

**Philosophy 316: Philosophy and Feminism**

Fall 2005

Dr. Grace Clement

Office Hours: Mondays 2-4 and Tuesdays and Thursdays 12:30-2

Office: Philosophy House, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor

(410) 677-5074

[gaclement@salisbury.edu](mailto:gaclement@salisbury.edu)

**Course Description:** In this course we will address feminism, both as a social and political position and as it raises questions for philosophers of all kinds. We will address the following sorts of questions:

- 1) Are there still problems of sex and gender inequality in our society? If so, what are they, and why do they continue to exist?
- 2) What is feminism? Why does it have such a bad reputation, and is that reputation deserved?
- 3) Is femininity natural or is it socially constructed? How are feminine ways of thinking and being—like the ethic of care—related to the masculine ways of thinking and being—like the ethic of justice?
- 4) What would it mean for women to be “liberated”? Do men need to be “liberated” as well? Are feminist ideals worth pursuing?

A warning: This course will demand that you reflect on your personal life in ways that most courses may not. One of the main slogans of the feminist movement has been, “The personal is political.” While traditional political philosophers have held that public decision-making should be uncontaminated by private influences, feminist political philosophers have argued that larger social realities *unavoidably* influence and are influenced by what happens in personal relations, and that we cannot understand one realm without also understanding the other. Thus your personal life will be relevant to the philosophy we do here, and you will need to be willing to reflect on your personal life (not necessarily publicly but at least in your writing).

**Texts:**

1. *Feminism: Issues and Arguments*, by Jennifer Mather Saul (Oxford, 2003)
2. *Feminist Theory: A Philosophical Anthology*, edited by Ann E. Cudd and Robin O. Andreasen (Blackwell, 2005)

**Course Requirements:**

1. **Four formal papers** (60% of grade, or 15% each).  
Papers should be 3-4 pages long. These will not be research papers, but will require only that you reflect on the assigned reading, class discussions, and your own experiences. Topics will be provided in class.

Papers should be typed, written carefully, and proofread. Because it is important that you learn to express yourself well, grammar and spelling *do* matter. I will penalize you ½ letter grade for every two misspellings or significant errors in grammar that I find in your paper. I expect papers to be turned in on time: extensions will not be given except in extremely extenuating circumstances. **Late papers will be penalized by one letter grade; and I will not accept papers more than one week late.**

**2. Four Response Papers (20% of grade, or 5% each)**

These papers should be 2-4 pages long and typed. In them you are to informally reflect on the assigned reading, class discussions, and your own related experiences. You should identify an important idea or argument addressed in the reading or class discussion and give your philosophical and/or personal reflections on it.

**3. Class Participation (10% of grade).**

Class participation is vital in this course because philosophy is conducted primarily through discussion. You are expected to show an interest in learning from others' ideas and in sharing and developing your own ideas. Note that participation is not just a matter of talking a lot. Quality, effort, and a willingness to listen to and learn from others are more essential contributions.

In addition, you are expected to show courtesy and recognize the importance of classroom functions: *come to class on time and stay in class the whole period; turn off your cell phone during class; at the very least, you are expected to be awake and attentive in class.*

As part of your class participation, once during the semester you are required *either* to present your response paper to the class *or* to serve as an "expert" on the assigned reading for one class session. You will have the chance to volunteer for these assignments ahead of time.

**4. Class Attendance (10% of the grade).**

Because this class should be a *learning community*, regular attendance is expected, and you are expected to come to class on time. Your participation and attendance grade will be no higher than a 'B' if you miss 4 classes, no higher than a 'C' if you miss 6 classes, and it will be an 'F' if you miss 8 or more classes. Two latenesses will be counted as one absence. Your three allowed absences are intended for illnesses or emergencies, and you should save them in case you need them for these reasons. (Please speak to me as soon as possible if you have an extended illness or emergency.)

**The Writing Center:** At the University Writing Center at Herb's Place, trained consultants will be ready to help you at any stage of the writing process. It is often helpful for writers to share their work with an attentive reader, and consultations allow writers to test and refine their ideas before having to hand papers in or to release documents to the public. In accordance with Salisbury University's mission to foster a

student-centered learning community, the writing center is a student-centered place; therefore, visits are not mandatory. However, all undergraduates are encouraged to make use of this important student service.

