

PHIL 4352: PROBLEMS IN PHILOSOPHY: FEMINIST PHILOSOPHY
WS 4360: JR/SR SEMINAR: FEMINIST PHILOSOPHY

The University of Texas at El Paso

Semester: Fall 2015

Location: Old Main, Rm. 205

Times: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 3:00-4:20 pm

INSTRUCTOR: DR. CAROLINE T. ARRUDA

Office Hours:

- Tuesdays, 12:00-2:00; 4:30-5:30 pm
- Other times by advance appointment

Office: Worrell Hall, Room 306

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Feminist philosophy is a field of inquiry that challenges traditional answers to and proposes competing answers to central questions in a variety of philosophical subfields, such as ethics, political philosophy, epistemology, metaphysics, philosophy of language, philosophy of science, among others. It does so on the grounds that oppression and privilege, conceptions of gender, and women's lives deserve philosophical consideration and may change the way that we understand philosophical problems. This course will introduce students to the variety of views in feminist philosophy or it will focus on a particular set of philosophical arguments within one subfield.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

In this course, we will focus on the following questions. First, what are biological sex and gender and in what way are they related? Second, what is the relationship between gender and other forms of identity (e.g., race, class, sexual orientation, etc.)? Third, what constitutes oppression and how does it arise? Fourth, what sorts of issues arise when we consider our standard conceptions of knowledge, scientific inquiry and rationality from the standpoint of the oppression of women? Fifth, should we change our ethical theories to reflect feminist concerns about the status of women in modern society? Sixth, what should the political goals of feminism be? Seventh, how should feminism understand sexual orientation and does it share concerns with those who suffer oppression due to their sexual orientation?

LEARNING AND COURSE OBJECTIVES: The main objectives of this course are twofold: first, to develop your understanding of the various philosophical approaches to the questions noted above; second, to formulate your own, informed philosophical answers to them. To this end, the written assignments for this course are designed to allow you to explore various features of any one of the central questions of this course.

REQUIRED TEXTS

- 1) *Feminist Theory: A Philosophical Anthology*, edited by Ann E. Cudd and Robin O. Andreasen
- 2) Electronic reserves for this course.

SUGGESTED TEXTS

- 1) *The Cambridge Companion to Feminism in Philosophy*, ed. Miranda Fricker and Jennifer Hornsby

COURSE RESOURCES:

1. Blackboard site for this course
2. The Writing Center
 - Located in Library 227
 - Visit their website at:
<http://academics.utep.edu/Default.aspx?alias=academics.utep.edu/writingcenter>
3. Jim Pryor's "Guidelines on Writing a Philosophy Paper":
 - <http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>
4. Purdue University Library's Citation Guide:
 - <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/>
5. UTEP's Instructional Support Services Module "How to Avoid Plagiarism":
 - http://dmc.utep.edu/home/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=390:part-3-citations&catid=109:internet-research&Itemid=539

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES:

1. Any changes made to this syllabus will be announced in class.
2. If you contact me by email, I need *at least twenty-four hours* to respond.
3. If you want me to read a draft of a paper, I need *at least one week to provide comments*. I cannot accommodate poor planning.
4. If you want to set up an appointment for a time other than scheduled office hours, you will need to do so *at least three days in advance*.

GRADING:

- Class Participation: 8% of semester grade
- Argument summaries: 12% of semester grade, 1% per argument summary x 12 argument summaries
- Take Home Essay Exam #1: 20% of the semester grade
- Take Home Essay Exam #2: 20% of the semester grade
- Term Paper: 40% of semester grade

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS & REQUIREMENTS

CLASS PARTICIPATION:

Students are expected to complete the reading for each class meeting, and they must bring their books (or a photocopy of the reading assignment) to class. They will be called upon in class to answer questions about the reading and are expected to make thoughtful comments or to ask well-formulated questions. No question is too simple or naïve to ask! Students are expected to maintain a respectful demeanor in class, although they should feel free to criticize and question one another as long as it is done in a respectful fashion.

WEEKLY ARGUMENT SUMMARIES:

- You will write **twelve** argument summaries over the course of the semester.
- Your argument summaries **MUST** cover the readings that are designated for argument summaries in the schedule on this syllabus (see below). In most cases, this means that your argument summary for a given class meeting will cover **more than one** reading assignment. Your summaries should be divided accordingly.
- Argument summaries must:
 - **Be approximately 350-450 words in length per reading assignment,**

but no less than 300 words.

