

**PHIL 6190: TOPICS IN FEMINIST PHILOSOPHY**  
**FEMINIST PHILOSOPHY AND THE POLITICS OF NEGATIVE AFFECT**

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Class Location: Ross South 501  
Class Time: Th 11.30am-2.30pm  
Office Hours: M, Th 2.30-3.30pm  
\*Email is the best way to reach me. I will respond within 48 hours\*

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Feminist philosophers have played an important role in drawing philosophical attention to the epistemological, moral, and political significance of emotion. When we turn our attention to contexts of wrongdoing, injustice, and oppression, reactive attitudes such as anger and resentment, guilt and shame become especially salient. Relevant philosophical questions include: what is the nature and moral valence of these reactive attitudes – and what insights do feminist approaches add to our understanding of them? What role do emotions of anger, guilt, and shame play in how we understand, navigate, and respond to wrongdoing? How is their expression and uptake structured by practices of sexism, racism, and other forms of oppression?

This course will deepen our understandings of feminist philosophy of the emotions, as well as feminist moral psychology. Topics covered will include anger and resentment, contempt, guilt and shame, as well as the dynamics of calling out and apologizing, and affective practices of ally-ship and solidarity.

**COURSE READINGS:** All required readings are listed in the schedule at the back of this syllabus. These include journal articles and book chapters by Sarah Ahmed, Macalester Bell, Sue Campbell, Lorraine Code, Alison Jaggar, Martha Nussbaum, and Alexis Shotwell, among others. I also reserve the right to do some minor rearranging or switching up as we go along.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

**1. Discussion Questions (8%) and Class Participation (7%)**

You will each be required to post a discussion question to the group, via email, no later than 5pm the day before each class (i.e. Wednesday evenings). You should include a brief introduction to your question when you post it (1-2 sentences), and will be sometimes expected to say a few remarks to frame it for the class when we meet. These will not be evaluated – so don't feel too much pressure – but keep in mind (a) that we may use your question as a basis for some of our class discussion each week, and (b) you will lose 1/8 whenever you either do not post by **5PM** the day before we meet or when you do not show up to class to present your question (we may not get to your question every week, but you should be ready in case we do). You should post 8 discussion questions in total, before 8 different classes (you get two passes and the first class & last class don't count).

**2. Response Papers/Seminar Presentation (20%)**

a) Option A: You will be required to further develop *two* of your discussion questions into critical responses to the reading, drawing on your original analysis and on subsequent class conversation, and to hand these in within one week (by the beginning of the subsequent week's class). These responses should be 7-8 typed (12pt font, 1 inch margins), double-spaced pages and should further develop and follow through on your original challenge, by reflecting carefully on the material and class discussion.

**OR**

b) Option B: If you prefer, you can choose to submit only *one* critical response paper and, in addition, give one seminar presentation (of no more than 15 minutes) to the class. This presentation should be treated like an extended version of the discussion question, introducing the class to the topic/reading, and then choosing to focus on one aspect of it and developing a critical analysis from that. The goal of your presentation is to provoke class discussion. If you choose to take this option, you must inform me by the beginning of our **SECOND** class (Thursday, January 15) and we will choose a date/topic.

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**3. Final Paper (in three parts) (65%)**

**a) Paper Topic DUE MARCH 19 (10%)**

This component has two parts: a presentation, and an electronic submission. You should come to class on **March 19** ready to present your choice of paper topic (the general area or question you will be tackling, the shape your thesis is taking, the direction you see your research going, etc.) and be ready to voice concerns or questions you have going forward. This presentation should take no more than 5-7 minutes. You will also be encouraged to comment productively on other people's short presentations (with respect, enthusiasm and constructive engagement) and your contributions will be part of your grade. Additionally, you will be required to submit a written version of this, electronically, by 5pm the night before that class (i.e. **March 18**) to me, only.

**b) Thesis Statement, Outline and Annotated Bibliography DUE APRIL 2 (15%)**

You will present your paper as a work in progress a second time, on **April 2** (our last class). This will be something closer to a short conference presentation (i.e. a poster presentation without the poster): identifying your thesis, outlining your argument and explaining who or what you draw on for support, and then gesturing towards the kind of conclusions you hope to draw, and why you think they are significant or of interest. Your presentation should be focused and *succinct*. You should also be prepared to answer questions from classmates about your paper and to ask questions of others, and you should prepare a **handout** to assist your classmates. And, again, you will be expected to hand in a written version of this presentation (i.e. your thesis, your outline and an annotated bibliography explaining your sources) along with your handout, by 5pm the night before class (i.e. **April 2**).

**c) Complete Draft of your Final Paper DUE APRIL 16 (40%)**

A complete draft of your paper (approximately 4000-7000 words) is due via email by **5pm, April 16**. You should aspire to write a paper that will ultimately be suitable for submission to an academic conference or journal (I'm happy to speak with you more about this). An abstract (150-250 words) must be included. Please indicate if you intend to submit your paper to a journal, and I will gear my comments to potential revisions. I will also read and comment on a revised version of your paper.

