

## Course Outline

### Philosophy/Women's Studies WGS/PHIL 324

1. Title of course and number: Philosophy and Feminism; Philosophy/Women's Studies 3240

2. Description of the course exactly as in the WPUNJ catalog:

An overview of some of the issues and work done in feminist philosophy. Students read philosophy specifically by, for, and about women, and consider how this theory informs ethics, politics, and metaphysics, as well as our views of the world and the classroom.

3. Course prerequisites: PHIL 1100

4. Course objectives

The primary goal is to introduce students to feminist issues in philosophy and a variety of theoretical approaches to resolving those issues. The specific objectives are:

To enable the student to understand the historical development of philosophical feminist thought

To enable the student to understand the themes of feminist philosophy, such as the role of the family in political philosophy, arguments for sex equality, arguments regarding what equality and justice are, epistemological questions regarding whether gender affects knowledge acquisition, definitions of terms such as sex and gender, questions regarding definitions of personhood are or should be gendered, and applied issues such as abortion rights, equal pay, sexual freedom.

To enable the student to understand the methods of feminist philosophical thought, such as care, liberal, Marxist, materialist, existentialist, postmodernist and radical feminist theories

To enable the student to closely read feminist philosophical texts, which are difficult due to their theoretical complexity and their applied complexities.

5. Student Learning Outcomes:

The student should be able to demonstrate knowledge of the main lines of feminist philosophical thought from the 1700s to today and knowledge of the influence of early theorists on contemporary theorists.

The student should be able to define and discuss major feminist philosophical theories and compare their strategies.

The student should be able to identify main issues in feminist philosophy, including issues surrounding sexism, racism, heterosexism, classism and colonialism.

The student should be able to identify and analyze sexism in theoretical texts and in real life situations.

The student should be able to analyze, explain, and criticize key passages from important feminist philosophical texts.

#### 6. Topical Outline of the Course Content:

Week One: Introduction to Feminist Philosophy: How Feminist Philosophy Addresses Diversity

Week Two: Liberal Feminist Philosophy: Its Origins

Week Three: Contemporary Liberal Feminist Philosophy (Nussbaum, Pateman, Okin)

Week Four: Marxist Feminist Philosophy and Feminist Materialism

Week Five: Socialist Feminist Philosophy

Week Six: Radical Feminist Philosophy

Week Seven: Simone de Beauvoir and her Influence

Week Eight: Postmodern Feminist Philosophy

Week Nine: Feminist Ethics of Care

Week Ten: Racism and Feminist Philosophy

Week Eleven: Development and Feminism

Week Twelve: Postcolonialism and International Issues in Feminist Philosophy

Week Thirteen: Women and Violence

Week Fourteen: The Sex/Gender Distinction Redux

#### 7. Guidelines/suggestions for teaching methods and student learning activities

Lecture, discussion, group projects, presentations or debates are appropriate teaching methods.

8. Guidelines/suggestions for methods of student assessment (student learning outcomes)

Assignments may include weekly homework questions, journals, quizzes, exams, formal essays, presentations or debates.

9. Suggested readings, texts, objects of study

Gould, Carol. *Gender*. Amherst, New York: Humanity Books. 1997.

Hackett, Elizabeth and Sally Haslanger. *Theorizing Feminisms*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.

10. Bibliography of supportive texts and other materials

11. Preparer's name and date: Paula Rothenberg

12. Original departmental approval date: unknown

13. Reviser's name and date: Barbara Andrew, February 8, 2007

14. Departmental revision approval date

## Syllabus

### Philosophy/Women's Studies 324 Philosophy and Feminism

Office hours: MW 2-3:15 p.m.  
And by appointment

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This course gives the student an overview of some of the issues and work done in feminist philosophy. Readings from liberal, socialist, radical, psychoanalytic, postmodern, and postcolonial feminist theory will be discussed, as will issues such as race, class, power, sex and sexual identity. We will read philosophy specifically by, for and about women and consider how this theory informs ethics, political theory, and metaphysics as well as our world views and our views of the classroom.

#### **Required text:**

*Theorizing Feminisms*, edited by Elizabeth Hackett and Sally Haslanger (Oxford University Press, 2006).

This text is available at the university bookstore.

#### **Course Requirements:**

Course requirements include careful reading of assigned articles, class attendance and participation, one short, written assignment each week and three 5-7 page papers.

