

Philosophy 1540: Introduction to Feminist Philosophy

Spring 2024

Tuesday/Thursday

Dr. Milton Wachsberg Meyer

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Classroom:

Office hours:

Office hours: ZOOM

Topic for Spring 2024: Feminist Political and Social Philosophy: What is gender justice?

Issues to be discussed include: What is gender in a political theory? What is the nature of women's oppression and (how) does it differ from other forms of oppression? (How) can women in a contemporary liberal society still be oppressed? What would constitute women's liberation and what steps does it require? After constructing a theory of oppression to fit the peculiarities of the case of women the theory will be tested through the consideration of societal gendering of paid work, the body, sexuality, and other issues of interest to students.

Requirements

Two short papers with revisions after comments (5-6 pages, 35% each), a comprehensive take-home final examination or long paper on an approved topic (15%) and regular attendance at the class meetings and conscientious participation in its discussions and exercises via e-mail (15%).

Required Books

Bem, Sandra L., *The Lenses of Gender* (LG)

Frye, Marilyn, *The Politics of Reality* (PR)

MacKinnon, Catharine, *Feminism Unmodified* (FU)

Articles on CANVAS

Required books are available at the Penn Book Store

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS, READINGS, PAPERS and FINAL EXAM

January 18:

Introduction: Philosophical Method and Feminism

Alan Boyle, "The Case for Pluto"

Elizabeth Howell, "Should Pluto Be a Planet Again?"

Genesis 1-3

January 23:

Feminism and the Question of Women's Oppression

Wollstonecraft

January 25:

Gender: Biological Essentialism and Social Construction I

Bem (LG): pp. vii-ix; 6-23; 29-38

Pinker: pp. 343-351 (from *The Blank Slate*, Ch. 18 "Gender")

January 30:

Gender: Biological Essentialism and Social Construction II

Haslanger: "Ontology and Social Construction" pp. 1-10

Antony: "Human Nature and Its Role in Feminist Theory", pp. 63-91

February 1:

Gender: Social Construct., Anti-Essentialism and Intersectionality I

Crenshaw: "Intersectionality and Identity Politics: Learning from ..."

Grillo: "Anti-Essentialism and Intersectionality: Tools to ..."

Zack: "Can Third Wave Feminism Be Inclusive?"

February 6: **Gender: Social Construct., Anti-Essentialism and Intersectionality II**

Haslanger: from Resisting Reality, "Gender and Race"

Kirkland, "Feminist Aims and a Trans-Inclusive Def. of "Woman""

Jenkins, "Amelioration and Inclusion: Gender Identity ... Woman"

February 8: **Gender: Androcentrism I**

Bem (LG): pp. 39-43; 62-79

February 13: **Gender: Androcentrism II**

MacKinnon (FU): Ch. 2 "Difference and Dominance"

Anderson: "Feminist Epistemology: An Interpretation and Defense"

Paper Topic 1 assigned

February 15: **A Model of Women's Oppression: Analysis of the Concept I**

Frye (PR): pp. vii- 40

February 20: **A Model of Women's Oppression: Analysis of the Concept II**

Haslanger: from Resisting Reality, "Oppressions: Racial and Other"

Student Presentations: Examples of Androcentrism

February 22: **Oppression via Androcentric Definition I**

Frye (PR): pp. 52-83

February 27:

Oppression via Androcentric Definition II

Moulton: "Sex and Reference"

Lloyd: "All about Eve: Bias in Evolutionary Expls. of Women's Sexuality"

Langton: "Feminism in Epistemology" (from *Sexual Solipsism*)

February 29:

Objectification: Woman as Body

McGhan, Heywood, Torres, Edut and Damsky: (from *Adios, Barbie*)

Langton: "Autonomy-Denial in Objectification" (*Sexual Solipsism*)

Langton: "Projection and Objectification" (from *Sexual Solipsism*)

Brumberg: "Introduction" (from *The Body Project*)

March 5/7

SPRING BREAK

March 12:

Sexuality: Sex, Violence and Rape I

MacKinnon: (FU): Intro & Chs. 3, 6, 7 and Afterword

March 14:

Sexuality: Sex, Violence and Rape II

Pinker: pp. 359-371 (from *The Blank Slate* Ch. 18 "Gender")

Paglia: pp. 49-74 (from *Sex, Art, and American Culture*)

Langton: "Sexual Solipsism" (from *Sexual Solipsism*)

Paper Topic 2 Assigned

March 19: **Abortion: Womanhood and Bodily Autonomy I**

Pope John Paul: "The Unspeakable Crime of Abortion"

Thomson: "A Defense of Abortion" (sections 1-3)

March 21: **Abortion: Womanhood and Bodily Autonomy II**

Thomson: "A Defense of Abortion" (sections 4ff)

Little: "The Moral Permissibility of Abortion"

March 26: **Abortion: Radical Feminist Analysis**

Markowitz: "Abortion and Feminism"

MacKinnon (FU): Ch. 8

March 28: **Sexual Division of Labor I**

Okin, Chs. 7 & 8 (from *Justice, Gender and the Family*)

April 2: **Sexual Division of Labor II**

Bem (LG): pp. 176-196
Pinker: pp. 351-358 (from *The Blank Slate* Ch. 18 "Gender")

April 4: **Resistance: Law and a New Definition of Woman I**

MacKinnon (FU): Chs. 9, 10

April 9: **Resistance: Law and a New Definition of Woman II**

MacKinnon (FU) 15 & 16

April 11: **Resistance: Separation and Woman as a Positive Category I**

Frye (PR): pp. 95-109

April 16: **Resistance: Separation and Woman as a Positive Category II**

Frye: pp. 991-1010 ("The Necessity of Differences")

Haslanger: from *Resisting Reality*, "Future Genders? Future Races?"

April 18: **Resistance: Feminism and Lesbian Oppression I**

Frye: pp. 124-137 (from *Willful Virgin: Essays in Feminism*)

April 23: **Resistance: Feminism and Lesbian Oppression II**

Calhoun: pp. 199-218 "Separating Lesbian Theory from Fem. Theory"

Frye: "A Lesbian's Perspective of Women's Studies"

Final Assigned

April 25: **Resistance: Radical Feminist Sisterhood I**

Frye (PR): pp. 152-174

TBD

April 30: **Resistance: Radical Feminist Sisterhood II**

Frye (PR): pp. 152-174

Portrait of a Lady on Fire