**Academic Integrity:** You are encouraged to talk to others about assignments, but the work you turn in must be your own. *In this class you are not expected or encouraged to do any outside research—you are expected to study the course readings carefully and develop your own thoughts about them and the questions they address. I am interested in your own thoughts, expressed in your own voice.* If you choose to do any research using outside sources, you must cite it carefully. Please do not make the serious mistake in judgment and ethics of downloading papers (or parts of papers) off the Internet, or “borrowing” from other sources. I detect and find such papers easily. **Plagiarism is a serious violation of academic integrity, and the standard penalty for plagiarism is failure for the course.** If you have any doubts about whether something counts as plagiarism, please come meet with me *before* you turn it in.

### **Class Schedule**

8/29: Introduction to the course

#### **I. What is Sexism?**

##### **The Politics of Work and Family**

8/31: Saul, chapter 1, pp. 5-22

9/2: Saul, chapter 1, pp. 22-43

9/5: **Labor Day. No class.**

##### **Sexual Harassment**

9/7: Saul, chapter 2, pp. 45-60

9/9: Saul, chapter 2, pp. 60-72

9/12: **Response paper 1 due**

##### **Pornography**

9/14: Saul, chapter 3, pp. 74-90

9/16: Saul, chapter 3, pp. 90-106

##### **The Nature of Sexism**

9/19, 9/21: Cudd and Jones, “Sexism” (pp. 73-83, *Feminist Theory*)

9/23: **Formal Paper 1 due**

#### **II. What is Feminism?**

##### **Abortion**

9/23: Saul, chapter 4, pp. 110-130

9/26: Saul, chapter 4, pp. 130-138

##### **Feminine Appearance**

9/28: Saul, chapter 5, pp. 140-153; in-class video: Body Image

9/30: Saul, chapter 5, pp. 153-168.

10/3: **Response paper 2 due.**

### **Feminism and Language Change**

10/5: Saul, chapter 6, pp. 170-185.

10/7: Saul, chapter 6, pp. 185-196.

### **Feminism**

10/10, 10/12: Beauvoir, "Introduction from *The Second Sex*" (pp. 27-36, *Feminist Theory*)

10/14: **Formal Paper 2 due.**

### **III. Femininity: Its Nature and Value**

10/14: in-class video: Gender and Relationships

#### **Is Femininity Natural?**

10/17, 10/19: Haslanger, "Gender and Race: (What) Are They? (What) Do We Want Them To Be?" (pp. 154-170, *Feminist Theory*)

#### **Women's "Different Voice"**

10/21: Saul, chapter 7, pp. 199-212.

10/24: Saul, chapter 7, pp. 212-229.

10/26: **Response paper 3 due.**

#### **Care and Autonomy**

10/28: Tronto, "An Ethic of Care" (pp. 251-263, *Feminist Theory*)

10/31, 11/2: Friedman, "Autonomy, Social Disruption, and Women" (pp. 339-351, *Feminist Theory*)

11/4: **Formal Paper 3 due.**

### **IV. Feminist Ideals**

#### **Reason and Objectivity**

11/4: Lloyd, "The Man of Reason" (pp. 177-187)

11/7: Saul, chapter 8, pp. 232-250.

11/9: Saul, chapter 8, pp. 250-258.

#### **Feminism and "Respect for Cultures"**

11/11: Saul, chapter 9, pp. 261-275.

11/14: Saul, chapter 9, pp. 275-291.

11/16, 11/18: Nussbaum, "Women and Cultural Universals" (pp. 302-324, *Feminist Theory*)

11/21: **Response Paper 4 due.**

#### **What Would Liberation Be?**

11/28, 11/30: MacKinnon, "Difference and Dominance: On Sex Discrimination" (pp. 392-402, *Feminist Theory*)

12/2, 12/5: Okin, "Toward a Humanist Justice" (pp. 403-413, *Feminist Theory*)

12/7: Cornell, "Feminism, Utopianism, and the Role of the Ideal in Political Philosophy" (pp. 414-421, *Feminist Theory*)

12/9: Conclusions

**12/16 by 1 p.m.: Formal Paper 4 due.**