

**INTRODUCTORY HANDOUT PHILOSOPHY 169  
FEMINISM AND PHILOSOPHY**

**SPRING, 2017**

**Revised April 20**

Professor: Richard Arneson.

Lecture Tuesday and Thursday 11:00 a.m.-12:20 p.m. in HSS 7077..

The final exam for this course will take place on Tuesday, June 13 from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. If you enroll in this class, you must be free to take a regular final exam for this course at this time.

Feminism and Philosophy (Philosophy 169) is an introduction to feminist thought. This is a broad category of intellectual work that seeks to advance the liberation of women from the oppression of men. Feminists see themselves as aligning with campaigns and social movements for women's rights. A complementary task is to bring the concerns, experiences, and perspectives of women to bear on views of the world that have been shaped predominantly by the thinking of men and their concerns, experiences, and perspectives. This course focuses on some ethical topics that feminists have introduced into mainstream philosophical discussion in recent years or that have been significantly shaped by feminist contributions. Among these topics are abortion, marriage and childrearing, sexual coercion and rape and our understanding of the consent that renders sexual activity permissible, prostitution and commercial surrogacy, and discrimination in employment and sexual harassment. We also look at three broadly different ways of conceiving of the problem of inequality in society that women face. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, J. S. Mill stresses removal of legal bars to women engaging in the public sphere and protection of sexual autonomy. In the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, the difference approach emphasizes that men and women are different and that social arrangements should be fair to all, given the differences, and especially to women, who tend to get the short end of the stick under present conditions. The dominance approach stresses the social construction of differences between men and women and sees women as forced into subordinate caste status.

This course studies writings that pursue a feminist intellectual agenda and defend equal rights for women. For the most part I have not attempted to present a balanced slate of readings that include conservative defenses of traditional women's roles and antifeminist perspectives. That said, in class and coursework students are encouraged to take any viewpoint on the materials presented that seems sensible to you; I want to examine a certain body of material, not to push you to adopt one or another perspective on it. In the same spirit, questions might be raised about the current relevance of feminist perspectives given social changes in modern democracies in the past 40 years or so. Is feminism, like the early twentieth century women's suffrage movement, outdated, or does it still speak powerfully to our present predicament? You decide.

**COURSE GOALS:** The goals of the course are to improve our skills at interpreting challenging texts and assessing their arguments, to understand a variety of perspectives on feminism and different approaches to the understanding of equality for women, and to gain a more reflective understanding of our own values concerning these issues. A secondary aim is to sharpen our analytical writing skills.

**COURSE TEXTS:** All course readings will be available at the course TritonEd page.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:** (1) regular participation in class discussion, (2) eight short weekly discussion papers, each about one page in length, commenting on some aspect of the reading for that class that strikes you as significant, (3) a longer writing assignment, six to eight double-spaced pages in length, topics to be assigned in class, and (4) a regular comprehensive final examination. You will have some choice of topic on the writing assignment. On your discussion papers, writing assignment, and final exam you will be graded according to the clarity of your prose, the cogency of your arguments, and the soundness of the understanding of course materials that you exhibit. The final examination will comprehend all course materials including required readings, lectures, and handouts distributed in class. (This means that merely recommended readings will NOT be covered on exams.)

To encourage keeping up with the reading class by class and week by week, there will be a class participation component of your grade. At each class meeting, there will be class discussion for about half of the class, always on questions posed in advance of class (and relating to the readings assigned for that class). This class discussion usually will take place at the start of class, before the instructor's lecture starts, but

sometimes will occur at the mid-way point. During lectures, you are always encouraged to interject questions and comment. I will take notes after every class on the class discussion, and the quality and frequency of your contributions to discussion will be the basis of your class participation grade.

It's possible that there may also be in-class quizzes occasionally. The results will contribute to your class discussion grade.

