

## Feminism and Philosophy

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### Textbook

There is no required textbook for this course. Readings will be available on the course website.

### Course Description

In this course, students have the opportunity to explore, discuss, and debate questions at the core of feminist thought. Together we will investigate social body norms, the nature of gender, and widespread harms against women. Throughout the course, students will participate in a total of three in-class debates where everyone will get some hands-on experience applying these philosophical ideas to our contemporary circumstances.

### Course Goals

- (1) Describe major topics in feminist philosophy including what makes them distinctively philosophical.
- (2) Identify the major issues at stake in these debates and how those apply to contemporary issues.
- (3) Defend and critique your favored view in at least one major topic in a variety of formal and informal settings.

### Unit Goals

What is Feminism? What is feminist philosophy?	Describe what feminism is broadly and what analytic feminist philosophy is specifically.  Describe the tools of argumentation and apply them to at least one topic broadly understood as within Feminist concerns
Body Norms	Describe 1-2 Issues Centered on Body Norms in Feminist Philosophy and what is at stake in those debates.  Defend and Critique a particular stance on one of those issues.

Gender, Race, and Metaphysics	<p>Describe 1 gender related issue and 1 race related issue within feminist philosophy while identifying what is at stake in those debates.</p> <p>Defend and critiquing an assigned stance on a related contemporary case study.</p>
Misogyny and Harm against Women	<p>Describe 1-2 forms of harm against women while identifying what is at stake in those issues.</p> <p>Defend and critique your own view on a related contemporary case study.</p>

## READING SCHEDULE

### ***Unit 1 What is Feminism? What is Feminist Philosophy?***

#### Week 1 Introduction

Youtube - What is Feminist Philosophy? What does feminist philosophy mean?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8weVGTzffSI>

Youtube – “How to Argue – Philosophical Reasoning: Crash Course Philosophy #2”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NKEhdsnKKHs>

#### Week 2 Methods

“Bloomsbury Companion of Feminist Philosophy Ch 1”

Contemporary blog post TBD in order to get something current

### ***Unit 2 Body Norms***

#### Week 3 Beauty Norms

2pg essay on Unit 1 DUE by the first class meeting of this week.

“Feminist Pleasure and Feminine Beautification” by Ann J. Cahill

“Appearance as a Feminist Issue” by Deborah L. Rhode in *Body Aesthetics*

#### Week 4 Fatphobia

“Taste in Bodies and Fat Oppression” by A. W. Eaton in *Body Aesthetics*

“The injustice of fat stigma” by Rekha Nath

#### Week 5 Regulation & Medicalization of Women’s Bodies

Visual Aid due at the start of the first class meeting of this week

Ch 9 “Backlash: The Veil, the Burka, and the Clamour of War” in *A Quiet Revolution: The Veil's Resurgence, from the Middle East to America* by Leila Ahmed

“Medicalization and the Pill” by Anna Reser on *Lady Science*

<https://www.ladyscience.com/new-blog-2/1sqa0eecysoxf260fwyzieb12jb2xo>

#### Week 6

DEBATE: Should fat bodies be a protected class under the law? The debate will take place in class. There are no additional readings for this week

### ***Unit 3 Gender, Race, and Metaphysics***

#### Week 7 Intersectionality

10 Minute Podcast DUE at the start of the first class meeting of this week.

“Introducing Black Feminist Philosophy” by Kristie Dotson in *The Routledge Companion to Feminist Philosophy*

Sara Bernstein’s “Metaphysics of Intersectionality”

#### Week 8 Gender

Charlotte Witt, *The Metaphysics of Gender* (excerpts)

Sally Haslanger, “Race and Gender: (What) Are they? (What) Do we Want Them to be?”

#### Week 9 Race

Visual Aid Due at the Start of the first class meeting of this week.

