

## PHIL204: Philosophy of Gender and Women's Lives

**Textbook:** *Theorizing Feminisms: A Reader* (Hackett and Haslanger)

- All readings not contained in the above text will be made available as PDFs, accessible on Moodle

### **Course Schedule:**

*\*\*\*Our course schedule is tentative—all readings, topics and reflective assignments are subject to change, and we may take more or less time than scheduled to address the topics listed below, depending on our unique class pace. Any updates will be communicated via email and posted on Moodle. You are responsible for following the new syllabus once it is updated and sent out. Days with content or readings marked TBA will be determined in accordance with student interest.*

### **Unit 0: Introduction to Feminist Philosophy**

January 10: Introduction to course content, course policies & schedule

Homework due: First Day Survey (available via Moodle, turn in by Jan. 10 @ 11:59pm)

January 12: Background, Intro to Applications of Feminist Theory

Reading due:

- Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy article excerpt, available via Moodle.

### **Unit 1: Approaches to Feminist Theory**

January 17: Intersectionality

Reading due:

- **Required:** Grillo, Trina. "Anti-Essentialism and Intersectionality: Tools to Dismantle the Master's House." (in Hackett and Haslanger).
- **Encouraged:** Crenshaw, Kimberlé. "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color." (in Hackett and Haslanger).

Homework due:

- Informal assignment 1: What does "intersectionality" mean? What do you think taking an intersectional perspective requires of us?

January 19: The Sameness Approach

Reading due:

- Nussbaum, Martha. "Human Capabilities, Female Human Beings" (in Hackett and Haslanger)
- Truth, Sojourner. "Ar'n't I a Woman?" (in Hackett and Haslanger).

January 24: de Beauvoir and Intro to Philosophical Writing

Reading due:

- de Beauvoir, Simone. *The Second Sex*, Introduction. (in Hackett and Haslanger)

Homework due:

Informal Assignment 2: Try to summarize in just a few sentences: what is de Beauvoir's main point? What is she arguing for in this piece? Separately, note at least one thing about the piece that struck you.

January 26: Wollstonecraft & Young - Moving to the Difference Approach

Reading due:

- Wollstonecraft, Mary. "Of the Pernicious Effects Which Arise From the Unnatural Distinctions Established in Society." Available via PDF.
- Young, Iris. "Humanism, Gynocentrism, and Feminist Politics." (in Hackett and Haslanger)

Homework due:

- Optional paper 1 draft due

## **Unit 2: The Concept & Metaphysics of Gender**

January 31: Gender and Social Construction

Reading due:

- Haslanger, Sally. "Gender & Social Construction: Who? What? When? Where? How?" (in Hackett and Haslanger).
- Haslanger "Gender and Race: What Are They? What Do We Want Them To Be?" **Only section IV: Race**

February 2: Writing Workshop I - **No class meeting**

Homework due: Writing Workshop Document due Feb. 2 @ 11:59pm

February 7: The Metaphysics of Gender

Reading due:

- **Required- Skim:** Witt, Charlotte. Excerpt from *The Metaphysics of Gender*, available via PDF.
- **Recommended:** Catherine MacKinnon, "Desire and Power."

Homework due:

- Informal Assignment 3: Given the views on offer of gender so far, what do you think gender is? Do you think Haslanger, Witt, and/or MacKinnon are right? If so,

about what? If not, why not?

February 9: The Concept of Gender con't.

Readings due:

- Butler, Judith. Excerpt from *Gender Trouble*.
- Butler, Judith. "Against Proper Objects."

Homework due:

- Paper 1 due

Feb. 14: Gender, Gender Identity, and Queer Theory

Reading due:

- Required: Bettcher, "Trapped in the Wrong Theory: Rethinking Trans Oppression and Resistance." available via Moodle. Be sure to read 383-393, and 398-end. (Feel free to read the whole article if you'd like).
- **Recommended:** Feinberg, Leslie. "Walking Our Talk."

Homework due:

- Informal Assignment 4: Reflect: how does Bettcher's argument challenge us to think about gender as a concept differently (if at all)? Note at least one question you have about the article (on any level): this will help us kick off in-class discussion.

Feb. 16: Gender Identity con't, Writing Workshop II

Reading due:

TBD in accordance with student interest

Feb. 21: Gender Identity con't., Writing Workshop II

Homework due: Bring an idea as to which theory of the metaphysics we've covered is the most successful, and why. Please also bring any questions on the prompt, or any of the theories we've covered.