- Be divided or organized by article under discussion.
- Cover the designated assigned readings for that class meeting.
- Explain the basic thesis of the article, the claims used to support the thesis and the ways in which these claims support the thesis.
- Use clear, simple, non-technical language.
- Explain any complicated or technical aspects of the main argument.
- Define/explain technical terms in simple language.
- Summarize any other major arguments that the author discusses, such as refutations of competing views **WHERE SPACE PERMITS.**
- **NOT USE ANY OUTSIDE SOURCES.**
- NOT cover every detail of the article.
- NOT raise criticisms of the argument. Their function is to explain the argument.
- **Be uploaded to Blackboard by class time on the day that the article(s) in question will be discussed.**

Argument summaries will be graded on a Pass/Fail basis. If you meet the requirements above, you pass. If you don't, you fail. For the purposes of calculating your semester grade, this means that you either receive 100% or 0% on the assignment.

TAKE HOME SHORT ANSWER ESSAY EXAMS:

- You will write **two** take home short answer essay exams for this course.
- Please see the section "Directions for Accessing and Handing in Take Home Exams" on this syllabus.
- In addition to the specific directions for each take home exam, you will be expected to meet all of the requirements for a traditional essay, as specified in the "General Requirements for Writing Assignments" on this syllabus.
- The start dates (the dates on which the exams become available on Blackboard) and the due dates for each exam are listed on the schedule on this syllabus.
- The exams are as follows:

Essay Exam #1: You must write a minimum of **800 words per essay and you will write two essays.** This assignment is worth **20%** of the semester grade.

Essay Exam #2: You must write a minimum of **800 words per essay and you will write two essays.** This assignment is worth **20%** of the semester grade.

TERM PAPER:

For undergraduates:

You will write a **2700-3000 word term paper** for this course. See the schedule below for due dates. This paper will require that you do the following (**but please see the more detailed assignment directions posted on Blackboard**):

- Choose a topic from the list of assigned topics or obtain my approval for an alternative topic.
- **Read at least one *reputable***, academic sources on the topic (e.g., a recent journal article on the

- topic in an academic journal) and **include it in your paper.**
- Use the relevant assigned course readings in the paper.
- See the specific assignment directions under the 'Assignments' tab on Blackboard.

GRADING SCALE:

- A 90-100%
- B 80-89%
- C 70-79%
- D 60-69%
- F 59% and below

COURSE POLICIES

CLASS PROTOCOL AND CONDUCT:

- Students are expected to arrive on time to class. **Any students arriving to class more than 10 minutes late or leaving more than 10 minutes early will be considered absent.**
- Students must turn off all cell phones, iPods, etc. during class. If your cell phone rings during class, you will be asked to leave.
- Students are expected to refrain from chatting with their neighbors during class. If you do so, you will be asked to leave.

LAPTOPS, RECORDING DEVICES AND CELL PHONES:

- Using laptops, your cell phone (including text messaging), audio or video recorders or other digital devices during class **is prohibited.**
- **Lectures cannot be recorded** (except in individual cases where I have granted permission).

MAKE-UP POLICY:

- Students will be allowed to make up missed work, including quizzes, ONLY in the case of documented family emergency or illness.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS:

- I will deduct one letter grade for each calendar day that an assignment is late.

EMAIL:

- All class email correspondences will be conducted exclusively through our UTEP email addresses.

BLACKBOARD:

- We will be using the Blackboard shell for our class throughout the semester.
- If you have not done so, you should learn how to use Blackboard.
- I will be using Blackboard to post course materials, including the syllabus, essay topics and your grades for your assignments.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

- Attendance is mandatory.
- To account for emergencies, illness, among other possibilities, you are allowed **1 absence.**
- Any absence(s) after your allowed absence will result in the **deduction of one full letter grade from your semester grade.**
- If you miss **2 or more classes, you will fail this course.**

CENTER FOR ACCOMODATIONS AND SUPPORT SERVICES (CASS) :

- “UTEP seeks to provide reasonable accommodations for all qualified individuals with disabilities, including learning disabilities. This university will adhere to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations as required affording equal educational opportunity. It is the student’s responsibility to register with the CASS Office in the East Union Bldg., Room 106 within the first two weeks of classes, and inform the faculty member to arrange for appropriate accommodations.”
- The CASS Office can also be reached in the following ways:
Web: www.sa.utep.edu/cass
Phone: (915) 747-5148 voice or TTY
Fax: (915) 747-8712
E-Mail: cass@utep.edu

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

UTEP’s Policy: “Scholastic dishonesty (which includes the attempt of any student to present the work of another as his or her own, or any work which s(he) has not honestly performed, or attempting to pass any examination by improper means) is a serious offense and will subject the student to disciplinary action. The aiding and abetting of a student in any dishonesty is held to be an equally serious offense. All alleged acts of scholastic dishonesty should be reported to the Dean of Students for disposition. It is the Dean of Students’ responsibility to investigate each allegation, dismiss the allegation, or proceed with disciplinary action in a manner which provides the accused student his or her rights of due process.” See the Dean of Students office for further information at <http://www.utep.edu/dos/acadintg.htm> .