Students are required to bring their copy of the reading to class. Everyone should come to class prepared to 1) engage one another in dialogue about the reading, 2) ask questions about its meaning, and 3) reconstruct its arguments.

In addition to other controversial topics in feminist philosophy, this course discusses readings which are sexually explicit. If you are offended by explicit representations of sexuality, sexual orientation, race or gender, this is not an appropriate course for you. You are not expected to agree with everything discussed in class. You are expected to complete all required readings and other assignments, to take seriously the views of the authors and your classmates, and to act in a respectful manner towards your classmates, regardless of your disagreements.

**Each week** a one-page paper will be due on the reading. Topics, format, and evaluation criteria for longer essays as well as the homework writing assignments will be discussed in additional handouts and in class. Late work will be penalized.

#### **Final Grade:**

Weekly homework 25%

Each 5-7 page essay 25% (for a total of 75%)

Attendance Policy: If you miss more than four classes your final grade will be lowered by one full letter grade. (An "A" becomes a "B.") Being tardy or leaving early 3 times counts as one absence.

Academic honesty: All work submitted in this course must be your own and produced exclusively for this course. The use of sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrases) must be properly acknowledged and documented. Plagiarism is the use of five or more words from another person's writing. Plagiarized essays and homework assignments will be given the grade of zero.

\*If you have any condition, such as a physical or learning disability, that will prevent you from completing the assignments as I have outlined them please let me know within the first two weeks of class.

**Reading list**: This list is tentative. It is the student's responsibility to keep up with any changes. Reading should be completed by the date listed. All readings can be found in the textbook unless otherwise noted.

Jan. 17 Introduction to the course

Jan. 19 Read Young, "Five Faces of Oppression"

Jan. 24 Read Haslanger, "Gender and Social Construction"

Jan. 26 Read Wendell, "The Social Construction of Disability"

Jan. 31 Read Grillo, "Anti-Essentialism and Intersectionality"

Feb. 2 Read Collins, "The Politics of Black Feminist Thought"

Feb. 7 Read Narayan, "Cross-Cultural Connections, Border-Crossings, and 'Death by Culture'"

Feb. 9 Read Mill, "The Subjection of Women"

Feb. 14 Read Truth, "Ar'n't I a Woman?" and Beauvoir, "The Second Sex"

Feb. 16 Read Nussbaum, "Human Capabilities, Female Human Beings"

FIRST ESSAY DUE

Feb. 21 NO CLASS

Feb. 23 Read Schechter, "Social Change on Behalf of Battered Women"

Feb. 28 Read Sen, "More than 100 Million Women are Missing"

Mar. 2 Read Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins"

Mar. 7 Read Young, "Humanism, Gynocentrism, and Feminist Politics"

Mar. 9 Read Addams, "Women and Public Housekeeping" and Allen, "Who is Your Mother?"

Mar. 14 SPRING BREAK (NO CLASS)

Mar. 16 SPRING BREAK (NO CLASS)

Mar. 21 Read Gilligan, "Moral Orientation and Moral Development"

Mar. 23 Reading to be announced

- Mar. 28 Read Walker, "The Only Reason You Want to Go to Heaven..."  
and Ruddick, "Towards a Maternal Peace Politics"
- Mar. 30 Read Shiva, "Women's Indigenous Knowledge and Biodiversity  
Conservation"
- Apr. 4 Read Mackinnon, "Difference and Domination"  
SECOND ESSAY DUE
- Apr. 6 Read Mackinnon, "Desire and Power" and "Sex and Violence"
- Apr. 11 Read Goldman, "Woman Suffrage" and Lorde "Age, Race, Class and Sex"
- Apr. 13 Read Bartky, "Foucault, Femininity, and the Modernization of Patriarchal  
Power"
- Apr. 18 Read Frye "Willful Virgin or Do You Have to Be a Lesbian to Be a Feminist?"
- Apr. 20 Read Fraser and Nicholson, "Social Criticism Without Philosophy"
- Apr. 25 Read Butler, "Gender Trouble"
- Apr. 27 Read hooks, "Postmodern Blackness"
- May 2 Read Bordo "Material Girl"
- May 4 Reading to be announced
- May 11 THIRD ESSAY DUE BY 10:30 A.M.