Feb. 23: Intro to Unit 3 & Finishing Writing Workshop II

Reading due:

- "Postcolonialism and Feminism," Leela Gandhi in Hackett and Haslanger
  - **Please read: p. 471-476, 478-end.**
- Homework due:
  - Informal Assignment 5:
    - Two available prompts: see Moodle submission link for more details.
    - Paper 2 draft due at 11:59pm

February 28: **No class, F.I.R.E. week**

March 2: **No class, F.I.R.E week**

March 7: **No class, Spring Break**

March 9: **No class, Spring Break**

### **Unit 3: Focusing on Intersectionality**

March 14: Intersectional Perspectives

Reading due:

- Gloria Anzaldúa, "La Conciencia de la Mestiza: Towards a New Consciousness" (in Hackett and Haslanger)

Homework due:

- Informal Assignment 6: Identify at least one main point Anzaldúa wants us to take away from the piece assigned for today. Then, reflect-- how does her essay either align with or challenge the issues we discussed in class before the break regarding the relationship between feminism and postcolonialism (namely that there might be ways that the projects of feminism and postcolonialism conflict)?

March 16: Guest Lecturer Dr. Vanessa Plumly: Intersectional Perspectives con't.

Readings due :

- hooks, bell. "Eating the Other" (available via Moodle).

### **Unit 4: Feminist Approaches to "Traditional" Philosophical Questions**

March 21: Feminist Ethics

Reading due:

- Gilligan "Moral Orientation and Moral Development"

Homework due: Paper 2 due @ 11:59 pm

March 23: Feminist Ethics

Readings due:

Kittay, Eva Feder. "Vulnerability and the Moral Nature of Dependency Relations."  
Available via PDF.

Homework due:

- Informal Assignment 7: Write a two sentence summary of what you take to be the main point of Kittay's piece. Based on that, evaluate: in what sense is she making a feminist point/argument about ethics? Finally, record at least one question you have about the argument/view as well-- we will use this as a starting point for class discussion.

March 28: Feminist Philosophy of Science

Reading due:

Longino, Helen E. "Can There Be a Feminist Science?" Available via PDF.

Homework due:

- Informal Assignment 8: What about this piece did you find surprising, if anything? Note one impactful idea you took away from the reading/discussion of the values and practice of science.

March 30: Feminist Philosophy of Science con't., Intro to Epistemic Injustice

Reading due: Re-read Longino– come with questions and objections!

April 4: Feminist Epistemology

Fricker, Miranda. Excerpt from *Epistemic Injustice*. Available via PDF. Required reading: p. 14-29. Optional reading: p. 9-14

Homework due:

- Informal Assignment 9: Summarize: what is testimonial injustice?

April 6: Final Project Peer Feedback & Writing Workshop

Homework due: Final project draft due

April 11: Feminist Bioethics

Readings due:

Sherwin, Susan. "Feminist Ethics and Medical Ethics." Available via PDF.

**Required reading: p. 59 (start with "The Role of Context in Medical Ethics")  
-end**

April 13: Feminist Bioethics con't.

Readings due: Re-read Sherwin "Feminist Ethics and Medical Ethics."

Homework due:

- Informal Assignment 10: Describe the aspects of particular situations that Sherwin argues a feminist version of medical ethics should pay attention to. In other words, if we're analyzing a medical ethics case as feminist medical ethicists, what kinds of details should we focus on, and what kinds of questions should we ask?

April 18: Disability & A Feminist View of Health

Wendell, Susan. "The Social Construction of Disability." (in Hackett and Haslanger).

Homework due:

- Informal Assignment 11: Summarize: For Wendell, what does it mean that disability is “socially constructed”? Bring at least one question you have about the reading to class.

April 20: Disability con't.

Reading due:

Kittay, Eva Feder. “The Ethics of Care, Dependence and Disability.” Available via PDF.

- **Required reading**: Beginning to p. 53 (end of section 2), p.56 (starting with section 4)- end

April 25: The definition of mental health & disorder/ Mad Pride movement

Reading due: Rashed “In Defense of Madness: The Problem of Disability.”

**Sections I, II and III Required**, whole article optional

Homework due:

- Informal assignment 12: What is the central problem or question Rashed is considering in this piece? How does it connect with our discussions over the past few days of disability and the social model of disability?

April 27: TBD - Final topic in accordance with student interest, final project workshop

**Final project/paper due May 1 @ 11:59pm**

## Course Policies

### **Course Learning Objectives:**

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- 1) Feel comfortable thinking critically and asking critical questions
- 2) Write strong, well-supported arguments in a concise, clear, philosophical style
- 3) Understand and appreciate the motivating questions and issues in feminist philosophy in both historical and contemporary contexts
- 4) Apply various feminist philosophical concepts, theories, and analytical lenses to new contexts in and outside the classroom

- 5) **LO10:** analyze problems, issues, or representations using knowledge, theories and/or methods appropriate to the humanities.
- 6) **LO2:** write effectively, considering audience and purpose.