Students who violate the above policy will be reported to the appropriate academic office, may receive a zero or ‘F’ for the assignment in question and may receive a zero or ‘F’ for the semester.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS:

(IN ADDITION TO THE SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR EACH ASSIGNMENT)

- Essays should be written using a formal tone, must be edited for spelling and grammatical errors, and should include a clear thesis statement that answers the assigned question.
- Essays must make use of the relevant assigned course readings.
- *Reputable, academic sources* that are not part of the assigned reading list may be used (or, where required, must be used).
- **Some assignments for this course prohibit the use of outside sources. Please follow this requirement where applicable.**
- Essays must have internal citations and include a formal bibliography. Both MLA and Chicago Style formatting are acceptable.
- Essays must be double-spaced, have a 1-inch margin, and be written using a 12 point font. They should include page numbers in the bottom right-hand corner of the page.
- Essays must include a word count underneath the author’s name.
- Essays (excluding the in-class presentation) will be handed in on the Blackboard site for this course.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

Reading assignments are listed on the day for which they should be completed.

Key: -All reading assignments can be found in our reader unless otherwise noted.
(BB)= Article posted on Blackboard
*= **must be the subject of weekly argument summary**

SCHEDULE (provisional)

Week 1: Introduction

08/25: Introduction to the course

08/27: Introduction to Feminist Philosophy [Recorded lecture and handout on Blackboard; Dr. Arruda is away at a conference]

Week 2: The Origins of Feminism

09/01: "Of the Pernicious Effects which Arise from Unnatural Distinctions" by Mary Wollstonecraft *
[Recorded lecture on Blackboard; Dr. Arruda is away at a conference]

09/03: "The Subjection of Women" by John Stuart Mill *

[Recorded lecture on Blackboard; Dr. Arruda is away at a conference]

Week 3: Second and Third Wave Feminism

09/08: "Introduction to the *Second Sex*" by Simone de Beauvoir *

09/10: "Black Women: Shaping Feminist Theory" by bell hooks *

Week 4: What is Oppression?

09/15: "Sexism" by Ann Cudd and Leslie Jones *

09/17: "Five Faces of Oppression" by Iris Marion Young *

Week 5: What is Gender?

9/22: "Pre-theoretical Assumptions in Evolutionary Explanations of Female Sexuality" by Elisabeth Lloyd*

9/24: "Natures and Norms" by Louise M. Antony*

Week 6: What is Gender?

9/29: "Is Gender Essential?" by Anne-Fausto Sterling (**BB**)

10/01: [Catch up day]

10/01: Take Home Short Answer Essay Exam #1 available on Blackboard at 9:00 pm

Week 7: Feminist Conceptions of Autonomy and the Self

10/13: "Throwing Like a Girl" by Iris Marion Young (BB) *

10/15: "Autonomy, Social Disruption, and Women" by Marilyn Friedman*

10/16: Take Home Short Answer Essay Exam #1 due via Blackboard by 9:00 pm

Week 8: Feminist Conceptions of Identity

10/20: "Gender and Race" by Sally Haslanger *

10/22: "Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?" by Susan Moller Okin*

Week 9: Feminism, Epistemology and Philosophy of Science

10/27: "The Man of Reason" by Genevieve Lloyd *

10/29: "Feminist Epistemology: An Interpretation and A Defense" by Elizabeth Anderson *

Week 10: Feminism, Epistemology and Philosophy of Science

11/3: "Can there be a Feminist Science?" by Helen Longino *

11/5: "The Feminist Standpoint" by Nancy Hartsock (BB) *

Week 11: Feminism, Epistemology and Philosophy of Science

11/10: "Rethinking Standpoint Epistemology: What is "Strong Objectivity"?" by Sandra Harding *

11/12: [Catch up day]

11/12: Take Home Short Answer Essay Exam #2 available on Blackboard at 9:00 pm

Week 12: Feminism and Ethics

11/17: "The Need for More Than Justice" by Annette Baier *

11/17: Term paper topics become available on Blackboard

11/19: "Women and Cultural Universals" by Martha Nussbaum *

11/20: Take Home Short Answer Essay Exam #2 due via Blackboard at 9:00 pm

Week 15: Feminism and Political Philosophy

11/24: "Difference and Dominance: On Sex Discrimination" by Catharine MacKinnon *

11/26: No Class (Thanksgiving recess)

Week 16: Feminism and Political Philosophy

12/1: "Toward a Humanist Justice" by Susan Moller Okin *

12/3: In class discussion of term paper outlines (please bring an outline to class)

Final Exam Week:

12/9: Term papers due via Blackboard by 9:00 pm