

PHI/WSP 297: Philosophy of Feminism
Fall 2007

INSTRUCTOR:

Prof. Ishani Maitra, Department of Philosophy

Office: 529 Hall of Languages

Mailbox: 541 Hall of Languages

Phone: 443-5816

Email: imaitra@syr.edu

Office hours: Wednesdays 2:15–3:15p.m., and by appointment

CLASS MEETINGS:

Mondays and Wednesdays 12:45–2:05p.m. in 237 Sims Hall.

BLACKBOARD:

There is a Blackboard site for this course, which will be accessible from <http://blackboard.syr.edu>. Course documents (syllabus, class handouts, assignments, some course readings) will be available at this site. Please consult this site for announcements (including changes to the course schedule).

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course will explore the development of feminist theory, especially in the second half of the 20th century. We will focus especially on the following questions. What is (sexist) oppression? Why does it exist, and how is it perpetuated? What is the relationship between sexist oppression, and other types of oppression, including racist oppression, class oppression, and so on? What ought to be done about (sexist) oppression? We will look at a variety of theoretical and political perspectives on these questions. Additionally, we will apply this theory to some specific topics that have particularly engaged feminists, such as marriage, religion, sexuality, pornography, etc.

The aim of the course is to acquaint students with some key questions and debates in feminist theory, and to introduce some of the frameworks and concepts feminist scholars have developed to deal with these questions.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. Read the required pieces closely.

2. Regularly attend class.

Attendance in class is required, and essential for doing well in this course. If you miss a class, you are responsible for getting notes and handouts from that class.

3. Participate in class.

There will be plenty of opportunity during class time to ask questions, make comments, and respond to what I and your classmates say. Everyone is expected to come to class prepared to participate. I will attempt to make sure that the class atmosphere is such that everyone feels comfortable speaking up; if you feel that that is not the case, I strongly encourage you to come talk to me.

4. Complete the homework exercises.

Throughout the term, I will occasionally assign short homework exercises. These will usually be due at the beginning of the following class. These exercises will be graded with a \checkmark +, \checkmark , or X.

5. Write three papers during the term.

Each paper should be about 3-4 pages in length. Due dates for all papers are noted in the course outline below; please plan your semester accordingly. Prior to each due date, a list of possible paper topics will be handed out; you will be required to write on one of the topics on that list.

Papers must be typed or word-processed. Please keep a copy of each paper that you submit.

6. Take the final exam.

The final exam will be a take-home assignment. It will be handed out during the regular finals week, and you will be given a week to complete the assignment. The final exam will be cumulative.

GRADING

Class attendance and participation:	10%
Homework exercises:	5%
Three papers (20% each):	60%
Final exam:	25%

READINGS:

1. Required text: Elizabeth Hackett and Sally Haslanger, *Theorizing Feminisms: A Reader*, Oxford University Press, 2006.

This text is available at Follett's Orange Bookstore, in the Marshall Square Mall (which is not the same as the bookstore in the Schine Center).

2. Additional readings will be made available on the Blackboard site for the course.

POLICY ON EXTENSIONS

Everyone is entitled to exactly one (3-day) extension during the semester, on any assignment (EXCEPT THE FINAL EXAM). No other extensions will be granted. It is up to you when to use this extension, but please use it wisely.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

The following is Syracuse University's policy on academic honesty:

Syracuse University students shall exhibit honesty in all academic endeavors. Cheating in any form is not tolerated, nor is assisting another person to cheat. The submission of any work by a student is taken as a guarantee that the thoughts and expressions in it are the student's own except when properly credited to another. Violations of this principle include: giving or receiving aid in an exam or where otherwise prohibited, fraud, plagiarism, the falsification or forgery of any record, or any other deceptive act in connection with academic work. Plagiarism is the representation of another's words, ideas, programs, formulae, opinions, or other products of work as one's own either overtly or by failing to attribute them to their true source. (Section 1.0, University Rules and Regulations.)

Anyone in violation of this policy will *at least* receive a failing grade on the relevant assignment.

If you have any questions about what constitutes academic dishonesty, you should look at <http://www-hl.syr.edu/cas-pages/PromAcademicHonesty.htm>, and come talk to me.

TENTATIVE COURSE OUTLINE:

[Note: Readings marked *TF* are in the required text for the course. Other readings will be available from the Blackboard site for the course. The schedule of readings is subject to change; please be sure to keep track of changes.]

