

PH254: Feminist Theory

Worcester State University
Fall 2021 Course Syllabus

Professor Laura Kane

Course Description

This course will begin by exploring how Western feminist philosophical thought was developed, from early responses to Rousseau’s *Emile* to contemporary accounts of oppression, sexism, misogyny, and intersectionality. Some of the areas that we will touch upon include: feminist epistemology (especially challenges to the traditional notion(s) of objectivity and gendered knowing), feminist accounts of oppression and domination, feminist conceptions of the self (especially relational autonomy and intersectional identity), feminist understandings of race and racial hierarchies, and feminist conceptions of gender and gender hierarchies. We will then move on to discuss transnational feminism and transnational challenges to Western feminist thought. Some of the topics we will touch upon include: multiculturalism and its relationship to feminism, imperialism and its relationship to global feminist movements, and the notion of idealism—can there be more than one “right” way to be a feminist? In exploring these topics, our class will be introduced to historical and contemporary feminist thought, as well as ongoing debates within feminist philosophy

The structure of this blended course is meant to facilitate, as best as possible, a space for students to thoughtfully engage with our course materials: to discuss them, pose questions about them, and to collaborate with others to make meaning and gain insight into the nature of philosophical inquiry. We will meet synchronously – either in person or through Zoom – once per week. There will also be asynchronous activities weekly. Please check the course schedule for specific meeting dates and time. Communication with me and with your peers will be the key to making this course run as smoothly as possible. There will be many opportunities to communicate in a variety of modalities, and I will be on hand to guide everyone as much as possible.

Course Reading Schedule

Week	Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
Week 1: <i>Introduction</i>	To Read: The Syllabus and informational documents
Week 2: <i>What is Feminism?</i>	To Read: John Stuart Mill, “The Subjection of Women” To Read: Simone de Beauvoir, Introduction from <i>The Second Sex</i>
Week 3: <i>What is Feminism?</i>	To Read: bell hooks, “Black Women: Shaping Feminist Theory” To Read: Sojourner Truth, “Ain’t I a Woman?”

Week 4: <i>Feminist Epistemology</i>	To Read: Elizabeth Anderson, “Feminist Epistemology: An Interpretation and a Defense”
Week 5: <i>Gender and Sex</i>	To Read: Judith Butler, “Performative Acts and Gender Constitution”
Week 6: <i>Gender and Sex</i>	To Read: Sally Haslanger, “Gender and Race: (What) Are They? (What) Do We Want Them to Be?” Watch In Class: Laverne Cox, “The T Word”
Week 7: <i>Sexism and Misogyny</i>	To Read: Marilyn Frye, “Oppression” To Read: Ann Cudd and Leslie Jones, “Sexism”
Week 8: <i>Sexism and Misogyny</i>	To Read: Kate Manne, “Threatening Women”
Week 9: <i>Intersectional Theory</i>	To Read: Kimberle Crenshaw, “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics” Watch In Class: Kimberlé Crenshaw: The Urgency of Intersectionality
Week 10: <i>Transnational / Universal Feminism</i>	To Read: Martha Nussbaum, “Women and Cultural Universals” To Read: Esra Özcan, "Who is a Muslim Woman? Questioning Knowledge Production on 'Muslim Woman'"
Week 11: <i>Transnational / Universal Feminism</i>	To Read: Serene Khader, “Toward A Decolonial Feminist Universalism”
Week 12: <i>Transnational / Universal Feminism</i>	To Read: Linda Martín Alcoff, “The Problem of Speaking for Others”
Week 13: <i>Transnational / Universal Feminism</i>	To Read: Saba Fatima, “Navigating the #MeToo Terrain in an Islamophobic Environment”
Week 14: <i>Presentations</i>	UNESSAY PRESENTATIONS
Week 15: <i>Presentations</i>	UNESSAY PRESENTATIONS