**OTHER COURSE POLICIES:**

Please submit electronic and *not* paper copies of all your work (in .doc or .docx format, please). Late work 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.

I aspire to provide a classroom and course environment that meets the needs of all students, and which enhances your studies and your research. If you face circumstances that will impair or disrupt your contributions to this seminar or if you have concerns about the course requirements and your learning needs, please speak to me as soon as possible.

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.

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**SCHEDULE OF CLASSES, TOPICS, AND READINGS FOR PHIL 6505**

| Date: | Topic:                              | Required Readings:   | Further Readings:  |
|-------|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| 8/1   | <i>Introduction to the Course</i>   | <i>No Required Readings</i>  | <p>1. Ronald de Sousa, Stanford Encyclopedia, <i>Emotion</i><br/><a href="http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/emotion/">http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/emotion/</a></p> <p>2. Margaret Walker, "Moral Psychology," <i>The Blackwell Guide to Feminist Philosophy</i>, pp. 102-115.</p>  |
| 15/1  | Feminist Philosophies of Emotion I  | <p>1. Alison Jaggar, "Love and Knowledge: Emotion in Feminist Epistemology," <i>Inquiry: An interdisciplinary journal of philosophy</i>. 32:2 pp. 151-176.</p> <p>2. Margaret Olivia Little, "Seeing and Caring: The Roles of Affect in Feminist Moral Epistemology," <i>Hypatia</i> 10:3 117-37.</p>  | <p>3. Leslie Brody &amp; Judith Hall, "Gender and Emotion in Context," <i>Handbook of Emotions</i> 3<sup>rd</sup>. ed. pp. 395-408.</p> <p>4. Catherine Lutz, "Emotions and Feminist Theories".<br/><a href="http://www.zefg.fu-berlin.de/media/pdf/querelles_jahrbuchaufsatz5.pdf">http://www.zefg.fu-berlin.de/media/pdf/querelles_jahrbuchaufsatz5.pdf</a></p> <p>5. Patricia Greenspan, "A Case of Mixed Feeling: Ambivalence and the Logic of Emotion," <i>Exploring Emotions</i> pp. 223-50.</p> |
| 22/1  | Feminist Philosophies of Emotion II | <p>1. Sue Campbell, "Being Dismissed: The Politics of Emotional Expression" <i>Hypatia</i> 9:3 pp. 46-65.</p> <p>2. Maria Lugones, "Playfulness, 'World-Travelling' and Loving Perception" <i>Hypatia</i> 2:2 pp. 3-19.</p>  | <p>3. Annette Baier, "Feelings that Matter," <i>Reflections on How We Live</i> pp. 157-172.</p> <p>4. Cheshire Calhoun, "Emotional Work," <i>Explorations in Feminist Ethics</i> pp. 117-22.</p>   |
| 29/1  | Reactive Attitudes I: Anger         | <p>1. Audre Lorde, "The Uses of Anger: Women Responding to Racism," <i>Sister Outsider</i>, pp. 124-33.</p> <p>2. Maria Lugones, "Hard to Handle Anger," <i>Overcoming Sexism and Racism</i>, pp. 203-18.</p> <p>3. Lisa Tessman, "The Burden of Political Resistance," <i>Burdened Virtues: Virtue Ethics for Liberatory Struggles</i> pp.107-132</p> | <p>4. Marilyn Frye, "A Note on Anger," <i>The Politics of Reality</i> pp. 84-94.</p> <p>5. Bernadette Hartfield, "A Response to Maria Lugones' 'Hard to Handle Anger'," <i>Overcoming Sexism and Racism</i>, pp. 219-226</p> <p>6. Elizabeth Spelman, "Anger and Insubordination," <i>Women, Knowledge and Reality</i>, pp. 263-74.</p>  |

