

Philosophy 316: Philosophy and Feminism
Spring 2008
Dr. Grace Clement
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Course Description: In this course we will seek to understand the nature, the significance, the implications, and the merits of feminism, both in theory and in practice. We will begin by addressing basic questions about the nature of feminism, such as: Are there still problems of sex and gender inequality in our society? If so, what are they, and why do they continue to exist? What is feminism? What does it claim and what are its goals? And why does it have such a bad reputation?

Then, for the majority of the course, we will study three different feminist theoretical frameworks, each of which offers a distinctive account of the nature of sexist oppression and of the appropriate goals of feminism. Each of these frameworks will be applied and explored in the context of specific "real-world" problems and questions, such as: Why doesn't the criminal justice system adequately protect battered women? Why are more than 100 million women missing from the world's population? Do women think about morality different than men do, and, if so, is this a good thing? Why do we think of God as male, and should we think of God as female?

Philosophy 316 is an "enhanced" course; that is, a course that might traditionally be offered for 3 credit hours, but which, within the context of both the newly reformed Philosophy program and the Fulton School's overall curriculum reform initiative, is being offered here in a 4-credit context. The main purpose of the Fulton reform and the courses in it is to engage students more in the individual courses they take and, as a result, provide students with a deeper—and often more active—learning experience and encounter with the subject at hand. All "enhanced," 4-credit courses in the Fulton School will require significantly more—and sometimes different—work than they might (or used to) require as 3-credit courses. For more information on the Fulton reform and "enhanced" courses, and what both mean to you, as a student, please visit the Fulton reform student website at <http://www.salisbury.edu/fulton/currref-students.html>.

Texts:

1. *Feminism: Issues and Arguments*, by Jennifer Mather Saul (Oxford, 2003)
2. *Theorizing Feminisms*, edited by Elizabeth Hackett and Sally Haslanger (Oxford, 2006)

Requirements:

1. The Honor Pledge

To foster and sustain an ethical community and a culture of integrity, the Philosophy Department asks you to sign an honor pledge that the work you do is truly your own and when you rely on sources you cite them. To remain enrolled in this class, this form must be signed and returned to the professor at the beginning of the second class period.

2. Weekly writing assignments (40% of grade).

Papers should be typed and 1-2 pages long. Questions will be provided in class and will require careful reading and critical thinking about the assigned reading. These papers will not be accepted late.

3. Three formal papers (45% of grade)

These papers are to be four-to-five pages long. Topics for these papers will be provided in class one week before the due-dates, and will require that you synthesize and draw conclusions about the texts and the philosophical questions we study.

I expect papers to be turned in on time. Late papers will be penalized by one letter grade, and will not be accepted more than one week late. Extensions will not be given except in extremely extenuating and documented circumstances. Papers should be written carefully and proofread. Because it is important that you learn to express yourself well, grammar and spelling do matter. I will penalize you as much as one letter grade if there are numerous misspellings or grammatical errors in your paper.

4. Class attendance and participation (15% of grade).

Because this class should be a *learning community*, regular attendance is expected, and you are expected to come to class on time. 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.*

If you miss 4 classes, you will receive *at best* a 'B' for this grade; if you miss 6 classes you will receive *at best* a 'C'; if you miss 8 or more classes, you will receive an 'F' for this grade. Your three allowed absences are intended for illness or emergencies, and you should save them in case you need them for these reasons. Speak to me as soon as possible if you have an extended documented illness or emergency.

Writing:

Through its frequent informal and formal writing assignments, this course participates in and supports "Writing Across the Curriculum" at Salisbury University.

At the University Writing Center at Herb's Place (Guerrieri University Center, Room 213), trained consultants are 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 addition to the important writing instruction that occurs in the classroom and during teachers' office hours, the center offers another site for learning about writing. **All undergraduates are encouraged to make use of this important student service.** For more information about the writing center's hours and policies, visit the writing center or its website at www.salisbury.edu/uwc.

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 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 research using outside sources, you must cite it carefully. Please do not make the serious mistake of downloading papers (or parts of papers) off the Internet, or "borrowing" from other sources. I detect 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 speak with me *before* you turn it in. As noted in the requirements above, students are required to sign an honor pledge that the work you do is truly your own and when you rely on sources you cite them.

