

Feminist Philosophy

Instructor

Maria Waggoner

Office Hours

TBD

Email

Maria.waggoner0522@gmail.com

Course Overview

This course introduces students to central issues within feminist philosophy. We begin with theoretical questions – those concerning the metaphysics of sex and gender and theories of knowing, evidence, and rationality. We then move to applied issues that women may encounter everyday – issues of pornography, the right to sex, abortion, gender roles in the workplace and family, and religious practices.

This course will involve typical reading and argumentative papers, as well as ‘engagement’ assignments, which will require students to go out into the world to talk to another woman about a particular issue that is being covered in class.

Course Schedule

Week	Subject	Readings/Assignments
Week 1	Metaphysics	Sally Haslanger (2012): “Gender and Race: (What) Are They? (What) Do We Want Them to Be?”
Week 2	Metaphysics	Witt (2011): <i>Metaphysics of Gender</i> , Chs. 4 & 5
Week 3	Metaphysics	Zanghellini (2020): “Philosophical Problems with the Gender-Critical Feminist Argument Against Trans Inclusion” Talia Mae Bettcher (2013): “Trans Women and the Meaning of ‘Woman’”
Week 3	Epistemology	Lloyd (1993): <i>The Man of Reason</i> , Ch. 2
Week 4	Epistemology	Jaggar (1989): “Love and Knowledge”
Week 5	Epistemology	Fricker (2007): <i>Testimonial Injustice</i> , Chs. 1 & 7 *At least one interview/reflection paper must be completed by this week.
Week 6	Epistemology	Kate Abramson (2014): “Turning Up the Lights on Gaslighting” Barnes (2020): “Women’s Pain and the Hysteria Accusation” Solnit (2008): “Men Explain Things to me”
Week 7	Ethics & Political Society	Okin (1989): <i>Justice Gender and the Family</i> , Ch. 2 Argumentative First Paper Draft Due

Week	Subject	Readings/Assignments
Week 8	Ethics & Political Society	Little (1999): “Abortion, intimacy, and the duty to gestate” Argumentative First Final Paper Due
Week 9	Ethics & Political Society	Watson (2015): “Why Sex Work Isn’t Work” Watson (2022): “An Equality Approach to Prostitution”
Week 10	Ethics & Political Society	Altman (2014): “The Right to Get Turned On: Pornography, Autonomy, Equality” Srinivasan (2021): <i>The Right to Sex</i> , Ch. 3
Week 11	Ethics & Political Society	Bianchi (2017): “Transgender Women in Sport”
Week 12	Religion	Lazreg (2009): <i>Questioning the Veil</i> , Letter 5 Amijee (forthcoming): “How to be a Feminist Muslim”
Week 13	Religion	Beverly Clack (2013): “Feminism and the Problem of Evil” Argumentative Second Paper Draft Due
Finals Week		Argumentative Second Final Paper Due

Course Materials

All reading materials can be found on Canvas, under “Files.” Readings are to be done in advance, for that week – e.g. readings in the Week 2 folder should be read before you come to class on Week 2.

Assignments

This course will have four graded components. All grading will be blinded, so please do not put your name on your assignments--use only your Student ID number. You can use the weightings below to calculate your performance throughout the semester.

Reading Quizzes (20%): You are expected to come to class having read--and thought about--the assigned readings. There will be a handful (~5-8) of in-class ‘pop’ quizzes. The content of these quizzes will consist of 5-10 questions (multiple choice, T/F, fill in the blank, etc.), covering the main points from the reading for today’s class. The quizzes are ‘open note’ – any notes you take (on notebook paper, not on the article itself) while reading are allowed to be used while taking the quiz. If you are absent on a day we have a class, you receive a 0% for that day’s quiz. However, I will drop one (the lowest) quiz score at the end of the semester – so you essentially have one ‘free skip’ if you need to miss class.

Interview/Reflection Papers (30%): Through the course of the semester, you will select three topics and conduct three interviews with a woman, asking her to give her perspective, experience, and opinion on the topic. For any given topic and interview, they will be due one week *after* the topic is discussed. This will give you time to think about the questions you’d like to ask in light of our readings and classroom discussion, conduct the interview, and write up a 1 page reflection paper. A rubric for the reflection paper will be distributed at the beginning of the semester.

Argumentative Papers (30%): You will be asked to complete two short writing assignments throughout the semester. The first assignment (2-3 pages) will simply involve fleshing out the author's main argument of an article we will read for class (more to come), while the second assignment (5-6 pages) will involve you constructing an argument for or against the specific issue we will be discussing during class time.

All three short writing assignments will involve you bringing a draft of your paper to class, getting feedback in class, and then writing a final draft, due one week later. You should bring a hard copy of the draft with you to class the week before the final due date. You will need to turn in your short paper (by Canvas, details below) before the start of class on the day that it is due.

Participation (20%): Participation is based on the following: attendance, paying attention to lectures, videos, etc., respectfully listening to classmates, engaging in discussion – whether through doing so verbally, submitting written discussion questions ahead of time (more on this to come), responding to online polls, etc. If you are worried about your ability to participate in these ways, please talk to me and can figure out an alternative way for you to participate.

Classroom Policies

In order to help ensure a successful class, please heed the following rules and policies:

Anonymity on Assignments: Research shows that anonymous grading reduces the chances for implicit bias, making for more fair grading policies. In light of this, I ask that you submit (rough and final) drafts of your papers to Canvas and put your Student ID number and the assignment number (example: 654321-AP1) on the top of the document but **omit your name**.

Due Dates: Barring unusual circumstances, the due dates on the syllabus are non-negotiable. If you think you have reason to request an extension, it is best to inform me well in advance. Any late assignments will be subject to a grade penalty.

Classroom Environment: Please arrive to class on time. All cell phones must be turned off during class. Texting, surfing the web, and the like are not permitted. Abuse of these courtesies may lead to penalties. Please have readings for the day completed, and a copy available for referencing during classroom discussion. I find that students do better when discussing the class readings if they can look back at specific passages or paragraphs during class. I encourage you to print out the readings ahead of time and bring a hard copy to class. I strongly discourage the use of tablets and/or laptops in the classroom, even for note-taking purposes. (Research indicates that computer use in class is strongly correlated with poorer performance on assignments and learning.) However, I am aware that some students have difficulty taking notes with paper and pen, and so if you feel as though you need to use a tablet or laptop for notetaking, use of a laptop or tablet is allowed for these purposes only.