

**PHIL 275/ WMST 275:**  
**Moral and Philosophical Issues of Gender in Society**

UNC Summer Session II

11:30 am - 1 pm, Dey Hall 201

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Office hours: 1:30 pm - 2:30 pm Tuesdays and Thursdays, and by appointment

**Course description**

This course will address three major issues within feminist theory: sex/gender, sexism, and intersectionality. First, we will investigate the nature of gender and sex, asking such questions as: What is the difference between gender and sex? What are the metaphysical underpinnings of gender? Are “male” and “female” sufficient for categorizing biological sex, or are more categories needed? Next, we will explore historical and contemporary forms of sexism in Western society, including educational oppression, financial subjugation, epistemic injustice, and implicit bias. Finally, we will look at some of the ways that gendered identity and sexism intersect with racial identity and racism. Is feminism primarily for the benefit white women? What if one finds oneself at the intersection of more than one oppressed group?

**Learning objectives**

By the end of this course, students will be familiar with several of the main debates in feminist theory. They will be able to read philosophical articles carefully enough to charitably reconstruct a paper’s central arguments. Furthermore, they will be able to critically assess arguments, providing possible objections and responses to objections. They will develop their own understanding of feminist theory and will be able to present arguments to support their conclusions.

**Required books**

*Theorizing Feminisms: A Reader* (TF in assignment schedule)

Edited by Elizabeth Hackett and Sally Haslanger

ISBN-13: 978-0195150094

*The Politics of Reality: Essays in Feminist Theory* (PR in assignment schedule)

Marilyn Frye

ISBN-13: 978-0895940995

Other readings will be made available on Sakai.

## Course Requirements

*Preparation:* You are expected to come to class having read the assigned readings carefully and critically.

*Attendance and Participation:* To do well in this class, you will need to attend regularly and engage in active participation. Part of adequate participation includes reading the assigned course material ahead of time. It also includes listening actively to and engaging respectfully with the other students in the class.

Many of the topics discussed in this course are sensitive or controversial. What is most important is not that all of us agree on everything all the time (we won't), but that we engage thoughtfully and respectfully with each other, taking care to be charitable to all arguments presented. Being charitable to an argument means attempting to fully understand exactly where the argument goes right, where it goes wrong, and what could be done to make the argument better.

You may disagree with the conclusions of any of the readings in this class, but disagreement does not give license to dismiss. This is especially important in philosophy, which, rather than a combative hurling of rhetoric in pursuit of personal victory, ought to be a collaborative effort in search of deeper understanding, and truth. You are more likely to come to the right conclusions in the end if you are able to listen to others and allow their views to challenge how you think.

*Electronics:* Turn off all electronic devices (computers, phones, tablets, etc.) prior to the beginning of class. Use of such devices will result in a zero for participation for the day.

## Assignments

Assignment	Weight
Class participation	10%
Reading responses	15%
Paper #1 (3-4 pages*)	15%
Peer review comments	15%
Paper #2 (6-7 pages*)	25%
Final Exam	20%
Extra credit poster project	Extra credit (up to 3% of final grade)

\*Written work for this course must total at least ten pages

*Class participation:* To get full points for participation, you should participate in class conversation at least once or twice a class period. Just attending class is not enough. Every time you talk,

your comments should be (a) relevant, (b) coherent, and (c) respectful. Consistent failure to comply with any of these requirements will result in a poor participation grade. **If you worry that you will struggle to fulfill the participation requirement, please let me know.**

*Reading responses:* At the beginning of most class periods there will be a reading response question, based on the reading assigned for the day, which you will answer in class and turn in to me. These will each be graded out of 10 points. I will award fewer than 6 points if it is unclear whether you have done the reading. I will award 6 points if it is clear that you have done the reading, but misunderstood it. I will award 8 points for passable understanding of the reading, and 10 points for superior understanding. At the end of term, I will drop your lowest three reading response scores.

*Paper #1:* You will write one 3-4 page paper in which you critically assess an argument presented in class (either in the readings or in discussion). After reconstructing the argument, you will provide one or two objections to it. Then, you will either respond to the objections you provide, or explain why you think that the objections undermine the original argument. Both papers should be typed (12-pt font, double spaced, 1-in margins) and emailed to me by midnight on the due date. The papers will be assessed for accuracy in reconstructing the original argument, strength of objections, quality of critical thought, and quality of writing. You will have the option to rewrite this paper based on the comments you receive from me.

