

SPRING 2018

PHIL 3720 Philosophy and Feminism

Section R12 Registration Code 33629

Thursdays 12:50 – 3:30 PM

Prof. Serene Khader

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 two sets of 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) 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? We will focus on two subject areas in which knowledge can be ideologically distorted: scientific knowledge and knowledge of Westerners about third-world women.