

Humanities 3332-001
Introduction to Feminist Philosophy
FALL 2017

Instructor: Daniel Skibra

Time and Location: Monday 9:00AM - 12:00PM, Spertus-423B

Contact: email: dskibra@saiu.edu

Office Hours: Mondays 12:15 - 1:15 Lakeview building # 1008, or by arrangement

Course Description

This course is an introduction to feminist philosophy. While feminist philosophy continues to describe women's oppression and aims at theorizing strategies for women's liberation, feminist philosophy today addresses a multitude of theoretical and political concerns and encompasses numerous positions. The aim of the course is to trace some of the important developments in feminist theorizing to give students an appreciation for the formative debates in feminist theory, and for the ways in which gender and other social factors are of social and political consequence. Topics include the nature of gendered and sexual oppression; the interrelations of sex and race, class, sexual orientation, and gender expression, the problem of intersectionality, the distinction between sex and gender, and feminist topics in epistemology and the philosophies of science. Students will gain an appreciation for the multiplicities of feminist positions, and above all, for the important arguments deployed in these positions.

Course Objectives

Students will:

- learn to understand philosophical arguments
- develop their own informed views on the topics of study
- present the arguments of the philosophers and theorists as well their own views in clear prose
- subject both the views studied as well as their own to critical scrutiny.

Course Requirements

Assignments

Short responses (10 over the course of the semester): 25%

First Assignment: Paper 1 (3-4 pages) **due Oct. 30**: 25%

Final Assignment: Poster & Paper (5-6 pages) **due Dec 1**: 35%

Class discussion/ participation: 15%

You need at least a 68%/ C- to get earn a passing grade for this course. There are no extra credit opportunities associated with this course. All assignments for course credit are required as stated in this syllabus, and students should fully utilize all these assignments in order to successfully complete the course. Students requesting individual extra credit opportunities will be referred back to their copy of the syllabus and this course policy.

Notes on assignments

Resources for writing a philosophy paper:

- <http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>
- <http://www.public.asu.edu/~dportmor/tips.pdf>
- https://prezi.com/z4h1_fwilbxj/a-sample-philosophy-paper/

Course Policies

Attendance

You are required to attend the class meetings; attendance will be taken. However, I understand that emergencies arise, people get sick, and other factors may legitimately prevent you from coming to a particular class. Therefore, I will adopt the following attendance policy. Your grade will not be affected by up to **2** absences. You do not need to provide any kind of written excuse or justification for these absences (although you are welcome to provide them). However, more than two absences will begin to have an effect on your final grade, bringing your final average down by a third of a grade (approx. 5%) for each additional day missed. Since this class only meets once a week, and one meeting is 3 classroom hours, this is a very generous attendance policy, so it will be enforced. *If at some point in the term you expect to miss more than this (due to a serious illness, for example), let me know as soon as you can, **before** you accumulate the absences!* It will be your responsibility to distribute your absences however you see fit. My advice: try not to use them. You never know when something comes up.

Importantly, you are responsible for the material covered in class. Any slides presented in class will be made available on Canvas, but class time will often not be devoted to lecture, and material will not always be on the slides. There is simply no substitute for being in class.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

SAIC is committed to full compliance with all laws regarding equal opportunities for students with disabilities. Students with known or suspected disabilities, such as a Reading/Writing Disorder, ADD/ADHD, and/or a mental health condition who think they would benefit from assistance or accommodations should first contact the Disability and Learning Resource Center (DLRC) to schedule an appointment. DLRC staff will review your disability documentation and work with you to determine reasonable accommodations. They will then provide you with a letter outlining the approved accommodations for you to deliver to your instructors. This letter must be presented before any accommodations will be implemented. You should contact the DLRC as early in the semester as possible. The DLRC is located within the Wellness Center on the 13th floor of 116 S Michigan Ave. and can be reached via phone at 312.499.4278 or email at dlrc@saic.edu.

