

University of Guelph  
Department of Philosophy  
Fall 2013

PHIL\*2060DE Course Outline

Instructor: Dr. Victoria I. Burke  
Office Hours: MWF 10-11 AM  
Office Location: Appointments will take place in MacK 339 (office wing)  
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**Philosophy of Feminism**

Feminist issues are discussed in a wide variety of disciplines across the university, both in the social sciences and humanities, as well as in activist practice in the public sphere. *PHIL2060DE Philosophy of Feminism* will introduce students to the study of feminism specifically as it has been mobilized within the discipline of philosophy, and it will serve as both an introduction to philosophy and to feminist philosophy. In the 1980s feminists sought to draw attention to the gender bias of much of the history of philosophy. Feminist philosophers argued against the traditional privileging in theory of mind over body, for example, or the valuing of reason over the emotions. The first half of *PHIL\*2060DE Philosophy of Feminism* will examine some of these arguments, with readings that evaluate the classics in the history of philosophy with feminist concerns in mind. Often feminists have pointed out that the philosophers are not consistent with themselves when they make claims about feminine inferiority. In the course of examining how feminists have critically engaged Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Rousseau, Kant, Hegel and Nietzsche,

students will also be exposed to such elementary metaphysical distinctions as form and matter, appearance and being, substance and accidents, the eternal and the changeable, subjectivity and objectivity, and mind and body, as well as the political concepts of autonomy, equality and freedom. Today, many women in philosophy believe that the classics in the history of philosophy provide the theoretical tools necessary to advance the aims of truth and justice, not just for women, but for those who suffer oppression due to ethnicity, disability status or sexual orientation. Martha Nussbaum, for example, instead of criticizing Aristotle's alignment of the active male with form and the woman with passive matter, has used Aristotle's conception of flourishing to theorize disability rights as well as an alternative to distributive justice, the "capability" approach. Post-Hegelian theorists such as Foucault have been used by feminists to discuss the nature of oppression and gender difference or to theorize the category of patriarchy itself. Drawing upon the distinctions and categories we examine in the history of philosophy, we will proceed to issues within the recent philosophy of feminism, such as the idea of essentialism and the debates it has inspired. We will also devote significant attention to the contrasting "sameness" versus "difference" approaches to the pursuit of feminist justice in contemporary readings. We will also discuss the idea of domination itself. Readings will be drawn from queer theory, feminist theology, critical theory, legal theory and feminist epistemology.

**Required Texts:**

Haslinger and Hackett, *Theorizing Feminisms: A Reader* (Oxford UP, 2006)

Photocopy packet

**Course Requirements:** Students will be assessed on the basis of two Analysis papers (5-6 pages each), participation in the discussions, and a take-home Final Examination.

**Distribution:**

1<sup>st</sup> Analysis (1200-1400 words): 25%

2<sup>nd</sup> Analysis (1200-1400 words): 25%

Class Participation 20%

Final Examination: 30%

**Guidelines for submitting written work:** The essays must be typed single-sided and double-spaced (a cover sheet is not necessary—put your name and student number at the top of the first page and start the essay one quarter of the way down the page). Students must keep a copy of their work for their own files in case the paper should become lost. If the paper becomes lost (by the student, the Office of Open Learning or the Instructor), it is the student's responsibility to be able to replace it. Papers must be submitted to the course website dropbox by the 11:59 PM on the day of the deadline. For footnoting or citation style use Chicago Manual of Style, MLA Style, or APA Style. Any of the standard style sheets is fine, as long as you are consistent. I will post a style guide for your convenience.

**Gender Inclusive Course:** all genders and sexual orientations are welcome in this course. This is mentioned because in the past some male students have said that they did not sign up for the course because they felt that they would not be welcome.

## Course Schedule

### Unit I: Feminist Critiques of the History of Philosophy

#### WEEK 1:

September 5-15: Course Introduction: The Idea of Oppression

Reading: Young, "The Five Faces of Oppression," Haslinger and Hackett, pp. 3-15

#### WEEK 2

September 16-22: Feminist Critiques of Aristotle

Reading: Reading: Genova, "Feminist Dialectics: Plato and Dualism," pp. 41-52 (photocopy); McCumber, "Aristotle's Concept of *Ousia*," pp. 21-45 (photocopy); Feminist Critiques of Aristotle: Spelman, "Who's Who in the Polis," pp. 97-126 (photocopy)

#### WEEK 3:

September 23-29: Feminist Critique of Descartes

Reading: McCumber, "The Cartesian Relocation of *Ousia*," pp. 109-127 (photocopy); Feminist Critiques of Descartes

Reading: Bordo, "Purification and Transcendence in Descartes' *Meditations*," pp. 75-95 (photocopy)

#### WEEK 4:

September 30-October 6: Feminist Critique of Rousseau

Reading: Lange, "Women and Rousseau's Democratic Theory," pp. 95-116 (photocopy); Waters, "Women in Kantian Ethics: A Failure at Universality," pp. 117-126 (photocopy)

\*1<sup>st</sup> Analysis Due by end of 4<sup>th</sup> week

#### WEEK 5:

October 7-13: Feminist Critiques of Hegel

Reading: Benhabib, "On Hegel, Women, and Irony," pp. 25-43; Irigaray, "The Eternal Irony of the Community," pp. 45-57 (photocopy)

## WEEK 6

October 14-20: Feminist Critique of Nietzsche

Reading: Oliver, "Who is Nietzsche's Woman?" pp. 201-218 (photocopy)