I. Introduction to the Course Monday, August 27

NO READINGS

II. Some Key Concepts Wednesday, August 29 - Wednesday, September 19
Monday, September 3 NO CLASS (Labor Day)

Readings:

bell hooks, "Feminism: A Movement to End Sexist Oppression"
Marilyn Frye, "Oppression"
Iris Young, "Five Faces of Oppression" *TF*
Sally Haslanger, "Gender and Social Construction" *TF*
Susan Wendell, "The Social Construction of Disability" *TF*
Trina Grillo, "Anti-Essentialism and Intersectionality" *TF*
Joanna Kadi, "Stupidity 'Deconstructed'" *TF*
Patricia Hill Collins, "The Politics of Black Feminist Thought" *TF*
Uma Narayan, "Cross-Cultural Connections, Border-Crossings, and 'Death by Culture'" *TF*
Linda Alcoff, "The Problem of Speaking for Others" *TF*

III. The Sameness Approach Monday, September 24 - Wednesday, October 3

Readings:

JOHN STUART MILL, "THE SUBJECTION OF WOMEN (CHAPTER 1)" *TF*
Sojourner Truth, "Ar'n't I a Woman?" *TF*
Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (Introduction) *TF*
Martha Nussbaum, "Human Capabilities, Female Human Beings" *TF*
Susan Schechter, "Social Change on Behalf of Battered Women: Reforming the Criminal Justice System" *TF*
Amartya Sen, "More than 100 Million Women are Missing" *TF*
Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color" *TF*

FIRST PAPER DUE MONDAY, OCTOBER 1, AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS

IV. The Difference Approach Monday, October 8 - Monday, October 22

Readings:

Iris Young, "Humanism, Gynocentrism, and Feminist Politics" *TF*
Sara Ruddick, "Notes Towards a Feminist Maternal Peace Politics" *TF*

Jane Addams, "Women and Public Housekeeping" *TF*
Audre Lorde, "Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power" *TF*
Carol Gilligan, "Moral Orientation and Moral Development" *TF*
Carol Christ, "Why Women Need the Goddess: Phenomenological, Psychological, and Political Reflections" *TF*
Alice Walker, "The Only Reason You Want to Go to Heaven Is That You Have Been Driven Out of Your Mind (Off Your Land and Out of Your Lover's Arms)" *TF*
Vandana Shiva, "Women's Indigenous Knowledge and Biodiversity Conservation" *TF*

V. The Dominance Approach Wednesday, October 24 – Wednesday, November 7

Readings:

Catharine MacKinnon, "Difference and Dominance: On Sex Discrimination" *TF*
Catharine MacKinnon, "Desire and Power" *TF*
John Stoltenberg, "Confronting Pornography as a Civil-Rights Issue" *TF*
Lisa Duggan, Nan Hunter, and Carole Vance, "False Promises: Feminist Antipornography Legislation" *TF*
Sandra Bartky, "Foucault, Femininity, and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power" *TF*
Audre Lorde, "Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference" *TF*
Marilyn Frye, "Willful Virgin, or Do You Have to Be a Lesbian to be a Feminist" *TF*
bell hooks, "Seduced by Violence No More"

SECOND PAPER DUE MONDAY, NOVEMBER 5, AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS

VI. Postmodern Feminism Monday, November 12 – Monday, November 19
Wednesday, November 21 NO CLASS (Thanksgiving Break)

Readings:

Nancy Fraser and Linda Nicholson, "Social Criticism without Philosophy: An Encounter between Feminism and Postmodernism" *TF*
JUDITH BUTLER, "GENDER TROUBLE" *TF*
bell hooks, "Postmodern Blackness" *TF*
Kate Bornstein, "Send in the Clowns" *TF*
Susan Bordo, "Material Girl: The Effacements of Postmodern Culture" *TF*

VII. Identity Politics Monday, November 26 – Monday, December 3

Readings:

Barbara Christian, "The Race for Theory" *TF*
Combahee River Collective, "A Black Feminist Statement" *TF*
Mari Matsuda, "On Identity Politics" *TF*
Dorothy Roberts, "Punishing Drug Addicts Who Have Babies: Women of Color, Equality, and the Right of Privacy" *TF*
Gloria Anzaldúa, "La Conciencia de la Mestiza: Towards a New Consciousness" *TF*

THIRD PAPER DUE MONDAY, DECEMBER 3, AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS

VIII. New Directions

Wednesday, December 5

Reading:

Nancy Fraser, "Multiculturalism, Antiessentialism, and Radical Democracy: A Genealogy of the Current Impasse in Feminist Theory" *TF*

Final Examination

Handed out: Friday, December 7 at noon

DUE: FRIDAY, DECEMBER 14 AT NOON
