

**Phil 275/WMST 275: Moral and Philosophical Issues of Gender in Society**  
11-12:15 TR, Caldwell 103  
Spring 2013

This course fulfills the PH and US general education requirements.

**Instructor:** Jennifer Kling

**Office Hours:** Tuesdays 3-5pm, Fridays 1-3pm; available by appointment (107C Caldwell)

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**Course Description:**

In this course we will explore and evaluate a number of important concepts in feminist theory. Specifically, we will look at feminist conceptions of oppression, sexism, gender, knowledge, intersectionality, and anti-essentialism, as well as at five paradigmatic approaches (liberal feminism, socialist feminism, radical feminism, cultural feminism, and postmodern feminism) to gender justice. Throughout the class we will be reading both historical and contemporary feminist texts. However, our efforts will not be merely an academic exercise where we will only study what others have thought. Instead, in this course you will be joining in an active and ongoing effort to better understand a world shot through with gender injustice and oppression, and how we should act in response to it.

This class fits into a broader program of liberal education, insofar as it seeks to question and grasp issues surrounding gender, society, and morality. It is targeted towards high-level undergraduate students; no topical or general philosophical expertise is assumed or required, but you will need to be able to read carefully, discuss critically, and write insightfully about (what can be) difficult and oblique texts. Ultimately, the goal of this course is to provide you with the critical tools for understanding and responding to a social world (that appears to be) filled with gender injustice and oppression.

In this class, you will have to struggle with big concepts that you may not have engaged before, and you will have to work hard to succeed. Along the way you will come to better understand what feminist theorists do, how they do it, and why. That will entail using and refining your abilities to effectively think, argue, read, and write. In other words, in this course you are going to learn how to *do* feminist theory, which is both difficult and rewarding.

**Required books:**

*Theorizing Feminisms: A Reader* (referred to as **TF** throughout)

Edited by Elizabeth Hackett and Sally Haslanger

ISBN13: 978-0-19-515009-4

*The Politics of Reality: essays in feminist theory* (referred to as **PR** throughout)

Marilyn Frye

ISBN-13: 978-0895940995

All other required readings will be made available on Sakai. (referred to as **Sakai** throughout)

## Course Requirements

**Participation (10%):** You will need to both do the readings and come to class in order to be successful in this course. If you don't do the readings, you'll be lost in class; if you don't come to class, you'll be lost in the readings and the assignments. While *\*excessive\** participation is not required, some willingness to engage with both me and your fellow classmates is necessary—without this willingness on your part, we won't be able to have the sort of productive class discussions that will enable you to successfully write your papers and pass both the midterm and final. So, while a lack of participation won't harm your grade very much, participation can significantly *help* your grade.

**Papers (20% each):** There are two required papers for this course. Each paper should be 5 pages long, and should present, explain, and critically engage with some issue brought up in the course readings and class discussions. I will provide a list of suggested topics two weeks in advance of each paper's due date. If you wish to write on a topic not on the list, please come see me to discuss your proposed topic. Papers are due at the start of the class period on the due date. For every 24-hour period that a paper is late, I will take 5 points off. That said, I am aware that life happens; if you feel you need an extension, please ask me as soon as possible. The earlier you ask, the more likely I am to give you an extension. Failure to turn in either one of the papers will result in failing the course.

**Exams (20% each):** There is both a midterm and a final for this course. The format for both will be the same; they will consist of a series of short answers as well as one longer essay. The midterm will cover the material introduced and discussed up to that point in the class. The final will cover the material introduced and discussed after the midterm. Please bring a bluebook for both the midterm and the final. Failure to take either the midterm or the final exam will result in failing the course.

**Discussion Questions (10%):** You will be required to submit discussion comments/questions, *via the Sakai Assignment tool*, throughout the semester. Prior to each class, please submit 3 distinct comments/questions about the reading assigned for that class period. These questions are due no later than **9pm the night before** class. You have broad leeway in these comments/questions. For example, you may comment on a part of the text you found confusing, ask a question about the author's argument or conclusion, present a problem with the author's position, or discuss the relationship between the current reading and a previous one. I do not expect these comments/questions to be more than one sentence in length; however, you are welcome to write more if you wish. Five times throughout the semester, I will check to see who has submitted discussion comments/questions for a particular class period. You will be graded on whether you have submitted 3 comments/questions about the reading for that class period.

### Grading Scale:

A: An 'A' denotes exceptional skill and ability. An 'A' student demonstrates an excellent grasp of the material (i.e., the student understands the material enough to explain it succinctly and well), and also displays the ability to engage philosophically with both the broad issues and finer points under discussion.

**B:** A ‘B’ denotes solid-to-impressive skill and ability. A ‘B’ student demonstrates a good grasp of the material (i.e., the student understands the material well enough to explain it with few mistakes), and also displays the ability to engage philosophically with most, if not all, of the issues and points under discussion.

**C:** A ‘C’ denotes adequate skill and ability. A ‘C’ student demonstrates a fair grasp of the material (i.e., the student understands the big picture, but makes some serious errors in presentation), and also displays the ability to engage philosophically with at least some of the issues under discussion.

**D:** A ‘D’ denotes inadequate skill and ability. A ‘D’ student has serious problems with grasping the material, and fails to engage philosophically with any of the issues under discussion.

