

# Feminism: Philosophical Theory and Practice

Laura Wildemann Kane

Sample Syllabus

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will explore the development of Western feminist philosophical thought from late 18th Century feminist philosophers to contemporary feminist philosophers. Some of the areas that we will focus on include: feminist epistemology (especially challenges to the traditional notion of objectivity), feminist theories on oppression and domination, feminist conceptions of the self (especially relational autonomy and intersectional identity), Feminist theories of race and responses to racist oppression, feminist theories on gender and responses to sexism, and transnational feminism. Overall, we will explore how feminists have challenged traditional knowledge paradigms and conceptions of the self, and examine several feminist theories about domination, race, gender, transnational solidarity, and the construction of knowledge.

## COURSE OBJECTIVES

The goals of this course are to provide students with a wide-ranging (though certainly not exhaustive) understanding of Western feminist thought and, by doing so, engage more deeply with broader philosophical debates.

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

1. Recognize, explain, and reflect upon the major philosophical arguments covered in this class, and critically compare them.
2. Understand the major goals of western feminism philosophy.
3. Hone critical thinking skills by analyzing philosophical arguments.
4. Refine writing skills through course papers and exams.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

- |        |  |
|--------|--|
| Week 1 | <b>Jean Jacques Rousseau</b> , <i>Emile</i> , Book V<br><b>Mary Wollstonecraft</b> , <i>"Of the Pernicious Effects which Arise from the Unnatural Distinctions Established in Society"</i> |
| Week 2 | <b>John Stuart Mill</b> , <i>The Subjection of Women</i> (selections)<br><b>Simone de Beauvoir</b> , <i>The Second Sex</i> (selection)   |
| Week 3 | <b>bell hooks</b> , <i>"Black Women: Shaping Feminist Theory"</i>  |
| Week 4 | <b>Ann Cudd and Leslie Jones</b> , <i>"Sexism"</i>   |

- Week 5 **Iris Marion Young**, *"Five Faces of Oppression"*
- Week 6 **Sally Haslanger**, *"Gender and Race: (What) Are They? (What) Do we Want Them to be?"*  
**Judith Butler**, *"Doing Justice to Someone: Sex Reassignment and Allegories of Transsexuality"*
- Week 7 **Lorraine Code**, *"Taking Subjectivity into Account"*  
**Elizabeth Anderson**, *"Feminist Epistemology: An Interpretation and a Defense"*
- Week 8 **Jane Roland Martin**, *Reclaiming a Conversation: The Ideal of the Educated Woman* (selection)
- Week 9 **Marilyn Friedman**, *"Autonomy, Social Disruption, and Women"*  
**Anita Allen**, *"Forgetting Yourself"*
- Week 10 **Simone de Beauvoir**, *Conclusion from The Second Sex*  
**Susan Moller Okin**, *"Toward a Humanist Justice"*
- Week 11 **Kimberle Crenshaw**, *Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color"*
- Week 12 **Serene Khader**, *"Toward A Decolonial Feminist Universalism"*
- Week 13 **Serene Khader**, *"Autonomy and the Secular: Do Muslim Women Need Freedom?"*
- Week 14 **Fiona Robinson**, *"Care Ethics and the Transnationalization of Care: Reflections on Autonomy, Hegemonic Masculinities, and Globalization"*