Sally Haslanger “You mixed? Racial identity without racial biology” in *Adoption Matters: Philosophical and Feminist Essays*

“Racism and Visible Race” in *Visible Identities: Race, Gender, and the Self* by Linda Alcoff

#### Week 10

DEBATE: Should the law require individuals to identify their gender? The debate will take place in class. There are no additional readings for this week

### ***Unit 4 Misogyny and Harm Against Women***

#### Week 11 Misogyny

3pg essay on Unit 2 DUE by the first class meeting of this week

Kate Manne Ch 1 “Threatening Women” of *Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny*

#### Week 12 Implicit Bias/ Epistemic Harm

“The Heterogeneity of Implicit Bias” by Jules Holroyd & Joseph Sweetman

“Testimonial Injustice” by Miranda Fricker

#### Week 13 Objectification

Visual Aid Due at the start of the first class meeting of this week.

Martha Nussbaum “Objectification”

Nancy Bauer “What Philosophy Can’t Teach us About Sexual Objectification” from *How to do Things with Pornography*

#### Week 14

DEBATE: Should there be quotas for female hires in the workplace? The debate will take place in class. There are no additional readings for this week

#### Week 15

Review Material – no additional reading

Students submit a full draft of their final paper by 9:00am Monday Morning. Each student is assigned a peer paper to read as homework. The peer pairs meet during the next class session after following precise marking guidelines. Then the class engages in

speed peer-review where students rotate to get perspective on sections of their paper from a number of their peers.

**FINAL ESSAY DUE – at our assigned finals time.**

*For specific dates, see the document entitled “Calendar Overview.” This document provides a calendar view of the entire course including assignment and essay due dates.*

## Assignments

Your grade in this course is based on 1) your understanding of feminist philosophy and 2) your philosophical skill. You will be awarded credit for demonstrating these different skills. Here is the breakdown of the different assignments you can use to demonstrate these two features. You have complete control over your grade in this class—the more assignments you work through and the more class activities you participate in, the more likely you are to earn a high grade. Conversely, if you miss class, do not complete the written assignments, or fail to be an active participant, then you are not likely to succeed.

**1) ESSAYS [5,000]:** These essays are an opportunity for you to demonstrate your mastery of the potential solutions to the nature of the self. You will only need to draw on the homework assignments and class materials to complete these assignments. Late essays will be deducted 25% of the total points possible for each 24 hour period which passes from the deadline. Essays should be uploaded to [The Course Website](#). In total, essays are worth 5,000 points:

- ESSAY 1 – 500 points
  - Length = 2 page double spaced
  - **DUE: Middle of First Full Month of Course**
- PODCAST – 500 points
  - Length = 10 minutes
  - **DUE: Middle of Second Full Month of Course**
- ESSAY 3 – 1,500 points
  - Length = 3 pages double spaced
  - **DUE: Middle of Third Full Month of Course**
- ESSAY 4 – 2,500 points
  - Length = 5 pages double spaced
  - **DRAFT DUE: Two weeks prior to the final due date**

○ **DUE: Whenever the Final happens for the course**

*NOTE:* You are welcome to send drafts to me up to one week prior to the essay due date. This will give me sufficient time to generate comments, and you sufficient time to modify your work accordingly.

**2) HOMEWORK [1,500 points]:** For each day of class, you will have a reading assignment. You are to complete that assignment by the time class meets on the day it is assigned.

In addition, 3 days of the week (**SPECIFIC DAYS DEPEND ON WHEN CLASS MEETS**), you are required to upload a handwritten<sup>1</sup> 3 paragraph philosophical reflection. Each day's assignment must be submitted to the class **google folder by 11:59pm on the day it is due**. For example, the Aug 27th 3 Paragraphs must be uploaded by 11:59pm on Aug 27<sup>th</sup>.

On the days that the class meets, your reflection will be guided by specific prompts released at the end of that day's lecture. For the day that class does not meet, you are to write 3 paragraphs that engage in philosophy in some way. These are called free form 3 paragraphs. It is the student's responsibility to write such that the work can be read.

- Prompt Guided 3 paragraphs are worth **40** points each
- Free Form 3 paragraphs are worth **30** points each

All 3 paragraph assignments are graded as either no credit or full credit. Feedback on 3 paragraph assignments will be given to the class as a whole. No written feedback will be given for 3 paragraph assignments. The student's **two lowest scores on the 3 paragraph assignment will be dropped** from the final grade calculation.