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| 5/2  | Reactive Attitudes II: Resentment               | <p>1. Margaret Walker, "Resentment and Assurance," <i>Moral Repair: Reconstructing Moral Relations after Wrongdoing</i> pp. 110-50</p> <p>2. Alice MacLachlan, "Unreasonable Resentments," <i>Journal of Social Philosophy</i> 41:4 422-441</p> <p>3. Saba Fatima, "Presence of Mind: A Political Posture," <i>Social Philosophy Today</i> 28: 131-146</p> | <p>4. Katie Stockdale, "Collective Resentment," <i>Social Theory and Practice</i> 39:3 501-521.</p> <p>5. Macalester Bell, "Anger, Virtue and Oppression," <i>Feminist Ethics and Social and Political Philosophy: Theorizing the Non-Ideal</i> pp. 165-184.</p>                  |
| 12/2 | Reactive Attitudes III: Contempt and Bitterness | <p>1. Macalester Bell, "A Woman's Scorn: Toward a Feminist Defense of Contempt as a Moral Emotion," <i>Hypatia</i> 20:4 pp. 80-93.</p> <p>2. Lynne McFall, "What's Wrong with Bitterness," <i>Feminist Ethics</i> pp. 146-60.</p>  | <p>3. Robin Dillon, "Critical Character Theory: Feminist Perspectives on 'Vice' (and 'Virtue')," <i>Out from the Shadows: Analytic Feminist Contributions to Traditional Philosophy</i>, pp. 83-107.</p> <p>4. Barrett Emerick, "On Not Turning Away from Hurt" (unpublished)</p> |
| 19/2 | Reading Week                                    | None   | None  |
| 26/2 | Reactive Attitudes IV: Guilt                    | <p>1. Sandra Bartky, "In Defense of Guilt," <i>Feminist Ethics</i> pp. 29-51.</p> <p>2. Alexis Shotwell, "Negative Affect and Whiteness," <i>Knowing Otherwise: Race, Gender, and Implicit Understanding</i> pp. 73-97.</p>  | <p>3. Patricia Greenspan, "Moral Residues" <i>Practical Guilt: Moral Dilemmas, Emotions, and Social Norms</i> pp. 109-50.</p>   |
| 5/3  | Reactive Attitudes V: Shame                     | <p>1. Cheshire Calhoun, "An Apology for Moral Shame," <i>Journal of Political Philosophy</i> 12:2 pp. 127-146.</p> <p>2. Sandra Bartky, "Shame and Gender," <i>Femininity and Domination: Studies in the Phenomenology of Oppression</i> pp. 83-98.</p>  | <p>3. Sarah Ahmed, "Shame before Others," <i>The Cultural Politics of Emotion</i>, pp. 101-121.</p>   |
| 12/3 | Affective Allies I: Empathy and Solidarity      | <p>1. Lorraine Code, "I know Just How You Feel: Empathy and the Problem of Epistemic Authority," <i>Rhetorical Spaces: Essays on Gendered Locations</i> pp. 120-143.</p>   | <p>4. Sally Scholz, "Transnational Feminist Solidarity and Lessons from the 2011 Protests in Tahrir Square," <i>Global Discourse: An International</i></p>  |

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|      |  | <p>2. Jean Harvey, "Moral Solidarity and Empathetic Understanding: the Moral Value and Scope of the Relationship," <i>Journal of Social Philosophy</i> 38:1 (2007) pp. 22-37.</p> <p>3. Mia McKenzie, "No More Allies," <i>Black Girl Dangerous</i>.</p>  | <p><i>Journal of Current Affairs and Applied Contemporary Thought</i> 4:2-3 (2014) pp. 205-219</p> <p>5. Janine Jones, "The Impairment of Empathy in Goodwill Whites for African Americans," <i>What White Looks Like: African American Philosophers on the Whiteness Question</i> pp. 65-86.</p> <p>6. Saba Fatima, "Muslim American Scripts," <i>Hypatia</i> 28:2 pp. 341-359.</p>  |
| 19/3 | <p>Affective Allies II: Calling Out and Apology</p> <p><i>Presentation of Paper Topics</i></p> | <p>1. Reading TBA</p> <p>2. Getting Called Out: How to Apologize <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C8xjXKYL8pU">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C8xjXKYL8pU</a>)</p> <p>3. How to tell someone they sound Racist <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b0Ti-gkJiXc">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b0Ti-gkJiXc</a></p> | <p>4. Alice MacLachlan, "Gender and Public Apology," <i>Transitional Justice Review</i> 1:2, Article 6.</p> <p>5. Elizabeth Spelman, "In the Toolbox: Words and Money," <i>Repair</i> pp. 78-101.</p>   |
| 26/3 | <p>Affective Allies III: Forgiving</p>   | <p>1. Nancy Potter, "Is Refusing to Forgive a Vice?" <i>Feminist Doing Ethics</i> pp. 135-150.</p> <p>2. Alice MacLachlan, "Practicing Imperfect Forgiveness," <i>Feminist Ethics and Social and Political Philosophy: Theorizing the Non-Ideal</i> pp. 185-204.</p>  | <p>3. Kathryn Norlock, "Forgivingness, Pessimism, and Environmental Citizenship" <i>Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics</i> 23:1, pp. 29-42.</p> <p>4. Macalester Bell, "Forgiving someone for who they are (and not just what they've done)" <i>Philosophy and Phenomenological Research</i> 77:3 pp. 625-658</p> <p>5. Lynne Tirrell and Alisa Carse, "Forgiving Grave Wrongs," <i>Forgiveness in Perspective</i> (2010).</p> <p>I highly recommend Norlock's <i>Forgiveness from a Feminist Perspective</i> and Walker's <i>Moral Repair</i>.</p> |
| 2/4  | <p>Presentations</p>   | <p>None</p>   | <p>None</p>   |