

**PHIL 2500: GENDER, POWER AND OPPRESSION
INTRODUCTION TO FEMINIST PHILOSOPHY, WINTER 2012**

Course Director: A. MacLachlan
Office: S418 Ross
Office Hours: Tues, 3-5pm
Email: amacla@yorku.ca

Class Location: CLH J
Class Time: Tues, Thurs 1-2.30pm
Phone: (416) 736 2100 x77587

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is an introduction to feminist theory as a philosophical enterprise. In it, we take up the topics, questions and debates that have shaped the development of feminist philosophy, and which have been changed by feminist philosophy, in turn. Topics include the nature of sex and gender, the relationship between knowledge and emotion, the value of autonomy, political power and oppression, the gendered nature and origin of moral values, and the roles of sameness, difference and domination in political equality.

COURSE READINGS:

All course readings are available as links on the course Moodle site, or in the PHIL 2500 course kit, available in the York University Bookstore.

You are expected to come to class having read and reflected on the readings, and be prepared to respond and discuss the author's position, arguments and examples. I will clarify any confusion, answer your questions and guide our class conversations.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this course:

1. You will be able to identify, recognize and critically examine the key questions, topics, debates and themes introduced and shaped by feminist philosophy, and to identify key thinkers associated with those theories. You will also be able to identify ways in which *feminist* philosophers and philosophies have challenged and changed traditional philosophical questions.
2. You will be able to think imaginatively and critically about the relationships between philosophical theories, feminist theories, and gender politics, and you will be able to apply that thinking to concrete topics.
3. You will develop basic reading and comprehension skills in philosophy: namely, the ability to read a philosophy text carefully, to identify the author's position, and to identify and evaluate the arguments she uses to support them.
4. You will develop basic analytic and communicative skills in philosophy; these include the ability to form a thesis statement, to support it with your own arguments and to defend it against possible objections, within a short essay format.

York students are required to maintain high standards of academic integrity and are subject to the Senate Policy on Academic Honesty:

(<http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/legislation/senate/acadhone.htm>)

Students are also expected to review the materials on the Academic Integrity website.

(<http://www.yorku.ca/academicintegrity>).

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COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

There are six components to your course assessment in PHIL 2500:

a) Take-Home Paper #1: (15% of final grade)
A critical response to an assigned reading, guided by a series of critical questions (listed on your assignment, which is available on the course Moodle website). 2-3 pages double-spaced; Due **January 26** by the beginning of class. Submit through turnitin.com on Moodle.

b) Midterm In-Class Test: (20% of final grade)
Held in-class on **February 16**, 75 minutes. Format: definitions, fill-in-the-blank, short answers.

c) Take-Home Paper #2: (15% of final grade)
Paper topics and specific instructions will be given out on **February 16**. 3-5 pages double-spaced; due **March 15** by the beginning of class. Submit through turnitin.com on Moodle.

d) Take-Home Assignment: (10% of final grade)
You will be asked to find a newspaper, magazine or blog article and write a short analysis applying what you have learned in this course, following a series of critical questions. Detailed instructions and more information will be provided in class by **March 8**. Due **March 29** (hard copy only) by the beginning of class.

e) Final Exam (30% of final grade)
Date and time TBA. Do not make *any* travel plans or book flights during the exam period (April 4-20) until you have confirmed the dates of your final exams.

f) Attendance & Participation: (10% of final grade)
This includes your attendance, your respectful and engaged verbal contributions to class discussion and group work (this is a matter of quality, and *not* quantity, of contributions) and *especially*, your participation in our class's online discussion forums. If you feel uncomfortable speaking in a classroom setting, coming to office hours and pertinent email inquiries (again, quality not quantity, please) will also count toward your grade.

Late work (or a missed test) will only be accepted without penalty if you have prior approval from me, or in the event of a documented emergency. All other work will be penalized at a rate of 3% per day. After 5 days it will not be accepted.

Last date to drop classes without receiving a grade: March 9.

Note: to succeed in PHIL 2500, you do not need hold a particular set of political, moral or philosophical views, but you *are* expected to defend the views you hold with reasoned, open-minded argument. You are also expected to respect and consider the views of others, and to treat them with respect, at all times.

While weekly readings will be covered in class lecture and discussion, you will need to cover them carefully on your own – before and after class – in order to do well on your test, assignments and exam.

