**PHIL 3773: Topics in Feminist Philosophy**

**Sections 001 and H01 CR# 63981 (Honors CR# 63982)**

**HSS 1047**

**TR 2-3:15**

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**Course Description:** The connection between feminism and philosophy is a constantly evolving relationship. While it is undoubtedly the case that philosophy has long suffered from a univocal focus and ought to be more inclusive of underrepresented voices from women, members of the LGBTQ+ community, BIPOC, and disabled persons, it is not so clear how this inclusion ought to look. Should we, for example, offer courses that are entirely devoted to feminist thought, or is it better to include a feminist perspective in every philosophy course – or both? In terms of content, we will examine questions as they arise both in the ‘mainstream’ philosophical canon and among feminist theorists. For instance, mainstream Philosophy of Mind, has witnessed a surge of interest in the embodied and interpersonal aspect of cognition. Feminists, on the other hand, have been discussing the body and its connection to sex, gender, society, and performativity for decades. Would it be beneficial to engage in a 'Feminist Philosophy of Mind'? What would that look like? And what about the connection between theory and practice? What is the ideal discourse between feminist theory and the real, lived experiences of transgender persons? What about between feminism and race? Politics? Technology? Science? These are just a few of the many questions we will explore in this course. We will proceed topically, which means the standard philosophical categories by which one might envision a course unfolding — metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, etc.— will not necessarily guide our inquiry. Instead, as we work through these aforementioned questions, we will see various philosophical frameworks emerge, get questioned, or even outright rejected. Our task, by the end of the course, is to determine how to better approach "Feminist Philosophy" within the larger discipline of philosophy in the future.

**Program Outcomes:**This course contributes to the following program-level outcomes:  
  
1) Students will understand central issues and theories in philosophy (from among the major areas of metaphysics, epistemology, and value theory).  
2) Students will be able to analyze and explain complicated ideas.  
3) Students will be able to analyze arguments.  
4) Students will be able to evaluate arguments.

**Course-Specific Learning Outcomes:**

1) Students will understand and appreciate issues central to Feminist Philosophy – its history and current debates

2) Students will be able analyze, explain, and evaluate arguments in Feminist Philosophy, both in their writing and in discussion

3) Students will be better prepared for graduate coursework in areas related to Feminist Philosophy.

**Course Materials**

No required textbook. All readings will be available on my website. (Honors students are required to read an additional book for their extra assignment and in most cases, I have the book to loan you or you can purchase it on Amazon.)

**Grading Scale**

90-100 = A

80-89 = B

70-79 = C

60-69 = D

Below 60 = F

**Grade Distribution:**

Workbook Homework 20%

Papers (2 @ 20% each) 40%

Social ‘Experiment’ 20%

Participation/Attendance 20%

*Homework*

One of our required materials is the album, “Capture the Flag,” by the band, *War on Women* (You can listen to the album for free on Spotify or on their website: <https://waronwomen.bandcamp.com/album/capture-the-flag>. It comes with a workbook (which will be available on Blackboard under “readings”) and throughout the semester, you will be asked to write answers to various parts of that workbook, as those questions pertain to a song and a relevant part of the class. Each homework assignment will have a specific due date (almost always on a Thursday – see schedule) and once this date has passed, no late homework will be accepted, for any reason. I will drop two homeworks, so if you miss one or two, your grade should not suffer much.

*Papers*

There will be two longer papers (6-8 pages) assigned on topics relevant to the course material at that time. More detailed information will be provided at least a week before the paper(s) is due, and a rubric will be available on Blackboard.

*Social Survey*

Working in small groups (we will determine those early in the semester), you will design a study in which you seek to answer a research question that your group has developed. The research question will relate to one or more aspects of our course insofar as you will attempt to further elucidate something we have read or discussed in class by means of testing a hypothesis. This is not intended to be a scientific experiment – hence, there should be no studies designed such that IRB approval is needed (though if you design such a study and think you need to go through the proper ethics channels, we can discuss how to do so). Instead, your task is to collect data based on observation, anonymous questionnaires, surveys, etc. At the end of the semester, your group will present your findings to the class. More specific details about this assignment will be discussed in class within the first three weeks.

*Participation/Attendance*

Attending class regularly and participating in discussions is vital to a successful learning environment. I will take attendance daily and track your participation. Should we transition to online instruction at any point in the semester, participation will be assessed based on discussion boards, Zoom meetings, etc. Generally, a could absences with no verifiable excuses will not impact your grade, but when they become excessive, I will give you fair warning to get back on track. As always, communication is key here. I am far more willing to work with you if you talk to me about any issues you are having with participating/showing up.