The weekly discussion paper examines one line of thought or argument or claim made in a course reading for that day (the day you are turning in the paper). In the paper you can highlight something in the reading you think would be a good focus for class discussion. You can present a claim or argument advanced by the course author. You can raise an objection to what the author is saying, or defend a controversial claim in the reading against some possible objection. You have a lot of choice as to what to do in the short paper. Trying to summarize the entire reading in a one-page paper is probably not a good idea, but you might summarize and clarify an argument in the reading that seems complicated or pivotal or both. **The weekly discussion paper for each week is due at the start of class on any class day in that week and should discuss some part of the assigned reading for that day's class.**

If you turn in nine discussion papers I will count your eight best grades. Also, you may if you wish write at most one two-page discussion paper, in which case you would be turning in a total of six one-page comments and one two-pager. (The two-pager counts the same as two one-pagers.) You must indicate when you turn in a two-pager that you intend it have this status. Discussion papers will be graded as very good, good, satisfactory, or unsatisfactory. I'll try to return your submitted discussion papers, graded and with comments, promptly.

**GRADING:** The final exam counts for 35 % of your exam grade, the writing assignment for 30%, the eight discussion papers for 15%, and class participation for 20 %.

Only medical excuses certified by a note from your physician or a comparable certified excuse will be accepted for late submission of the writing assignment or to justify the assignment of an Incomplete course grade.

## **SCHEDULE OF LECTURES, DISCUSSIONS, AND READINGS**

**{All readings are available at the TritonEd course page, under "Content" folder.}**

Week 1. April 3-9

TUES: Introduction. Reading: bell hooks, *feminism Is for everybody* (excerpt); also Philippe Van Parijs, "Four Puzzles on Gender Justice." Further recommended reading: Amartya Sen, "More than 100 Million Women Are Missing."

THUR: 19<sup>th</sup>-century feminism. Reading: J. S. Mill, *The Subjection of Women*, chapters 1 & 2.

{{NOTE: The copy of this work at the course TritonEd page is combined with *On Liberty*. You have to scroll down to reach *The Subjection of Women*. You can also directly access the text of *The Subjection of Women* at

[ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/m/mill/john\\_stuart/m645s/](http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/m/mill/john_stuart/m645s/)

This version is maybe easier to read.}}

Week 2. April 10-16

TUES: 19<sup>th</sup>-century feminism. Reading: J. S. Mill, *The Subjection of Women*, chapters 3 & 4.

Further recommended reading: Julia Annas, "Mill on the Subjection of Women"; Martha Nussbaum, "The Feminist Critique of Liberalism."

THUR: The difference approach. Reading: Carol Gilligan *In a Different Voice*, chapter 2; also Iris Young, "Humanism, Gynocentrism, and Feminist Politics." Further recommended reading: Carol Gilligan, "Moral Orientation and Moral Development."

Week 3. April 17-23

TUES: Two topics: (1) Nature and social construction and (2) The dominance approach. Reading: Sally Haslanger, "Gender and Social Construction: Who? What? When? Where? How?"; also Catharine MacKinnon, "Difference and Dominance: On Sex Discrimination." Further recommended reading: Elizabeth Lloyd, "Pre-Theoretical Assumptions in Evolutionary Explanations of Female Sexuality."

THUR: The dominance approach and sexuality. Reading: Catharine MacKinnon, "Desire and Power" and "Sex and Violence: A Perspective." Further recommended reading, Catharine MacKinnon, "Pleasure under Patriarchy," "Not a Moral Issue," and "The Sexual Politics of the First Amendment."

Week 4. April 24-30

TUES: Caring for oneself versus caring for others. Does virtue require not being disposed specially to cater to men? Does virtue require selfishness? Reading: Marilyn Frye, "Willful Virgin or Do You Have to Be a Lesbian to Be a Feminist?" Also: Jean Hampton, "Feminist Contractarianism." Further recommended reading: bell hooks, "Seduced by Violence No More." Also: Jean Hampton, "Selflessness and the Loss of Self."

THUR: Abortion. Reading: Judith Thomson, "A Defense of Abortion." Don Marquis, "Why Abortion Is Immoral."