### **Assignments:**

#### **- Informal Assignments:**

The purpose of informal assignments is to give you practice writing concisely in a philosophical style, and to help you to gather your thoughts prior to class to help facilitate class discussion. They are graded on a complete/incomplete basis—if you complete the assignment and turn it in via Moodle before the deadline, you will receive full credit.

I reserve the right to institute reading quizzes at any time—reading quizzes will not be announced in advance, and will be graded as part of the informal assignment category.

#### **- Papers**

Papers in this class will allow you to gain practice and comfort applying the lenses and ways of thinking critically we will engage with in course readings and in-class discussion. Our papers will be argumentative, written in a philosophical style, and increase in length and depth across the semester as we become more familiar with philosophical writing and the relevant philosophical content. Papers 1 and 2 are eligible to re-write, and to receive a new grade if appropriate. The final project is not eligible to re-write.

#### **- Final Project**

Students will engage with the main themes of the course by thinking critically and analyzing at least one situation from their own lives or close to their own lives by applying a feminist lens and/or specific theory/approach we have discussed in class. Students can engage in this final project in one of two ways: an argumentative paper that uses their key experience as a basis, or an argumentative podcast that uses their key experience as a basis.

- If students choose to create a podcast, this requires them to provide:
  - A written transcript (at least 2,000-3,000 words)
  - An abstract of the podcast's argument and perspective
  - A 100-300 word written advertisement meant to draw in listeners
- If students choose a traditional paper:
  - Argumentative, analytical paper in a philosophical style
  - 2,000-5,000 words

#### **Late work:**

Late informal assignments will not be accepted, except in cases of emergency or otherwise unavoidable absences. If this applies, please contact me in order to have the penalty waived, and to make up the work missed in class.

For papers, for each day the assignment is late results in a 1/3 grade penalty. (For example, if the paper earned an A, but is turned in after the deadline, but on the day of the deadline, it will earn an A-. If the paper is two days late, it will earn a B+... etc.) If a mandatory draft is late, this late penalty will accumulate and be applied to the grade of the final paper.

If you suspect that you cannot turn in an assignment (whether mandatory draft or final) by the deadline, it is crucial that you reach out to me ahead of time to arrange an extension. Except in cases of true emergencies, it is unlikely that late penalties for work turned in after the deadline will be waived without a previously arranged extension.

**Extensions:**

I am always happy to work with you if circumstances arise that get in your way of doing and turning in your best work. But, it is crucial that, except in the case of genuine emergencies or other unforeseen circumstances, you let me know that you need an extension **at least 24 hours before the due date of a specific assignment.**

**Expectations for Time Outside of Class:**

In this course, students should expect to spend at least twice as much time out of class doing work for each course as they spend in class. For this class, that means *at least* five hours a week working outside of class meetings, including working on writing projects, informal assignments, and completing readings. Readings are assigned for almost every course period. You need not approach each reading aiming to completely understand on your first read— we will discuss this, and strategies for reading philosophical articles— in detail on the first day of class. Informal assignments are designed to guide your reading, and should not be longer than a few sentences. Papers and paper revision will take more time and concerted effort.

Students are also expected to spend an average of one hour per week engaging in out-of-class direct instruction, which in this course will include office hours meetings with me, engagement with detailed feedback on your drafted and final writing assignments, and possible recorded content to accompany in-class discussion as needed.

**Attendance and participation:**

Attendance and participation are **crucial** components of this 200-level discussion-based course. Significant absences and/or lack of participation will impede your ability to engage with the content of the course. Absences will of course be excused in case of illness or emergency. If you need to miss class on any particular day, please inform me as soon as possible.

Participation in this course is not measured merely by the amount of time spent speaking in class or the number of classes during which you speak; active listening, preparation for class, and participating respectfully in discussions are all required for full marks in the participation and attendance category. One measure of participation will be coming to class prepared to ask *at least one question*— we will discuss this expectation further in class. If you have any concerns about participating adequately in class, please feel free to contact me.