**F:** An ‘F’ denotes catastrophic problems in fulfilling the requirements of the course. An ‘F’ student neither grasps the material nor engages with it critically at any level.

While hard work is correlated with success, it is not sufficient for success. To get a good grade in this course, you need to not only understand and engage with the material, but also communicate your understanding and engagement to me via your papers and exams. If you sense that you are heading towards a grade you do not want, please come see me as soon as possible (if you wait until the end of the semester, it will be too late).

### Assignments

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Assignment</b>
1/10	Introduction to the Course	<i>None</i>
1/15	Why Feminism? Or, Getting On Board With the Overall Problem	Solnit, “Men Explain Things to Me: Facts Didn’t Get in Their Way,” <b>Sakai</b> , and “Why Feminism is Relevant and Important Today,” <b>Sakai</b>
1/17	Essential Concepts: Oppression	Frye, “Oppression,” <b>PR</b>
1/22	Essential Concepts: Oppression	Young, “The Five Faces of Oppression,” <b>TF</b>
1/24	Essential Concepts: Sexism	Frye, “Sexism,” <b>PR</b> and Frye, “The Problem that has No Name,” <b>PR</b>
1/29	Essential Concepts: Sexism	Cudd and Jones, “Sexism,” <b>Sakai</b>
1/31	Essential Concepts: Gender	Haslanger, “Gender and Social Construction: Who? What? When? Where? How?,” <b>TF</b>
2/5	Essential Concepts: Gender	West and Zimmerman, “Doing Gender,” <b>Sakai</b>
2/7	Paper Discussion	<i>None</i>
2/12 <b>Paper #1 Due</b>	Applications: Domestic Violence	Schechter, “Social Change on Behalf of Battered Women: Reforming the Criminal Justice System,” <b>TF</b>
2/14	Essential Concepts: Knowledge	Anderson, “Feminist Epistemology: An Interpretation and a Defense,” <b>Sakai</b>

2/19	Essential Concepts: Knowledge	Collins, "The Politics of Black Feminist Thought," <b>TF</b>
2/21	Essential Concepts: Intersectionality and Anti-Essentialism	Grillo, "Anti-Essentialism and Intersectionality: Tools to Dismantle the Master's House," <b>TF</b>
2/26	Essential Concepts: Intersectionality and Anti-Essentialism	Frye, "On Being White," <b>PR</b> , and Garry, "Intersection, Social Change, and "Engaged" Theories: Implications of North American Feminism," <b>Sakai</b>
2/28	Applications: Sexual Violence	Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color," <b>TF</b>
3/5	Review	<i>None</i>
3/7 <b>Midterm</b>	<b>Midterm</b>	<i>None</i>
3/19	Why Justice? Or, The Core of Being a Feminist	Bartky, "Toward a Phenomenology of Feminist Consciousness," <b>Sakai</b>
3/21	Approaches to Gender Justice: Liberal/Humanist Feminism	Mill, "On the Subjection of Women," <b>TF</b>
3/26	Approaches to Gender Justice: Liberal/Humanist Feminism	Beauvoir, "Introduction," <i>The Second Sex</i> , <b>TF</b>
3/28	Approaches to Gender Justice: Socialist/Marxist Feminism	Ehrenreich, "What is Socialist Feminism?," <b>Sakai</b>
4/2	Approaches to Gender Justice: Socialist/Marxist Feminism	Young, "Socialist Feminism and the Limits of Dual Systems Theory," <b>TF</b>
4/4	Approaches to Gender Justice: Radical Feminism	MacKinnon, "Difference and Domination: On Sex Discrimination," <b>TF</b>
4/9	Approaches to Gender Justice: Radical Feminism	Frye, "Some Reflections on Separatism and Power," <b>PR</b>
4/11 <b>Paper #2 Due</b>	Approaches to Gender Justice: Cultural/Gynocentric Feminism	Young, "Humanism, Gynocentrism, and Feminist Politics," <b>TF</b>
4/16	Approaches to Gender Justice: Cultural/Gynocentric Feminism	Gilligan, "Moral Orientation and Moral Development," <b>TF</b>
4/18	Approaches to Gender Justice: Postmodern/Poststructuralist Feminism	Fraser and Nicholson, "Social Criticism without Philosophy: An Encounter between Feminism and Postmodernism," <b>TF</b>
4/23	Approaches to Gender Justice: Postmodern/Poststructuralist Feminism	Alcoff, "Cultural Feminism versus Post-Structuralism," <b>Sakai</b> and Bordo, "Material Girl: The Effacements of Postmodern Culture," <b>TF</b>
4/25	Review	<i>None</i>

**Final Exam: 12pm, Saturday, May 4<sup>th</sup>, Caldwell 103** (As per the UNC Final Exam Calendar)

**Honor Code:**

All students at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. For more information, please see <http://www.studentconduct.unc.edu>. Please obey the spirit as well as the law of UNC's Honor Code. If you think something is in violation of the Honor Code, it probably is, so check before doing it. Please remember that unintentional plagiarism is still plagiarism, and that **you must cite all of your sources** for papers!

**Syllabus Changes:**

I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus as appropriate. The odds that I'll do so during the semester are small, but if I do, I will inform you as soon as possible.