Week 5 May 1-7

TUES: Abortion and Infanticide. Reading: Mary Anne Warren, "On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion." Further recommended reading: Jeff McMahan, "Infanticide"; also Richard Arneson, "Basic Equality, Rational Agency capacity, Potential, and Personhood."

THUR: Should the state promote marriage? Do marriage vows make sense? Is marriage especially morally valuable? Is conventional marriage unfair to women? Reading: Elizabeth Brake, "The Marriage Promise: Is Divorce Promise-Breaking?"

Week 6. May 8-14

TUES: Should the state promote marriage? If not, why not? If so, what sort?

Reading: Elizabeth Brake, "Minimal Marriage: What Political Liberalism Implies for Marriage Law"; also John Finnis, "Marriage as a Basic and Exigent Good." Further recommended reading: Ralph Wedgwood, "Is Civil Marriage Illiberal?"; also Richard Arneson, "The Meaning of Marriage and State Efforts to Facilitate Friendship, Love, and Child-rearing." Also Elizabeth Brake, "Equality and Non-Hierarchy in Marriage."

THUR: Family responsibilities: Sharing childrearing and housework. Reading: Susan Okin, *Justice, Gender, and the Family*, "Introduction" and chapters 7 & 8. Further recommended reading: Richard Arneson, "Feminism and family Justice."

Week 7. May 15-21

TUES: Rape and rape prosecution. Reading: E.M. Curley, "Excusing Rape." Tom Dougherty, "Yes Means Yes: Consent as Communication."

THUR: Sexual consent. Reading: Tom Dougherty "Sex, Lies, and Consent"; also Hallie Liberto, "Intention and Sexual Consent." **Due date for consultation with instructor based on preliminary draft/outline of your writing assignment.**

Week 8. May 22-28.

TUES: **WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE IN CLASS.** Prostitution. Reading: Scott Anderson, "Prostitution and Sexual Autonomy: Making Sense of the Prohibition of Prostitution"; also Martha Nussbaum, "Whether From Reason or Prejudice: Taking Money for Bodily Services." Further Recommended reading: Debra Satz, *Why Some things Should Not Be For Sale* (excerpt). Another topic: commercial surrogacy: See Elizabeth Anderson, "Is Women's Labor a Commodity?." Also, Debra Satz, "Markets in Women's Reproductive Labor"; also Richard Arneson, "Commodification and Commercial Surrogacy; also Alan Wertheimer, "Two Questions about Surrogacy and Exploitation."

THUR: Equality between men and women, religious freedom, and special rights for cultural minorities.

Reading: Susan Okin, *Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?* (Excerpts).

Week 9. May 29-June 4.

TUES: Revisiting hiring quotas. Reading: L. W. Sumner, "Positive Sexism"; also Tamar Gendler, "On the Epistemic Costs of Implicit Bias."

THUR: Sexual harassment on the job. Reading: Elizabeth Anderson, "Rethinking Sexual Harassment." Vickie Schultz, "Reconceptualizing Sexual Harassment."

Week 10. June 5-11.

TUES: Discrimination in employment. Kimberly Yuracko, "Sameness, Subordination, and Perfectionism: Toward a More Complete Theory of Employment Discrimination Law"; also Connie Rosati, "Explanation, Vindication, and the Role of Normative Theory in Legal Scholarship."

THUR: Women and employment outside the home. Reading: Barbara Ehrenreich, *Nickel and Dimed*, chapter 2; also Gosta Esping-Andersen, *The Incomplete Revolution: Adapting to Women's New Roles*, chapters 1 & 2. Further recommended reading: Esping-Andersen, *The Incomplete Revolution*, Introduction & chapter 3; also "References" section of this book.

**Arneson's office hours: Wednesdays 1-2 and Thursdays 2-3 in HSS 8057. Office phone 534 6810. Email [rarneson@ucsd.edu](mailto:rarneson@ucsd.edu)**