**Grading Scheme:**

Participation and attendance: 20%

Informal assignments: 10%

Paper 1: 15%



Paper 2: 25%  
Final Project: 30%

### Grading Scale:

Your final grade in this class will be assigned using letter grades A-F:

95 - 100 = A	73 - 76 = C
92 - 94.9 = A-	70 - 72.9 = C-
87 - 91.9 = B+	67 - 69.9 = D+
83 - 86.8 = B	63 - 66.9 = D
80 - 82.9 = B-	60 - 62.9 = D-
77 - 79.9 = C+	Below 60 = F

Letter grades are converted to numerical scores using the following scheme:

A = 97	
A- = 93.5	C- = 71
B+ = 88	D+ = 68
B = 85	D = 64.5
B- = 81	D- = 61
C+ = 78	F = 58
C = 74.5	No paper submitted = 0

### Instructor Communication:

I welcome it! Please feel free to stop by office hours any time, or to schedule another time to meet with me outside office hours if my regularly scheduled hours don't work for you. Please also feel free to send me an email with any questions you have and I will get back to you as soon as possible. I always aim to respond within 24 hours during the work week. I do not guarantee response over the weekend, though I do occasionally respond to emails over the weekend. One can also send messages via Moodle: I prefer, and will respond much more quickly to email rather than Moodle messages.

#### **\*\*Important notes:**

- 1) I do not guarantee a response to emails about assignments or exams within 24 hours of the due date for that assignment. For example, our first paper will be due by class time on October 4. So, I will not guarantee a response to questions related to the paper starting at our regular class meeting time on October 3.
- 2) **I welcome talking about feedback and grades, but I will address questions on feedback and grades only once you have read through the feedback thoroughly and once 24 hours have passed since you received the feedback or grade.**
- 3) I am also happy to give feedback on drafts of papers, in addition to the more formal optional and mandatory draft feedback across the semester described in the syllabus. But, this feedback will only be given via an office hours meeting (during my regular office hours

or during a meeting made by appointment). I do not guarantee or generally offer additional written feedback.

### **Electronic Devices:**

Devices will be allowed for **proper use** in class. You have a good sense already about what counts as proper use. Because this class is small and discussion based, your improper use of electronic devices will distract your classmates, and impair your ability to participate in class and understand course material. Improper use of electronics during class, especially cell phones, **will result in a significant deduction of your participation/attendance grade.**

I also reserve the right to instate a ban on **all** electronic devices in the case of widespread improper use. In the case of a blanket ban on devices, exceptions will be granted for those with confirmation of need or disability accommodations, or individual permission granted after a conversation with me. I'm happy to talk through any questions about device use on an individual basis!

### **Respect:**

I expect that we will discuss issues on which we disagree, and will have strong opinions about those disagreements. It is absolutely crucial that our disagreements are respectful. Respectful engagement with our peers includes actively listening, refraining from distracting behaviors in class, taking others seriously, and respecting each others' time.

### **Inclusivity:**

Please know that this classroom respects and welcomes students of all backgrounds and abilities, and that I invite you to talk with me about any concern or situation that affects your ability to complete your academic work successfully.

### **Content warning:**

Please note that we will be discussing some controversial and potentially upsetting material as a part of this course. If you have any concerns about this content or anything else on the syllabus, please contact me as soon as possible.

### **Academic Honesty:**

Any form of academic dishonesty is unacceptable in this course; it will not be tolerated. This includes (but is not limited to) plagiarizing by failure to include proper citations on a written work, cheating on assignments, and acquiring pre-written essays. Please ensure that you are familiar with Wittenberg's code of academic integrity, which you can read at the following link: <https://www.wittenberg.edu/sites/default/files/media/honorcouncil/CodeOfAcademicIntegrity-Rev2022.pdf>. If you have any questions on what constitutes academic honesty, or especially any questions about how to cite properly (and when citations are required), please feel free to get in touch with me.

### **On Campus Resources:**

**Accessibility and ADA Accommodation**

Wittenberg University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, learning, chronic health, physical, hearing, vision and neurological, or temporary medical conditions, etc.), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, you must register with the Accessibility Services office by emailing [accessibilityservices@wittenberg.edu](mailto:accessibilityservices@wittenberg.edu). You can also find information on the Accessibility Services webpage found at [www.wittenberg.edu/success](http://www.wittenberg.edu/success). Please note that services are confidential, may take time to put into place, and are not retroactive. The Accessibility Services Office is located in the COMPASS: Sweet Success Center, Thomas Library, on the first floor.

**Counseling Services:**

Please check out the following website to see what is available to you in terms of on-campus counseling services: <https://www.wittenberg.edu/administration/healthwellness/tiger-counseling-services>. The counseling center is a fantastic resource for many different issues related to university life.

**Writing Center:**

The writing center is an excellent place to get more support on your writing projects, like the papers we will be working on in this class. For more information, and to make an appointment for writing assistance, check out the following link: <https://www.wittenberg.edu/administration/writingcenter>

**Syllabus Revision Policy:**

The instructor reserves the right to change ***any content on the syllabus and/or course policies, including grading scheme and course assignments at any time during the semester***. Changes will be announced in class, and a new syllabus/course policy document will be distributed via email and via Moodle if and when they are made.