Course Description
If there is one thing everyone thinks they know today about the differences between men and women, it is that there is a distinction between sex and gender. Sex is a biological difference and everyone has one. Gender, on the other hand, is a difference that relates to psychology and social-identity. But where did the sex/gender distinction come from and how did it get to be our common-sense way of thinking about the differences between men and women? In this class, we will trace the philosophical genealogy of the sex/gender distinction, and feminist debates about the distinction. What were the political stakes of the distinction in early second wave feminism? How does the distinction help us to or prevent us from negotiating the divide between nature and culture, necessity and freedom? How and why did the distinction collapse in much feminist work after the second wave, particularly in poststructuralist and radical materialist feminisms? What have been the consequences? How and why have feminist phenomenologists resisted the distinction from the beginning? This course will help students develop a sense of the variety of feminist philosophical approaches to the question of sexual difference, to notice that there is not one singular feminist point of view, and to identify the often conflicting philosophical and political commitments at work in feminist appropriations of and elaborations of social theory, poststructuralism, materialism, psychoanalysis and phenomenology.

Please see “Statement on Academic Honesty” posted on the Blackboard Site.

Requirements
* Attendance of all class sessions. Close reading, on time, of all of the texts for the class as evidenced in robust and appropriate participation in class discussions. 20% of final grade.

  * An in-class presentation on one of the readings assigned, preferably one closely related to your final paper project. 20% of final grade. Guidelines will be provided in class.

  * A 4 page proposal for final paper. Guidelines will be provided in class. (Please respect the 4 page limit, proposals which go over the 4 page limit will be returned for editing.) Due by Thursday of Week 8. 20% of final grade.

  * A final paper on a topic of your choice, approximately 10 pages (fine to go over by a few pages if you need to). Guidelines will be provided in class. Due by Wednesday of finals week. 40% of final grade.
If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this class, please be sure I get a copy of the letter detailing the accommodations that you need! Thanks.

Reading Schedule

**Week 1**
4/3 Opening Class
4/5 Fine et al. “Plasticity, Plasticity, Plasticity…and the Rigid Problem of Sex” 2013 (2 pages)
Rogers, selections from Sexing the Brain, 2001. (46 pages)

**Week 2**
4/12 Stoller, selections from Sex and Gender: On the Development of Masculinity and Femininity. Date: 1968 (34 pages)

**Week 3**
4/17 Firestone “1: The Dialectic of Sex” and “10: Feminism in the Age of Ecology” Date: 1970 (30 pp.)

**Week 4**
4/24 Rubin (continued)

**Week 5**
MacKinnon, “Difference and Dominance; On Sex Discrimination” Date: 1984. (14 pp.)
4/29 Haraway, “‘Gender’ for a Marxist Dictionary” 1985. (21 pp.)

**Week 6**
5/8 De Lauretis, “The Technology of Gender” 1987 (30 pp.)

**Week 7**
5/15 Butler, selections from Gender Trouble 1990, pp. vii-xxxiii (26 pages)
5/17 Butler (continued) pp. 3-44 (41 pages)

**Week 8**
5/22 Soper, selections from What is Nature? 1995 (40 pages)
      Begin Moi, “What is a Woman?” 1999 (120 pp.)

Week 9
5/29  Memorial Day: NO CLASS
5/31  Moi (continued); Barad, “Posthumanist Performativity: Toward and
      Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter” 2003. (28 pages)

Week 10
6/5  Ahmed, “Imaginary Prohibitions: Some Preliminary Remarks on the
     Founding Gestures of the ‘New Materialism’” 2008. (16 pages)
6/7  Van der Tuin, “Response to Ahmed,” 2008. (5 pages)