

730:347 & 988:347: Philosophical Issues in Feminism
Fall 2008

INSTRUCTOR

Prof. Ishani Maitra, Departments of Philosophy and Women's & Gender Studies

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Office hours: Mondays after class till 5:00 p.m. (in Davison Hall), or by appointment

CLASS MEETINGS

Mondays and Wednesdays 2:15-3:35 p.m. in 210 Waller Hall

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will explore several issues having to do with the politics of gender and feminism in contemporary society. We will begin by discussing certain ideas and concepts that are fundamental to feminist theory, such as oppression, sexism, liberation, intersectionality, and others. We will then turn to feminist discussions of several topics that are central to the politics of gender today: work and family, sexual violence, pornography and sex work, body image and the media, language change, and multiculturalism. In each of these areas, we will be distinguishing the major questions, evaluating arguments for an array of feminist (and some anti-feminist) positions, and developing philosophical tools for assessing those arguments.

Prerequisite: One course in philosophy other than 01:730:101 or one course in women's studies.

SAKAI

There is a Sakai site for this course, which will be accessible from

<https://sakai.rutgers.edu/portal>. Course documents (syllabus, course readings, class handouts, assignments) will be available at this site. Please consult this site regularly for announcements, including changes to the course schedule.

REQUIRED READINGS

All required readings for this course will be available from Sakai or from the web. There are no texts to be purchased for this course.

RECOMMENDED READING

Jennifer Mather Saul, *Feminism: Issues and Arguments* (Oxford University Press, 2003).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Read the required pieces closely.

Some of the assigned readings are quite difficult. You must do each reading in advance of the class meeting in which it will be discussed in order to fully understand the lecture material. But additionally, you are also responsible for those parts of the readings which are not discussed in lecture.

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 from that class.

It is important that you arrive for class on time, and that you refrain from distracting behavior, such as chatting with neighbors, during the lecture. All cell phones, beepers, etc. must be turned off for the duration of the 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. Take the in-class quizzes.

The quizzes will feature short, generally multiple-choice questions on the reading(s) for the class meeting. No notes, readings, or other aids will be allowed. There will be at least twelve quizzes during the semester, all worth the same. The dates for the quizzes will not be announced in advance. Your total quiz score will reflect your top eight scores; the remainder of your scores will be discarded. There will be no make-ups for quizzes.

5. Do an in-class presentation.

I will ask you to pick a class meeting in which to do a presentation. The presentations should discuss the reading(s) for the meeting, but can also relate the readings to external material. In most cases, students will be presenting in pairs. Each student should plan to present for 12-15 minutes, including some time for class discussion.

6. Take the midterm and final exams.

The exams will include both short answer questions and longer essays. The due date for the midterm exam will be Friday, October 29 (not a class day). The due date for the final exam will be during the finals period, and will be announced later in the semester.

All written assignments must be typed or word-processed. You must keep a copy of each assignment that you submit.

GRADING

Class attendance and participation:	10%
In-class quizzes:	20%
Take-home midterm exam:	25%
In-class presentation:	20%
Take-home final exam:	25%

PLAGIARISM

You are responsible for making sure that none of your work is plagiarized. For Rutgers University's policy on academic integrity, including its definition of plagiarism, you can go to: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml>.

DISABILITY

If you have a disability, and require accommodation, please contact the Office of Disability Support Services at (732) 932-2848 as soon as possible. Also, please notify me if there is anything I should know.

COURSE OUTLINE:

Most readings are available from Sakai; the remainder can be accessed via the web. Readings for each class meeting should be completed before the meeting. In the course of the semester, readings may be added or deleted from this list. *Please be sure to keep track of any changes.*

Wednesday, September 3 Introduction to course

I. FEMINISM, SEXISM, AND OPPRESSION

Monday, September 8 hooks, "Feminism: A Movement to End Sexist Oppression"
Wednesday, September 10 Frye, "Oppression"

Monday, September 15 Frye, "Sexism"
Gould, "X: A Fabulous Child's Story" (http://www.trans-man.org/baby_x.html)

Wednesday, September 17 Jaggar, "Political Philosophies of Women's Liberation"

II. SEXISM AND RACISM

Monday, September 22 McIntosh, "White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming to See Correspondences through Work in Women's Studies"

Wednesday, September 24 Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color"

Monday, September 29 Lugones and Spelman, "Have We Got a Theory for You! Feminist Theory, Cultural Imperialism, and the Demand for 'The Woman's Voice'"

III. WORK AND FAMILY

Wednesday, October 1 Williams, "Deconstructing the Ideal-Worker Norm in Market Work"

Monday, October 6 Albelda and Tilly, "Women, Income, and Poverty: There's a Family Connection"
Allison, "A Question of Class"
(<http://www.historyisaweapon.com/defcon1/skinall.html>)

Wednesday, October 8 Okin, "Vulnerability by Marriage"

IV. SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Monday, October 13 Griffin, "Rape: The All-American Crime"
Wednesday, October 15 Estrich, "Rape"

Monday, October 20 Pineau, "Date Rape: A Feminist Analysis"

Wednesday, October 22 Smith, "Sexual Violence as a Tool of Genocide"
Friday, October 29 **TAKE-HOME EXAM DUE (NO CLASS)**

V. SEX WORK AND PORNOGRAPHY

Monday, October 27 Carter, "A Most Useful Tool"
Ericsson, "Charges Against Prostitution: An Attempt at a Philosophical Assessment"
Wednesday, October 29 Giobbe, "Confronting the Liberal Lies about Prostitution"
Pateman, "Defending Prostitution: Charges Against Ericsson"
Monday, November 3 Longino, "Pornography, Oppression, and Freedom: A Closer Look"
Wednesday, November 5 Duggan, Hunter, and Vance, "False Promises: Feminist Antipornography Legislation"

VI. BODY IMAGE AND THE MEDIA

Monday, November 10 Bartky, "Skin Deep: Femininity as a Disciplinary Regime"
Wednesday, November 12 Richards, "The Unadorned Feminist"
Monday, November 17 Hill Collins, "Mammies, Matriarchs, and Other Controlling Images"

VII. LANGUAGE CHANGE

Wednesday, November 19 Bodine, "Androcentrism in Prescriptive Grammar: Singular 'They', Sex-Indefinite 'He', and 'He or She'"
Monday, November 24 Cameron, "Making Changes: The Debate on Sexist Language"
Wednesday, November 26 **THANKSGIVING BREAK**

VIII. MULTICULTURALISM

Monday, December 1 Okin, "Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?"
(<http://www.bostonreview.net/BR22.5/okin.html>)
Wednesday, December 3 Nussbaum, "Judging Other Cultures: The Case of Genital Mutilation"
Obiora, "Bridges and Barricades: Rethinking Polemics and Intransigence in the Campaign against Female Circumcision"
Monday, December 8 Narayan, "Cross-Cultural Connections, Border-Crossings, and 'Death by Culture': Thinking About Dowry-Murders in India and Domestic Violence Murders in the United States"
Wednesday, December 10 Wrap-Up/Reading TBA