**3) VISUAL AIDS [2,500 points]** Throughout the semester you are required to develop 3 visual aids.<sup>2</sup> The goals of these is to somehow illustrate at least one of the concepts that we have studied up to that point in the course. Within the visual aid, words should be kept to a minimum. Students must, in addition to submitting the visual aid itself, include a single paragraph explaining the visual aid. Examples of visual aids include but are not limited to: a single powerpoint slide, a hand drawn image, a piece of digital art, or a diagram.

- The first visual aid is worth **500** points
- Visual aids two and three are each worth **1000** points

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<sup>1</sup> If you have a learning difference or need an accommodation regarding hand writing 3 paragraphs, please come see me immediately.

<sup>2</sup> If you have a learning difference or need an accommodation regarding the development of a visual aid, please come see me immediately.

**4) PARTICIPATION [1,000 points]:** Students are expected to attend class, and actively engage. This course is largely activity based, so it is critical that all class members work together to master the material. In total, participation is worth 1,000 points. The student's **two lowest participation scores will be dropped** from the final grade calculation.

- Each day of class is worth **36** points for participation

### **Grades and Grading Policies**

Your grade will be determined by total points earned out of a potential 10,000 points. There are no comparative assessments in this class; it is entirely up to you how well you perform. As you'll see, strong participation and regular writing can make up for your less-than-stellar performance on the essays. There are many routes to a good grade.

**A (9,500+):** This student has demonstrated a thorough knowledge of the various potential solutions to the nature of the self and their philosophical skill. The student is able to both discuss and write about these topics in a sophisticated and persuasive way by exercising their philosophical abilities, apply elements of them in novel ways, and is an active and supportive citizen of the class.

**A- (9,000-9,499)**

**B+ (8,500-8,999)**

**B (8,300 – 8,499):** This student has demonstrated competent knowledge of the material covered in both the lectures and readings, is able to analyze arguments and present objections and replies, writes clearly, and actively participates in class activities. The student may show some difficulty in applying elements of the Buddhist philosophical system in new contexts, chose not to pursue some opportunities to develop writing and critical thinking skills, or struggled with one or two particular units in the course.

**B- (8,000 - 8,299)**

**C+ (7,500 -7,999)**

**C (7,300-7,499):** This student shows understanding of most of the material covered in the lectures and readings, demonstrates an ability to analyze arguments from the Buddhist philosophical tradition as well as consider objections, and participates in class activities from time-to-time. However, the student does not demonstrate competency in some topics of the course, has missed or poorly composed assignments, or is unable to apply the material in new contexts.

**C- (7,000-7,299)**

**D (6,000-6,999):** This student shows understanding of some but not all of the material; serious deficiencies in writing, and may have missing or incomplete work

**F (5,999 or fewer):** This student failed to show understanding of the Buddhist philosophical tradition and may have substantial missing or incomplete work.

### **Course content:**

Some of the topics and texts in this class contain content that people might find triggering, offensive, or just uncomfortable. If you are concerned about any of this material, feel free to discuss concerns with me at any time during the term. And please remember that the student counseling center is available to provide additional support.

### **Academic Integrity [Modify by Institution]**

All students must abide by the Notre Dame Honor Code: “As a member of the Notre Dame community, I will not participate in or tolerate academic dishonesty.” Details are available can be found [here](#). Please note that academic dishonesty (including plagiarism and unauthorized multiple submissions of work for assignments) will not be tolerated and will be punished severely.

### **Students with Disabilities [Modify by Institution]**

I am strongly committed to working with students who have any disability recognized under the Americans with Disabilities Act to ensure that they are able to fully participate in class activities. If you feel you require a reasonable accommodation, please follow the process described [here](#).

### **Email Policy**

I check my email once every weekday. That means I may not respond to your inquiry for up to 24 hours during the week. Please plan accordingly.