Writing Center Resources

Writing Center

Lakeview Building, 116 S. Michigan Ave., 10th Floor

writingcenter@saic.edu

312.499.4138

<http://www.saic.edu/academics/academicresources/writingcenter/>

Appointments

Schedule in advance: <https://www.supersaas.com/schedule/saic/WritingCenter>

Short-notice: Call 312.499.4138 to see if there are any openings

Hours

Monday - Thursday: 9:00 AM - 7:15 PM

Friday: 9:00 AM - 5:15 PM

Walk-in hours: Monday - Thursday: 4:15 - 7:15 PM

Auditing (Non-Credit Enrollment) Policy

All students participating in this course must be enrolled as credit-seeking students. Given the nature of the course, requests to enroll in the course as a non-credit (audit) student will not be approved. Participation in class activities by non-enrolled students is prohibited without advance, specific consent from the instructor.

Email/ Communication

The best way to reach me outside class is via email. However, give me 24 hours to respond during the week. If you email me after 5pm on Friday, don't expect a response until Monday morning. Most of the time, I will be able to respond to you sooner than this, but When there is a paper due, get all of your questions to be 48 hours before the due date.

I will answer *simple, specific* questions over email pertaining to the course material or the logistics of the course. I can also address simple interpretive questions you have with the material, or arguments you are trying out for your papers. To address anything more involved, you'll need to meet with me in office hours. (I highly encourage you to come to office hours in any event.)

Technology & Digital Devices

In this class, we will regularly engage in small group instruction and activities, as well as discussions with the whole class. Technology such as cell phones, tablets, and laptops easily become a distraction and create an obstacle to engagement during class time. For this reason, the policy of the class will be as follows. Do not use these devices during class time. Any lecture slides will be made available on the online course site, and any notes you might need to make should be taken by hand. There are two exceptions. First, if you have the need for such a device as an accommodation. (If you have a need for such a device, please consult the instructor.) Second, for class time that is dedicated to revising, editing, or peer reviewing assignments for this class, laptops and such devices will be allowed. I will make clear in advance when class time will be devoted to such tasks.

Participation

Participation in class discussion constitutes a significant part of your grade. You will be expected to attend class having done the readings and thought about them enough to discuss the arguments they make, to ask informed questions about them, and to engage with the other members of the class on these matters. Two expectations in service of these aims are worth making explicit. First, you'll need to be well-prepared, having read and thought about the assigned readings before class. Secondly, we will all need to foster a respectful, open environment where we can clarify, interpret and critically engage the philosophical issues dealt with in readings. Maintaining a respectful classroom atmosphere is crucial, and part of your responsibility.

Academic Misconduct

From the SAIC Student Handbook: "Academic misconduct includes both plagiarism and cheating, and may consist of: the submission of the work of another as one's own; unauthorized assistance on a test or assignment; submission of the same work for more than one class without the knowledge and consent of all instructors; or the failure to properly cite texts or ideas from other sources. Academic misconduct extends to all spaces on campus, including satellite locations and online education. Academic integrity is expected in all coursework, including online learning. It is assumed that the person receiving the credit for the course is the person completing the work. SAIC has processes in place that protect student privacy and uses LDAP authentication to verify student identity."

Specific procedures for faculty to follow in the case of academic misconduct are detailed

in the Student Handbook.

Additional resources for students:

- Read “Plagiarism: How to Recognize It and Avoid It” - a short guide prepared by the Faculty Senate Student Life Subcommittee in 2004.
- Read the Flaxman Library’s quick guide titled “AVOID PLAGIARISM.”

Required Texts

All the readings for the course will be posted on Canvas. You do not need to purchase any books for this class.