*Paper #2:* You will write one 5-7 page paper in which you take a stand on an issue relating to feminist theory. This can be an idea presented in the readings, in class, or something of your own choosing. **You should discuss your idea with me before starting serious work on this paper.** You should state your view clearly, give reasons to think that your view is correct, and address at least one possible objection to your position. Papers will be assessed for organization, critical thought, plausibility of objections, responses to objections, and quality of writing.

*Peer review comments:* Before handing in your second (longer) paper to me, you will be required to peer-review another student's rough draft. **If you do not submit a rough draft to be peer-reviewed, you will not be able to participate in the peer-review and you will receive a zero for this assignment.** You will comment on the structure/organization, clarity in laying out the original argument, critical thought, plausibility of objections, and responses to objections. I will grade you on the quality of your comments. Peer review comments will be given to the author of the draft.

*Final exam:* The final exam will consist of several short-answer questions.

*Extra credit poster project:* This is an optional project which is worth extra credit. Depending on the quality of the project, each student who completes it may earn credit worth up to 3% of the overall course grade. Together with a partner, you will create and present a poster which applies a topic covered in class to a recent event, a piece of popular culture (a TV show, movie, musical album, or book), or a piece of art (a play, opera, painting, famous book, etc.). Projects other than posters are allowed with prior permission of the instructor.

## Grading policies

*Late work:* Due dates for assignments are firm. For every 24-hour period that an assignment is late, the assignment will be docked one full letter grade (10%). If you have arranged for an extension in advance, this policy does not apply.

*Extensions:* I allow pre-arranged extensions. If you think you need an extension on an assignment, please contact me *at least* 24 hours in advance. **Due to the nature of the assignments, no extensions will be granted for the rough draft of Paper #2 or for the Peer Review Comments.**

*Blind grading:* For the two papers and the final exam, I will grade work without knowing who the author is. This means you shouldn't put any identifying information on them, other than your PID. You also shouldn't use distinctive formatting or fonts: 12 pt, double-spaced, Times New roman, please. I know it makes your paper look kind of boring, but fancy styles threaten anonymity.

*Assignment submission:* Written assignments are to be turned in via email (to [jrlawson@live.unc.edu](mailto:jrlawson@live.unc.edu)) by midnight on the due date. There will be a slightly different submission policy for the rough draft of Paper #2 and the peer review comments, which I will make clear closer to the deadline.

*Honor code:* Students are expected to abide by the UNC Honor Code at all times. You are responsible for understanding the terms of the Honor Code, and for understanding what constitutes plagiarism (see <http://studentconduct.unc.edu> for more information).

You may not submit work for this class that has previously been submitted for another class. If you are ever unsure whether your work complies with ethical standards of academic integrity, please come see me or visit <http://studentconduct.unc.edu> for more information.

### *Grading scale:*

A-range (90-93 = A-, 94-100 = A): Work that earns an A grade demonstrates insightful engagement with the course material and impressive mastery of central concepts. Argument reconstructions show attention to detail, are sensitive to nuance, and highlight the importance of the central dialectical moves in the piece. Criticisms are insightful, original, and particularly well developed. Writing is not only clear, but beautiful.

B-range (80-83 = B-, 84-86 = B, 87-89 = B+): Work that earns a B grade demonstrates competence and thoughtful engagement with the course material. Argument reconstructions are accurate and highlight the most important dialectical moves in the piece. Criticisms are thoughtful and well developed. Writing is clear and pithy.

C-range (70-73 = C-, 74-76 = C, 77-79 = C+): Work that earns a C grade demonstrates adequate comprehension and engagement with course material. Argument reconstructions are mostly accurate. Criticisms are relevant to the course material, but may lack development. Writing may demonstrate some problems with organization or structure, but is intelligible.

D-range (60-66 = D, 67-79 = D+): Work that earns a D grade demonstrates a lack of comprehension of and engagement with the course material. Argument reconstructions are

inaccurate. Criticisms are irrelevant or fallacious. Writing is unstructured and often difficult to understand.

## Course schedule

This schedule is subject to change, depending on time constraints. I will announce all changes in advance over email and in class.

