

Feminist Philosophy

Philosophy 3720

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Section: MW9
Code: 2969

Semester: Spring 2013
Classroom: 4117 Boylan Hall
Meeting time: M/W 9:30-10:45
Credits: 3.0

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Office hours: M/W 12:30-2:00 and by appointment

Philosophy Department: 3308 Boylan Hall
Department Web Site: <http://depthome.brooklyn.cuny.edu/philo/>
Department Secretary: Linda Dwyer

SYLLABUS

Introduction

Feminist philosophers have introduced new perspectives into almost every area of philosophy ranging from epistemology to ethics. Feminists have offered an insightful critique of the presuppositions and biases found in traditional western philosophy, which often neglects the woman's perspective, and they have introduced new issues that are of special concern to women.

This course will focus on the practical and theoretical issues raised by feminist philosophers through a topic-based approach. The issues we shall consider include the influence of gender in the family, sexual harassment, pornography, abortion, the norms of feminine appearance, language reform, the difference between the way men and women think, the bias within science and respect for cultures. This course is designed to give students who may not have a background in feminist thought a sampling of their contribution to western philosophy.

Course Objectives

1. Students will improve critical thinking by developing skills of explaining, critically examining, and responding to feminist philosophical theories.
2. Students will improve writing skills by explaining, exploring, and critically examining feminist philosophical theories.
3. Students will improve communication skills by explaining orally feminist philosophical theories and arguments.

4. Students will develop an openness to having their beliefs challenged, and learn to comprehend and appreciate the beliefs of others.

Required Text

There is one required text that will supply all the readings for this course. The textbook has been ordered at the Brooklyn College Bookstore (located in the basement of Boylan Hall). It is also available at large retail bookstores, and internet bookstores.

Feminism: Issues and Arguments
Jennifer Mather Saul
Oxford University Press, 2003
ISBN: 0-19-924947-4

Note: Used copies of this text may be purchased online and are generally cheaper. There will be a copy of the textbook placed on reserve in the library.

Course Requirements and Grading

Exams: 75% There will be three in-class exams, two during the semester and one at our scheduled time during finals week. The exams will focus on the material we go over in class, which will be based primarily on the readings. They will be closed-book, closed-note exams with short essay questions. There will be a review session the week prior to each exam. Each exam will be worth 25% of your final grade.

Papers: 25% There will be 12 short writing assignments based on the readings for the week. The assignments are designed to help you critically examine what you have read and develop your writing skills. I will hand out topics for each writing assignment that will focus on some issue raised in the reading. You are free to ask questions, raise objections or offer your opinion in these writing assignments. Most importantly, the assignments should show me that you have completed the reading and given it some critical thought.

The assignments must be typed, double-spaced, and should be approximately 1-2 pages in length. Hand-written assignments will not be accepted – no exceptions. The assignments will not receive letter grades, but will be graded on a pass or fail basis. Unacceptable assignments will not receive credit, but you will have the opportunity to redo the assignments and resubmit them for credit.

You are permitted to skip two writing assignments without penalty. You must complete 10 assignments to receive full credit (which is equivalent to an A for 25% of your final grade).

Students who complete all 12 of the assignments will receive extra credit. Anyone completing less than 10 assignments will be penalized one-third of a letter grade for each missed assignment (meaning, 9 assignments = A-, 8 assignments = B+, 7 assignments = B, etc.).

The writing assignments must be submitted in class each week. Assignments will not be accepted by email – no exceptions. The due dates are listed on the reading schedule. If you miss class when an assignment is due, you may submit the assignment when you return to class. Otherwise, late assignments will not be accepted, unless there is a special circumstance and you receive permission.

Class Participation and Attendance: Attendance will be taken at the start of each class by means of a sign-in sheet. Attendance is important, because the writing assignments will only be accepted in class, and they count for 25% of your final grade. Please also be aware the readings may change, and I will make the relevant announcements about such changes in class.