Course Outline

Part 1: Characterizing Identity and Oppression

Monday, September 4

- **Labor Day:** No class!
- **There are still reading assignments!**
Marilyn Frye- *Oppression* (9 pages)
Iris Marion Young- *the Five Faces of Oppression* (17 pages)
Sandra Bartky- *On Psychological Oppression* (11 pages)
- **ALSO:** Read over this (online):
<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/reading.html>

Monday, September 11

- **Readings:** Mary Wollstonecraft- Chapter 2 of *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (22 pages)
John Stuart Mill- Chapter 1 of *the Subjection of Women* (sections) (27 pages)

Part 2: Theorizing Feminisms

Monday, September 18

- **Readings:** Rosemarie Tong- Chapter 1 of *Feminist Thought* (“Liberal Feminism”) (read up to page 27) (16 pages)
Simone de Beauvoir- Introduction to *the Second Sex* (18 pages)
- **Optional:** *N.O.W. statement of purpose*

Monday September 25

- **Readings:** Friedrich Engels- Excerpts from *Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* (18 pages)
Heidi Hartmann- *The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: Towards a More Progressive Union* (33 pages) (read half)
- **Optional:** Susan Okin- *Vulnerability by Marriage*

Monday October 2

- **Readings:** Heidi Hartmann- *The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: Towards a More Progressive Union* (finish article)
Adrienne Rich- *Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Experience* (31 pages)
Monique Wittig- *the Category of Sex* (6 pages)
- **Optional:** Kathie Sarachild- *A Program for Feminist Consciousness Raising the Redstocking Manifesto*
Claudia Card- *Radicalesbianfeminist Theory*

Monday October 9

- **Readings:** bell hooks- Chapter 1 of *Feminist Theory from Margin to Center* (“Black Women: Shaping Feminist Theory”) (19 pages)
Audre Lorde- *Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference* (11 pages)

Monday October 16

- **Readings:** Emi Koyama- *the Transfeminist Manifesto* (15 pages)
Mari Matsuda- *On Identity Politics* (4 pages)

Monday October 23

- Readings:** Linda Alcoff- *the Problem of Speaking for Others* (29 pages)
Naomi Zack- *Can Third Wave Feminism Be Inclusive?* (15 pages)

Part 3: Topics in Feminist Philosophy**Monday October 30 PORNOGRAPHY**

- **Readings:** Catharine MacKinnon- *Pornography, Civil Rights, and Speech* (excerpt) (13 pages) Andrea Dworking- *Against the Male Flood* (20 pages)
- **Optional:** Catharine MacKinnon- *Only Words*
Nadine Strossen- *Feminist Critique of the Feminist Critique of Pornography*

Monday November 6

- **Readings:** Anne Eaton- *What's Wrong With the (Female) Nude? A Feminist Perspective on Art and Pornography* (32 pages)
- **Optional:** Anne Eaton- *Towards a Sensible Anti-Porn Feminism*

Monday November 13 THEORIES OF GENDER

- **Readings:** Judith Butler- *Performative Acts and Gender Constitution* (13 pages)
Sally Haslanger- *Gender and Race: (What) Are They? (What) Do We Want Them to Be?* (25 pages)
- **Optional:** Sally Haslanger- *the Sex/ Gender Distinction and the Social Construction of Reality*

Monday November 20 FEMINIST EPISTEMOLOGY

- **Readings:** Elizabeth Anderson- *Situated Knowers and Feminist Standpoint Theory* (10 pages)
Kristie Dotson- *Tracking Epistemic Violence: Tracking Practices of Silencing* (22 pages)
- **Optional:** Nancy Hartsock- *the Feminist Standpoint*

Monday November 27 FEMINIST PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE

- **Readings:** Helen Longino- *Can There Be a Feminist Science?* (14 pages)
Emily Martin- *the Sperm and the Egg: How Science Has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-Female Roles* (17 pages)
- **Optional:** Kathleen Okruhlik- *Gender and the Biological Sciences*

Monday December 4

- **Critique Week:** no class

Monday December 11

- **Catch Up Day:** We will almost certainly fall behind at some point. We'll use this day to catch up.