## Unit II: Contemporary Feminism and Philosophy

## WEEK 7: Feminism and the "Sameness" Critique

October 21-27: Reading: De Beauvoir, "The Second Sex," Haslinger and Hackett, pp. 114-122; Nussbaum, "Human Capabilities, Female Human Beings," Haslinger and Hackett, pp. 124-139; Sen, "More Than 100 Million Women are Missing," Haslinger and Hackett, pp. 150-159; Nussbaum *Frontiers of Justice*, pp. 155-173 (photocopy)

## WEEK 8: Feminism and the "Difference" Critique

October 28-November 3: Reading: Young, "Humanism, Gynocentrism, and Feminist Politics," Haslinger and Hackett, pp. 174-187; Gilligan, "Moral Orientation and Moral Development," Haslinger and Hackett, pp. 200-210; nChrist, "Why Women Need The Goddess," Haslinger and Hackett, pp. 211-218

## WEEK 9: The Idea of Domination

November 4-10: Reading: MacKinnon, "Difference and Dominance: On Sex Discrimination," Haslinger and Hackett, pp. 244-251; Bartkey, "Foucault, Femininity, and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power," Haslinger and Hackett, pp. 277-290; Lorde, "Age, Race, Class, Sex: Women Redefining Difference," Haslinger and Hackett, pp. 292-297

\*2<sup>nd</sup> Analysis Due by the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> week

## WEEK 10: Essentialism

November 11-17: Reading: Stone, "Essentialism and Anti-Essentialism in Feminist Philosophy," pp. 135-53 (photocopy); Grillo, "Anti-Essentialism and Intersctionality: Tools to Dismantle the Master's House," Haslinger and Hackett, pp. 30-38; Fraser, "Multiculturalism, Antiessentialism and Radical Democracy," Haslinger and Hackett, pp. 459- 468

## WEEK 11: Epistemology and Language

November 18-24: Reading: Freedman, "The Epistemological Significance of Psychic Trauma," pp. 104-125 (photocopy); Alcoff, "The Problem of Speaking for Others," Haslinger and Hackett, pp. 78-91; Sedgwick, "Epistemology of the Closet," pp. 67-90 (photocopy)

WEEK 12  
November 25-28: Review for Final Exam

The final exam will be a take-home exam: due date TBA

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### **Bibliography for Photocopy Packet**

Benhabib, Seyla. "On Hegel, Women, and Irony." *Feminist Interpretations of G.W.F. Hegel*. Ed. Patricia Mills. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996. pp. 25-43. ISBN 0-271-01491-1; 352 pp.

Bordo, Susan R. "Purification and Transcendence in Descartes' *Meditations*." *The Flight to Objectivity: Essays on Cartesianism and Culture*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987. pp. 75-95. ISBN 0-887—6-411-6; 145 pp.

Freedman, Karyn L. "The Epistemological Significance of Psychic Trauma." *Hypatia*, Vol. 21, No 2 (2006). 104-125.

Genova, Judith. "Feminist Dialectics: Plato and Dualism." *Engendering Origins: Critical Feminist Readings in Plato and Aristotle*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994. pp. 41-52. ISBN 0-7914-1644-5; 247 pp.

Irigaray, Luce. "The Eternal Irony of the Community." *Feminist Interpretations of G.W.F. Hegel*. Ed. Patricia Mills. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996. pp. 45-57. ISBN 0-271-01491-1; 352 pp.

Lange, Linda. "Women and Rousseau's Democratic Theory: Philosopher Monsters and Authoritarian Equality." *Modern Engendering: Critical Feminist Readings in Modern Western Philosophy*. Ed. Bat-Ami Bar-On. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994. pp. 95-116. ISBN 0-7914-1641-0; 280 pp.

McCumber, John. "Aristotle's Concept of *Ousia*." *Metaphysics and Oppression: Heidegger's Challenge to Western Philosophy*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999, 21-45: ISBN: 0-253—33473—X; 338 pp.

McCumber, John. "The Cartesian Relocation of *Ousia*." *Metaphysics and Oppression: Heidegger's Challenge to Western Philosophy*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999, 109-127: ISBN: 0-253—33473—X; 338 pp.

Nussbaum, Martha. *Frontiers of Justice: Disability, Nationality, Species Membership*. The Bellknapp Press of Harvard University Press, 2006, 155-173. ISBN: 0-674-01917-2; 487 pp.

Oliver, Kelly. "Who is Nietzsche's Woman?" *Modern Engendering: Critical Feminist Readings in Modern Western Philosophy*. Ed. Bat-Ami Bar-On. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994. pp. 201-218. ISBN 0-7914-1641-0; 280 pp.

Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky. "Epistemology of the Closet". In *Epistemology of the Closet*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990. pp. 67-90. ISBN 0-520-07042-9. pp. 258.

Spelman, Elizabeth P. "Who's Who in the Polis." *Engendering Origins: Critical Feminist Readings in Plato and Aristotle*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994. pp. 97-126. ISBN 0-7914-1644-5; 247 pp.

Stone, Alison. "Essentialism and Anti-Essentialism in Feminist Philosophy." *Journal of Moral Philosophy*. 1.2 (2004) pp. 135-153.

Waters, Kristen. "Women in Kantian Ethics: A Failure at Universality." *Modern Engendering: Critical Feminist Readings in Modern Western Philosophy*. Ed. Bat-Ami Bar-On. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994. pp. 117-126. ISBN 0-7914-1641-0; 280 pp.

Books on Reserve at the McLaughlin library

Haslinger and Hackett, *Theorizing Feminisms: A Reader* (Oxford UP, 2006)

1 copy of the photocopy packet