

PHILOSOPHY AND GENDER

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Language of Instruction: English

Course Outline:

The aim of this course is to introduce students to the fundamental philosophical questions, problems, and concepts that arise from thinking about gender. Feminism and gender theory have not only been shaped by and given shape to a number of important philosophical issues, but also introduced new perspectives into traditional philosophical themes such as, for example, the mind/body and culture/nature divisions or the notions of identity and difference. This course will offer a panoramic view of these topics to allow students to develop the philosophical tools necessary to address current debates on gender identity, gender oppression and violence, and questions regarding sexual consent. No previous knowledge of philosophy is assumed or required.

The methodology of the course will be text-based. Readings will be assigned each week and discussed in class.

Breakdown of the Course Content:

1. Sex and Gender Identities
 - 1.1. Identity and subjectivity through the prism of gender
 - 1.2. Identity and difference: are we all equal or different and irreducibly singular?
 - 1.3. What is it to be a woman/man/x? Are we such a thing or do we become a such thing?
 - 1.4. The sex/gender distinction
 - 1.5. Sexuality and sexual orientation
 - 1.6. Gender trouble or beyond the binary opposition between the masculine and the feminine: queer theory
2. The Nature/Nurture Debate
 - 2.1. Essentialism versus constructivism
 - 2.2. Nature, biology and culture from the perspective of gender
 - 2.3. The mind and body division from the perspective of gender
3. Knowledge and Gender
 - 3.1. Is my gender relevant to what I know, can know or don't know?
 - 3.2. Situated knowledge
4. Ethics, The Social and The Political
 - 4.1. Ethics from the perspective of gender
 - 4.2. Gender violence and oppression
 - 4.3. Power and emancipation
 - 4.4. Theories on the political from the perspective of gender
5. Intersectionality
 - 5.1. Gender and Race

- 5.2. Gender and Disability
- 5.3. Gender and Religion
- 5.4. Gender and Ecology

Course Assessment Structure:

Students will be required to submit a midterm essay (50%) and a final essay (50%) on topics discussed during the class.

Selected Bibliography:

- Beauvoir, Simone de, *The Second Sex*, trans. Constance Borde, Sheila Malovany-Chevallier (New York: Vintage, 2011).
- Benhabib, Seyla, *Situating the Self: Gender, Community and Postmodernism in Contemporary Ethics* (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1992).
- Benhabib, Seyla & Cornell, Drucilla (eds.), *Feminism as Critique* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).
- Berlant, Lauren and Edelman, Lee, *Sex, or the Unbearable* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014).
- Butler, Judith, *Gender Trouble* (New York: Routledge, 1990).
- "Sexual Consent: Some Thoughts on Psychoanalysis and Law", *Columbia Journal of Gender and Law*, vol. 21, n. 2, 2011.
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- Crenshaw, Kimberlé, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics", *The University of Chicago Legal Forum*, n. 1 (1989), pp. 139-167.
- Fausto-Sterling, Anne, *Myths of Gender: Biological Theories about Women and Men* (New York: Basic Books, 1992).
- *Sexing the Body: Gender, Politics, and the Construction of Sexuality* (New York: Basic Books, 2000).
- Firestone, Shulamith, *The Dialectic of Sex* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1970).
- Fraser, Nancy, *Fortunes of Feminism: From State-Managed Capitalism to Neoliberal Crisis* (London: Verso, 2013).
- Gilligan, Carol, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982).
- Grosz, Elizabeth, *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994).
- Haraway, Donna, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective", *Feminist Studies*, vol. 14, n. 3 (1988), pp. 575-599.
- *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1991).
- hooks, bell, "Black Women: Shaping Feminist Theory", in *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* (Boston: South End Press, 1984), pp. 1-15.
- Lorde, Audre, "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House", in *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (Berkeley: Crossing Press, 1984).
- Mahmood, Saba, *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).
- *Religious Difference in a Secular Age: A Minority Report* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016).
- Millett, Kate, *Sexual Politics* (New York: Doubleday, 1970).

- Mollow, Anna, "Disability Studies Gets Fat", *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy*, vol. 30, n. 1, 2015, pp. 199-216.
- Nicholson, Linda, *Identity Before Identity Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).
- Rich, Adrienne, "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence", *Signs*, vol. 5, n. 4 (1980), pp. 631-660.
- Rubin, Gayle, "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex", in *Toward an Anthropology of Women*, ed. Rayna Reiter (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975), pp. 157-210.
- "Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality", in *Pleasure and Danger: Exploring Female Sexuality*, ed. Carol S. Vance (New York: Routledge, 1984), pp. 267-319.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999).
- Strathern, Marilyn, *Before and After Gender: Sexual Mythologies of Everyday Life* (Chicago: Hau Books, 2016).
- Pateman, Carole, *The Sexual Contract* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988).
- Warren, Karen J, "The Power and the Promise of Ecological Feminism", *Environmental Ethics*, vol. 12, n. 2 (1990), pp. 125-146.
- Wittig, Monique, *The Straight Mind and Other Essays* (Beacon Press, 1992).