**The “Fine Print”**

Students are expected to adhere to all guidelines in the Student Bulletin and Student Handbook (found online at astate.edu). In addition to all the official A-State guidelines, students in this class are expected to comply with the following:

* + Arrive to class on time and stay for the entirety of the class.
  + Attendance Policy: The only excused absences will be documented and will pertain to university-sanctioned events, illness, family emergency, or inclement weather. (Attending a routine dental appointment during my class is not an excused absence, e.g.).
  + Inclement Weather Policy: Information on campus closure can be found on the ASU web page, KASU, and local radio and television stations. If inclement weather prevents you from being able to come to class and campus is not closed, please call the main office of the philosophy department.
  + Cell phones, laptops, iPads, etc. are to be used *strictly* for academic purposes. I reserve the right to ask you to put your device away if it is distracting to me or the rest of the class.
  + Cheating: Just Don't Do It! If you are unsure about what constitutes plagiarism, just ask. Better to be safe than sorry. Here is the official statement from the Handbook:
    - *Arkansas State University enthusiastically promotes academic integrity and professional ethics among all members of the ASU academic community. Violations of this policy are considered as* *serious academic misconduct and may result in severe penalties. Sanctions for Academic* *Misconduct may be imposed by the faculty member or instructor discovering the Academic* *Misconduct except in the case of dismissal from a particular program which shall be made by the* *department chair or program director, or suspension or expulsion from the university, which shall* *be made by the dean. A Student may not avoid academic sanctions by withdrawing from a class, a* *program, or the university. A student disagreeing with the sanction issued based on Academic* *Misconduct should follow the Academic Grievance Procedure. It is the student’s responsibility to have read and understood the topics under Academic Misconduct section of the Student Handbook*
  + Policy on Missed Assignments/Make up work: Better late than never is my policy, but there will be deductions for assignments where the deadline is clearly indicated well in advance. Likewise, for homework, since there will be a dropped assignment, no late homework is accepted.
  + If you have a disability that might make it difficult for you to succeed in this course, please contact me as soon as possible. Your privacy will be respected and every effort will be made to meet your needs. All students requesting accommodations for disabilities should be registered through A-State’s Disability Services (870 972 3964). If Disabilities Services determines you should be able to take tests in their office, it is your responsibility to schedule the test for the same time and date as the exam is administered to other students.
  + Extra Credit: As a rule, I do not offer extra credit on assignments. If an opportunity, such as a lecture or a philosophy club event arises, and I deem it suitable for students to attend and write a short paper pertaining to it, then I might consider offering extra credit in this case. This is up to my discretion.
  + Email Policy: I will do my best to respond to emails in a timely manner. In order to get a quick response from me, it is imperative that you 1. List the course in which you are enrolled, 2. State your name somewhere in the body of the email, and 3. Be specific about what it is you are asking.
  + Inclusiveness Policy: I am part of the SafeZone community network of trained A-State faculty/staff/students who are available to listen and support you. As a SafeZone Ally, I can help you connect with resources on campus to address problems you face that interfere with your academic success, particularly issues of sexual violence, hateful acts, or concerns faced by individuals due to sexual orientation/gender identity. Likewise, racism, bigotry, and xenophobia have no place in our class or at this university. My goal is to help you be successful and to maintain a safe and equitable campus. Acts of discrimination will not be tolerated, and by agreeing to take this course, you also agree to treat others with inclusivity and equity. Every Red Wolf counts.
  + COVID policies/requirements: I will be adhering to the guidelines on A-State’s website pertaining to COVID (<https://www.astate.edu/safety/novel-coronavirus/campus-communications/>), and you are expected to do the same. In addition to these guidelines, I ask that you observe the following course policies and my preferences for my own personal safety and the safety of my family:
    - Do not approach me within fewer than 6 feet
    - Schedule office hours with me over Zoom. Even if I am in my office, it is too cramped in there for a safe visit.
    - You mask is to be worn properly (e.g. over the mouth and nose) the entire duration of class.
    - Refrain from eating/drinking in class as much as possible. Obviously, stay hydrated! And if you have a medical condition that requires you to eat on specific time intervals, talk to me about that. I just want to limit the amount of time we are pulling our masks down.

**Course Schedule (subject to modification)**

Week 1 (August 24 + 26) – Introductions + Feminist Foundations

***-* Wollstonecraft*: Chapter 2 from "A Vindication of the Rights of Women"***

***-* Video*: "We Should All be Feminists”, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie***

Week 2 (August 31 + September 2) – Sex, Gender, and Beyond

***-* Beauvoir*, from "The Second Sex"***

***-* Haslanger, *“Gender and Race: (What) are they and (What) do we want them to be?***

***Homework Due: “YDTMHTL”***

Week 3 (September 7 + 9) – Sex, Gender, and Beyond, cont’d – VIRTUAL CLASS THIS WEEK

***-* Foucault*, Introduction to "Herculine Barbin”***

***-* Fausto-Sterling*, from "Sexing the Body”***

***\*\*Note: this week we will hold class virtually (asynchronously) – No in-person meetings. Please see Blackboard and my emails for further instruction \*\****