Please be aware of the NY State Education Law, which provides that:

1. Any student in an institution of higher education who is unable, because of their religious beliefs, to attend classes on a particular day or days shall, because of such absence on the particular day or days, be excused from any examination or any study or work requirements.
2. It shall be the responsibility of the faculty to make available to each student who is absent from school, because of religious beliefs, an equivalent opportunity to make up any examination, study or work requirements which they may have missed because of such absence on any particular day or days
3. Any student who is aggrieved by the alleged failure of any faculty or administrative officials to comply in good faith shall be entitled to maintain an action or proceeding in the supreme court of the county in which such institution of higher education is located for the enforcement of their rights

Course Expectations

To do well in this course, you are expected to attend class, do the readings, participate in class discussions, take the exams, and complete all of the required writing assignments.

You are strongly encouraged to participate in class discussions, and to bring questions or comments on the readings. I will go over all of the reading material in lecture, but you do not have to bring your textbooks to class each week. Be aware that some of the readings are quite dense and may take some time (and effort) to get through. Please allow yourself sufficient time to read through all of the articles and to think through the relevant issues.

Your final grade for this course will be calculated according to the percentages listed above and will not be based on a curve. Be aware that I do not offer or accept additional extra credit assignments. Please do not ask if you can do extra work to elevate your grade.

If you arrive late to class or you must leave early, please be discreet and try to minimize the disruption. Excessive lateness will not be tolerated. Eating and drinking during class is permitted if done quietly, but try to be courteous to those around you. Cell phones must be turned off and put away during class. Please do not take them out during class.

If you have a disability or there is some reason you may not be able to complete your course work, please let me know as soon as possible.

If you miss an exam without notice, it is your responsibility to contact me about making it up. However, if I have already handed back the exam to the class and you still haven't taken it, you will not be permitted to do a make-up. If you foresee any conflicts, please contact me as soon as possible.

CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity

The faculty and administration of Brooklyn College support an environment free from cheating and plagiarism. Each student is responsible for being aware of what constitutes cheating and plagiarism and for avoiding both. The complete text of the CUNY Academic Integrity Policy and the Brooklyn College procedure for implementing that policy can be found at this site: <http://www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/bc/policies>. If a faculty member suspects a violation of academic integrity and, upon investigation, confirms that violation, or if the student admits that violation, the faculty member MUST report the violation.

CUNY Policy on Disability Services

In order to receive disability-related academic accommodations, students must first be registered with the Center for Student Disability Services. Students who have a documented disability or suspect they may have a disability are invited to set up an appointment with the Director of the Center for Student Disability Services, Ms. Valerie Stewart-Lovell at

718-951-5538. If you have already registered with the Center for Student Disability Services, please provide me with the course accommodation form and discuss your specific accommodation with me immediately.

Reading Schedule

This list is only tentative and it is your responsibility to keep up with any changes. All of the readings are from our textbook *Feminism: Issues and Arguments* and are listed by chapter. Due dates for the writing assignments (WA's) and the exams are also listed.

January 28	Introduction to the course
January 30	Introduction and Chapter 1 (WA#1 due)
February 4	Chapter 1
February 6	Chapter 1 (WA#2 due)
February 11	Chapter 2
February 13	Chapter 2 (WA#3 due)
February 18	President's Day – College Closed
February 20	(Monday Schedule) Chapter 3
February 25	Chapter 3 (WA#4 due)
February 27	Chapter 3
March 4	Exam #1
March 6	Chapter 4 (WA#5 due)
March 11	Chapter 4
March 13	Chapter 4 (WA#6 due)
March 18	Chapter 5
March 20	Chapter 5 (WA#7 due)
March 25	Spring Break
March 27	Spring Break

April 1	Spring Break
April 3	Chapter 5 (WA#8 due)
April 8	Chapter 6
April 10	Chapter 6 (WA#9 due)
April 15	Chapter 6
April 17	Exam #2
April 22	Chapter 7 (WA #10 due)
April 24	Chapter 7
April 29	Chapter 7 (WA #11 due)
May 1	Chapter 8
May 6	Chapter 8 (WA #12 due)
May 8	Chapter 9
May 13	Chapter 9
May 15	Chapter 9

Final Exam: Wednesday, May 22nd from 8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.