Class Schedule

1/28: Introduction to the course

I. The Basics of Feminism: What is it and why does it matter?

- 1/30: "The Politics of Work and Family," Saul, chapter 1, pp. 5-22
- 2/1: "The Politics of Work and Family," Saul, chapter 1, pp. 22-43
- 2/4: "Sexual Harassment," Saul, chapter 2, pp. 45-60
- 2/6: "Sexual Harassment," Saul, chapter 2, pp. 60-73
- 2/8: "Pornography," Saul, chapter 3, pp. 74-90
- 2/11: "Pornography," Saul, chapter 3, pp. 90-106
- 2/13: "Abortion," Saul, chapter 4, pp. 110-130
- 2/15: "Abortion," Saul, chapter 4, pp. 130-138
- 2/18: "Feminine Appearance," Saul, chapter 5, pp. 140-153
- 2/20: "Feminine Appearance," Saul, chapter 5, pp. 153-168
- 2/22: "Feminism and Language Change," Saul, chapter 6, pp. 170-185

2/25: "Feminism and Language Change," Saul, chapter 6, pp. 185-196

2/27: **Formal Paper 1 due.**

II. Humanist Feminism

2/27: Introduction

2/29: Mill, "The Subjection of Women," in *Theorizing Feminisms (TF)*, pp. 97-112

3/3: Truth, "Ar'n't I a Woman?" in *TF*, pp. 113

3/5: de Beauvoir, "The Second Sex," in *TF*, pp. 114-123

3/7: Nussbaum, "Human Capabilities, Female Human Beings," in *TF*, pp. 124-139

3/10: Schechter, "Social Change on Behalf of Battered Women," in *TF*, pp. 140-149

3/12: Sen, "More than 100 Million Women Are Missing," in *TF*, pp. 150-159

3/14: Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins," in *TF*, pp. 159-173

Spring Break

III. Gynocentric Feminism

3/24: Young, "Humanism, Gynocentrism, and Feminist Politics," in *TF*, pp. 174-187

3/26: Addams, "Women and Public Housekeeping," in *TF*, pp. 187-188

3/28: Lorde, "Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power," in *TF*, pp. 188-192

3/31: Gunn Allen, "Who Is Your Mother? Red Roots of White Feminism" in *TF*, pp. 192-199

4/2: Gilligan, "Moral Orientation and Moral Development," in *TF*, pp. 200-210

4/4: Christ, "Why Women Need the Goddess," in *TF*, pp. 211-219

4/7: Walker, "The Only Reason You Want to Go to Heaven Is That You Have Been Driven Out of Your Mind," in *TF*, pp. 220-224

4/9: Ruddick, "Notes Toward a Feminist Maternal Peace Politics," in *TF*, pp. 225-237

4/11: Shiva, "Women's Indigenous Knowledge and Biodiversity Conservation," in *TF*, pp. 238-243

4/14: **Formal Paper 2 due.**

IV. The Dominance Approach

4/14: Introduction

4/16: MacKinnon, "Difference and Dominance," in *TF*, pp. 244-255

4/18: MacKinnon, "Desire and Power," in *TF*, pp. 256-265

4/21: MacKinnon, "Sex and Violence," in *TF*, pp. 266-271

4/23: Goldman, "Woman Suffrage," in *TF*, pp. 271-277

4/25: Bartky, "Foucault, Femininity, and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power," in *TF*, pp. 277-292

4/28: Lorde, "Age, Race, Class, and Sex," in *TF*, pp. 292-297

4/30: Stoltenberg, "Confronting Pornography as a Civil-Rights Issue," in *TF*, pp. 298-310

5/2: Duggan, Hunter, and Vance, "False Promises: Feminist Antipornography Legislation," in *TF*, pp. 311-324

5/5: Frye: "Willful Virgin or Do You Have to Be a Lesbian to Be a Feminist?" in *TF*, pp. 325-332

5/7: hooks, "Seduced by Violence No More," in *TF*, pp. 333-335

5/9: Last Day of Class: Conclusions

Day of Scheduled Final: Class meets. Formal Paper 3 due.