Feminist theory has both critical and constructive aims. Its critical aim is to reveal androcentric biases in our existing ways of thinking about the world. Its constructive aim is to develop ways of thinking about the world that do not distort the realities of women and other oppressed people.

In this course, we will examine four questions that are central to feminist theory:

1) How does oppression affect people’s capacities for autonomy and choice? Does the fact that participation in an oppressive practice is chosen make it less oppressive?

2) What knowledge practices by Western feminists perpetuate injustice to women in the global South and how do they distort Western women’s conceptions of their moral obligations to them?

3) What is intersectionality and what are the purpose/s of the concept of intersectionality?

4) How do existing practices of scientific knowledge acquisition and justification serve the interests of the powerful? How might we change our conceptions of knowledge so that we might arrive at claims about reality that are not distorted by the interests of the powerful?

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