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SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READINGS

Date:	Topic:	Background Reading/Resources (to be completed <i>before</i> class that day)
3/1	Introduction to the Course AND Feminist Philosophy: Origins I	Mary Wollstonecraft, "Of the Pernicious Effects which Arise from the Unnatural Distinctions Established in Society" Ch 9, <i>Vindication of the Rights of Women</i> http://etext.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/WolVind.html
5/1	Feminist Philosophy: Origins II	John Stuart Mill, Ch 1, <i>The Subjection of Women</i> http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mill-john-stuart/1869/subjection-women/ch01.htm Harriet Taylor Mill, "Enfranchisement of Women" (Excerpt) http://womhist.alexanderstreet.com/awrm/doc15.htm bell hooks, "Feminism: A Movement to End Sexist Oppression (Excerpt)" http://mcc.osu.edu/posts/documents/sexism-bhooks.pdf
10/1	Sex and Gender	Simone de Beauvoir, Introduction to <i>The Second Sex</i> http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/ethics/de-beauvoir/2nd-sex/introduction.htm Monique Wittig, "One is Not Born a Woman" ecmd.nju.edu.cn/UploadFile/17/8012/bornwoman.doc
12/1	Sex and Gender	Sally Haslanger, "Gender and Race: (What) Are They? (What) Do We Want Them To Be?" http://www.mit.edu/~shaslang/papers/WIGRnous.pdf
17/1	Oppression & Resistance	Marilyn Frye, "Oppression" http://feministtheoryreadinggroup.wordpress.com/2010/11/23/marilyn-frye-the-politics-of-reality-oppression/
19/1	Oppression & Resistance	Audre Lorde, "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House" http://radicalprofeminist.blogspot.com/2010/03/radical-feminist-audre-lordes-famous.html Peggy McIntosh, "White Privilege and Male Privilege" http://www.iub.edu/~tchsotl/part2/McIntosh%20White%20Privilege.pdf
24/1	Oppression & Resistance	Maria Lugones, "Playfulness, 'World'-Travelling, and Loving Perception" <i>Hypatia</i> 2:2 (1987) available through YorkU library (Moodle)
26/1	Intersections I: Gender & Race	Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Colour" <i>Stanford Law Review</i> 43:6 (1991) available through YorkU library (Moodle)
31/1	Intersections I: Gender & Race	Elizabeth Spelman, "Gender & Race: The Ampersand Problem in Feminist Thought" (course kit)

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2/2	Intersections II: Sexualities	Adrienne Rich, "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence" <i>Journal of Women's History</i> 15:3 (2003) available through YorkU library (Moodle)
7/2	Intersections II: Sexualities	Chris Cuomo, "Claiming the Right to be Queer" (course kit)
9/2	Intersections III: Abilities	Shelley Tremain, "The Government of Disability" <i>Social Theory and Practice</i> 27:4 (2001) available through YorkU library (Moodle)
14/2	Intersections IV	Ann Ferguson, "Can I Choose Who I Am? And How Would That Empower Me? Gender, Race, Identities and the Self" (course kit)
16/2	<i>In-Class Test</i> <i>Reading Week: No Class</i>	<i>None</i> <i>None</i>
28/2	Feminist Epistemologies	Genevieve Lloyd, "The Man of Reason" <i>Metaphilosophy</i> 10:1 (1979) available through YorkU library (Moodle)
1/3	Feminist Epistemologies	Alison Jaggar, "Love and Knowledge: Emotion in Feminist Epistemology" <i>Inquiry</i> 32:2 (1989) available through YorkU library (Moodle)
6/3	Feminist Epistemologies	Lorraine Code, "Taking Subjectivity into Account" (course kit)
8/3	Feminist Epistemologies	Uma Narayan, "The Project of Feminist Epistemology: Perspectives from a Nonwestern Feminist" http://publish.uwo.ca/~jbaxter6/narayan_non-western_feminism.pdf
13/3	Feminist Ethical Theories	Carol Gilligan, "Moral Orientation and Moral Development" (course kit) Virginia Held, "Taking Care: Care as Practice and Value" (course kit)
15/3	Feminist Ethical Theories	Marilyn Friedman, "Autonomy, Social Disruption, and Women" (course kit)
20/3	Feminist Ethical Theories	Eva Feder Kittay, "Taking Dependency Seriously: The Family and Medical Leave Act, Dependency Work, and Gender Equality" <i>Hypatia</i> 10:1 (1995) available through YorkU library (Moodle)
22/3	Feminist Political Philosophies	Susan Moller Okin, "Towards a Humanist Justice" (course kit)
27/3	Feminist Political Philosophies	Iris Marion Young, "Difference and Social Policy: Reflections in the Context of Social Movements" (course kit)
29/3	Feminist Political Philosophies	Catherine MacKinnon, "Difference & Dominance" (course kit)