

PHIL 242 – Introduction to Feminist Theory

Fall 2013

Lectures: Monday and Wednesday, RPHYS 112, 12:35-1:25

Instructor: Zoli Filotas (edwin.filotas@mail.mcgill.ca)

Office hours: Wednesdays, LEA 939, 3:00-5:00

This course is dedicated to the study of essays in feminist theory, focusing both on classics from the 70s and 80s and newer contributions from the 90s to the present. It is arranged by theme. We will start with broad questions about how to understand the oppression of women, move through a discussion of women's experience and the feminist perspective, consider the roles of science and culture in explaining sexual difference, and close with feminist approaches to issues like romantic love and the emotions. Topics discussed along the way will include the intersection of sexism and racism, the Western nuclear family, Marxism, eating disorders, and romantic love.

The lectures and assignments will focus on close reading and analysis of the texts—we will pay special attention to structure and argument, focusing on the ways that feminist theorists frame their questions, single out central topics, and develop them into a wide range of analyses and calls for action.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS

Sept. 4 Introductory class (no readings)

Describing the Problem 1: Oppression, Intersectionality, and Privilege

- Sept. 9 "Sexism," Ann Cudd & Leslie Jones
"Oppression," Marilyn Frye
- Sept. 11 "Five Faces of Oppression," Iris Marion Young
- Sept. 16 "Introduction to *The Second Sex*," Simone de Beauvoir
- Sept. 18 "Black Women: Building Feminist Theory," bell hooks
- Sept. 23 "Contesting Cultures," Uma Narayan
- Sept. 25 "White Privilege and Male Privilege," Peggy McIntosh
"Psychological Oppression," Sandra Bartky

Describing the Problem 2: Gender Roles, Economy, and Family

- Sept. 30 "The Traffic in Women," Gayle Rubin
- Oct. 2 "The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism," Heidi Hartmann
- Oct. 7 "The Psychodynamics of the Family," Nancy Chodorow
- Oct. 9 "Woman's Place in Man's Life Cycle," Carol Gilligan
- Oct 14 No class. Happy Thanksgiving!

Experience and Knowledge 1: Feminist Consciousness

- Oct. 16 "Toward a Phenomenology of Feminist Consciousness," Sandra Bartky
"Male Feminism as an Oxymoron," David Kahane
- Oct. 21 "The Feminist Standpoint," Nancy Hartsock
- Oct. 23 "Defining Feminist Thought," Patricia Hill Collins

Experience and Knowledge 2: What is a Woman? Science, Objectivity, and Social Construction

Oct. 28 “Ontology and Social Construction,” Sally Haslanger

Nov. 4 “Situated Knowledges,” Donna Haraway

Nov. 6 “Performative Acts and Gender Constitution,” Judith Butler

Romance and Sexuality

Nov. 11 “Feeding Egos and Tending Wounds,” Sandra Bartky

Nov. 13 “Sexuality,” Catharine MacKinnon

Nov. 18 “Thinking Sex,” Sandra Bartky

Nov. 20 “Lesbians in Revolt,” Charlotte Bunch
“Some Reflections on Separatism and Power,” Marilyn Frye

Emotions and the Body

Nov. 25 “Love and Knowledge: Emotion in Feminist Epistemology,” Alison Jaggar

Nov. 27 “The Body and the Reproduction of Femininity,” Susan Bordo

Dec. 2 “Throwing Like a Girl,” Iris Marion Young

Review and Concluding Remarks

Dec. 3 “Feminism, Utopianism, and the Role of the Ideal in Political Philosophy,” Drucilla Cornell

REQUIRED TEXT

Coursepack available from the McGill University Bookstore.

EVALUATION

- 20% Short paper (approx. 600 words)
- 35% Longer written assignment (approx. 1400 words)
- 35% Take-home final exam
- 5% Reading quizzes and in-class assignments
- 5% Conference participation

CONFERENCES

The course includes weekly, discussion-based conferences. They are an important part of the course, and attendance is required. You will need to sign up on Minerva.

LATE PAPERS AND EXTENSIONS

Written assignments are due in conferences. Extensions for papers will only be granted under unusual circumstances and will normally require supporting documents (e.g. doctors' notes). Late papers will lose one third of a grade per day (e.g., a paper that would normally have gotten an A- will get a B+ if it's handed in the day after the due date). Missed quizzes and in-class assignments cannot be made up.

In order to pass the course, students must submit both written assignments and write the exam.

GRADE APPEAL POLICY

In order to appeal a grade, you must submit a one-page request to the instructor, explaining why you think the original grade is inappropriate. The paper will be re-evaluated, and the grade may go up or down.

MCGILL POLICY STATEMENTS

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information).

In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.