Date	Topic	Required Readings	Assignments
6/26 (Mon)	<b>Course intro</b>	None	
6/27 (Tues)	<b>Feminism</b>	bell hooks, <i>Feminism is for Everybody</i> , Chapter 1 (Sakai)	Paper #1 assigned
6/28 (Wed)	<b>Sex and Gender</b>	Alison Stone, <i>An Introduction to Feminist Philosophy</i> , pp. 30-37 (Sakai) Linda Geddes, "Sex and Gender" (Sakai)	
6/29 (Thurs )		Simone de Beauvoir, introduction to <i>The Second Sex</i> (pp. 114-123 of TF)	
6/30 (Fri)		Sally Haslanger, "Gender and Social Construction: Who? What? When? Where? How?" (pp. 16-23 of TF)	
7/3 (Mon)		John Boswell, "Toward the Long View" (Sakai. Note: this is a long reading; make sure you give yourself plenty of time to read it.)	Paper #1 due by midnight
7/4 (Tues)		NO CLASS	
7/5 (Wed)		Talia Mae Bettcher, "Trans Women and the Meaning of 'Woman'" (Sakai)	
7/6 (Thurs )	<b>Oppression and Sexism</b>	Iris M. Young, "The Five Faces of Oppression" (pp. 3-15 of TF)	
7/7 (Fri)		Sojourner Truth, "Ar'n't I a Woman?" (p. 113 of TF) Wollstonecraft, introduction of <i>Vindication on the Rights of Women</i> (Sakai. Note: although this is a short reading, it's tough; make sure you give yourself time to read it more than once.)	
7/10		John Stuart Mill, Chapter 1 of <i>The Subjection of</i>	Paper #1 rewrite due by

(Mon)		<i>Women</i> (pp. 97-112 of TF)	midnight
7/11 (Tues)		Marilyn Frye, "Oppression" (pp. 1-16 of PR)	Paper #2 assigned
7/12 (Wed)		Frye, "Sexism" (pp. 17-38 of PR.)	
7/13 (Thurs )		David French, "Implicit Bias Gets an Explicit Debunking", from <i>National Review</i> , Jan. 10, 2017 (Sakai)  Daniel A. Yudkin and Jay van Bavel, "The Roots of Implicit Bias", from <i>The New York Times</i> , Dec. 9, 2016 (Sakai)	
7/14 (Fri)		Miranda Fricker, <i>Epistemic Injustice</i> , Chapter 1, section 1.3 (pp. 16-29, available via the UNC library website)	
7/17 (Mon)		Miranda Fricker, <i>Epistemic Injustice</i> , Chapter 7, sections 7.1 and 7.2 (pp. 147-161, available via the UNC library website)	Paper #2 first draft due by midnight  Peer review comments assigned
7/18 (Tues)		Frye, "A Note on Anger" (pp. 84-94 in PR)  Watch <i>Master of None</i> , "Ladies and Gentlemen" in class. <b>NOTE: there is (non-racial) offensive language in this episode. If you desire an alternative assignment, I will happily provide you with one. Please let me know at least 24 hours in advance if this is the case.</b>	
7/19 (Wed)	<b>Intersectionality</b>	Audre Lorde, "Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference" (pp. 292-297 in TF)	
7/20 (Thurs )		Frye, "On Being White" (110-127 of PR)	
7/21 (Fri)		Elizabeth Martínez, "La Chicana" (Sakai)  Junot Díaz, "The Pura Principle" (Available at: <a href="http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2010/03/22/the-pura-principle">http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2010/03/22/the-pura-principle</a> )	Peer review comments due by midnight  Extra credit poster project assigned

7/24 (Mon)		Almas Sayeed, "Chappals and Gym Shorts: An Indian Muslim Woman in the Land of Oz" (Sakai)	
7/25 (Tues)		Angela Davis, "Mama's Got the Blues" (431-444 in TF)	
7/26 (Wed)		(No assigned reading)  Watch Beyoncé's <i>Lemonade</i> in class. <b>NOTE: there is (racial and non-racial) offensive language in this visual album. If you desire an alternative assignment, I will happily provide you with one. Please let me know at least 24 hours in advance if this is the case.</b>	Paper #2 due by midnight
7/27 (Thurs )	<b>Review</b>	(No assigned reading)  Poster presentations and exam review	Extra credit poster project due in class
7/31 (Mon)		<b>FINAL EXAM (11:30 AM)</b>	