***Homework Due: “Capture the Flag”***

Week 4 (September 14 + 16) – Performing Gender

***-* Butler*, from "Gender Trouble"***

***-* Young*, "Throwing Like a Girl"***

Week 5 (September 21 + 23) – Stereotyping, Sports, and Space

**- Lorber*, "Believing is Seeing: Biology as Ideology”***

***-* Merritt, Yap, Comley & Diehl*: “Stereotype Threat and the Female Athlete”***

***Homework Due: “Pleasure and the Beast”***

Week 6 (September 28 + 30) – Speech Acts and Injustice

**- Kukla*, “Performative Force, Convention, and Discursive Injustice”***

**- Fricker, *“Hermeneutical Injustice”***

**- Abramson, *“Turning up the Lights on Gaslighting”***

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***Homework Due: “Silence is the Gift”***

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Week 7 (October 5 + 7) - Feminist Epistemology and Intersectionality

***-* Dotson *“Tracking Epistemic Violence, Tracking Practices of Silencing”***

**- Hill-Collins*, from “Black Feminist Thought”***

**- Lorde, *“The Uses of Anger”***

Week 8 (October 12 + 14) - Feminist Epistemology and Intersectionality, cont’d

**- Narayan*, “Cross-Cultural Connections, Border Crossings, and Death by Culture”***

***Homework Due: “Anarcha”***

***\*\*\*First Paper Due,* *Sunday, October 17, by 11:59pm\*\*\****

Week 9 (October 19 + 21) Rape Culture

**- Card, *“Rape as a Terrorist Institution”***

**- Davis, *“Rape, Racism, and the Myth of the Black Rapist”***

***Homework Due: “Dick Pics” and “Say It”***

Week 10 (October 26 + 28) – Motherhood and Reproductive Justice

***-* Thomson*, “A Defense of Abortion”***

**- Merritt, *“Adoption: The Elephant in the Intersectional Feminist’s Room”***

***Homework Due: “Childbirth” and “Pro-life?”***

Week 11 (November 2 + 4) – Trans\* Inclusionary Feminism

**- Bettcher, *“Intersexuality, Transgender, and Transsexuality”***

**- Spade*, "Mutilating Gender"***

Week 13 (November 9 + 11) – Feminism and Masculinity

**- hooks, “Feminist Manhood,” from *The Will to Change: Men, Masculinity and Love***

**- Green*, "Look! No Don 't! The Visibility Dilemma for Transsexual Men”***

***Homework Due: “Lone Wolves” and “Effemimania”***

Week 12 (November 16 + 18) – Feminist Issues in Science

***- Fine, from “Delusions of Gender”***

***- Longino, “Taking Gender Seriously in Philosophy of Science”***

Week 14 (November 23 + 25) \*\*

**\*\* NO CLASS – Thanksgiving Break \*\***

Week 15 (November 30 + December 2) – The Future of Feminist Philosophy

***- Baumgardner, “Is there a Fourth Wave? Does it Matter?”***

***\*\* Social Experiment Presentations\*\****

Week 16 (December 7 + 9)

***\*\*Social Experiment Presentations\*\****

***Homework Due: “Divisive Shit”***

***\*\*Final Papers Due on Final Exam day\*\****

**Honors Addendum:**

In addition to all of the above, Honors students must complete an additional assignment as described below. A revised grade distribution is also listed below.

*Presentation and Paper on Assigned Reading –* Discussion ‘Leader’ for the Day

* Choose one of the readings assigned throughout the course.
* Tell me with enough advanced notice that this is the reading you plan to use so we can plan and avoid scheduling conflicts with other Honors students
* You will prepare a discussion of this reading that you will present to the class on the specified date.
* The discussion should involve the following elements:
  + Overview of the main ideas/thesis/central arguments of the reading
  + How the reading ties in with previous readings and discussions we have had
  + Analysis from you: questions you have, objections to certain points, stuff you thought was missing or could have made the argument(s) stronger, etc.
  + Attempts to engage the rest of the class in discussion (including but not limited to: discussion questions, audio-visual aids, activities, etc.)
  + The presentation has no specified time constraints – it might be that you have a concise 15 minute discussion, but we might talk about the reading the entire class and you will be free to continue raising questions and directing the class as you wish. It is your class that day – lead it the way you see fit. I will pop in and ask questions/shift the focus if we are getting off track or if you finish your presentation and I have more thoughts I want to share, but otherwise, you are in charge.
* You will also turn in a brief essay that essentially walks the reader through your presentation (so it will have an exegesis section, analysis section, and all the other discussion points you raise in your presentation – think of this as your ‘notes’ for the presentation, but written more formally like a paper. Aim for 3-4 pages)

**Honors Grade Distribution:**

Workbook Homework 20%

Papers (2 @ 20% each) 40%

Social ‘Experiment’ 20%

Participation/Attendance 10%

Presentation 10%