

**M 1/15:** MLK Day – No Class

**W 1/17:** Tuana, "Reading Philosophy as a Woman" (11)

Alcoff, "Of Philosophy and Guerrilla Wars" (9)

**M 1/22:** Genevieve Lloyd "The Man of Reason" (16)

**W 1/24:** Val Plumwood, "The Politics of Reason: Toward a Feminist Logic" (33)

**\*\*First journal submission due in class\*\***

### **Unit 2: What Is a Woman?**

**M 1/29:** Beauvoir, "Introduction," from *The Second Sex* (16)

**W 1/31:** Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Construction" (12)

**M 2/5:** Heinämaa, "Woman: Nature, Product, Style" (15)

**W 2/7:** Lugones, "Heterosexualism and the Colonial / Modern Gender System" (21)

**\*\*\*\* Midterm paper due on Canvas at 11:59 pm on Friday, February 7 \*\*\*\***

### **Unit 3: Black, Latina, and Indigenous Feminisms**

**M 2/12:** Audre Lorde, "Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power" (7);

"Age, Race, Class, and Sex" (10);

"The Master's Tools will Never Dismantle the Master's House" (4)

**W 2/14:** bell hooks, "Feminism: A Transformational Politics" (8);

"Black Masculinity" (17)

**M 2/19:** Anzaldúa, *Borderlands* (selections) (50+)

**W 2/21:** Cherrie Moraga, "La Guera";

Lugones, "Purity, Impurity, Separation"

**\*\*Second journal submission due in class\*\***

**M 2/26:** Andrea Simpson, "Sexual Violence as a Tool of Genocide" (28)

**M 2/28:** Jaimes\*Guerrero, "'Patriarchal Colonialism' and Indigenism" (12);

Mishuana Goeman, "Notes toward a Native Feminisms' Spatial Practice" (18)

### **Unit 4: Science, New Materialism, and Animals**

**M 3/5:** Evelyn Fox-Keller, "Feminism and Science" (13)

**W 3/7:** Karan Barad, “Posthumanist Performativity” (24)

**\*\*Prospectus due on Canvas on Wednesday at 11:59 pm\*\***

**M 3/12:** Carol Adams, *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, chapters 3 and 4 (24)

**W 3/14:** Lori Gruen, “The Five Faces of Animal Oppression” (11)

**\*\*Third journal submission due in class\*\***

**\*\*\*\* Final paper due on Canvas on at 11:59 pm on Wednesday, March 21 \*\*\*\***