

PHIL 226/WGST 226: FEMINIST THEORY (Honors)

Fall 2014

12487/13640: MW 3:30 p.m. – 4:45 p.m. (Pray-Harrold 220)

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Office Hours: MW 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m., Th. 1:00 to 3:00 p.m., and by appointment
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Course Description

Feminist theory is an area of thought that seeks to expose, analyze and critically assess the justice of gender inequalities present in our society, in other societies, and globally. *By its nature, feminist theory is philosophical.* This means that the methods by which we will seek knowledge in this class are logic and reason, that our subject matter will typically be conceptual and abstract, and that we will question unacknowledged assumptions and beliefs whose truth is conventionally regarded as obvious.

This course focuses on six sets of questions:

- What is feminism? How has it changed over time? (Why?) How is feminism misrepresented? (Why?)
- What is gender (as opposed to sex)? To what extent is gender “natural”? To the extent that gender is not natural, why does it exist? Is gender an unjust social institution?
- What is sexism? Why is sexism unjust? How is sexism distinct from other forms of group-based injustice (e.g., racism)? How is it alike?
- How is contemporary American society sexist, if at all? Are women oppressed? Are men oppressed? What is the philosophical significance of the fact that all people experience multiple forms of oppression and privilege simultaneously?
- How should feminists reason about apparently sexist practices occurring outside of their own society? What (if anything) is the moral duty of Western feminists to women in poor, non-Western countries?
- What are the ultimate goals of feminism? How must societies be designed or reformed in order to satisfy feminist ideals? What is a gender-just society?

There are many goals I hope this course will achieve. This course will help students to

- understand what feminism is, in distinction to the way it is popularly portrayed,
- reconstruct arguments presented in feminist philosophical literature,
- learn to reason in a way that is sensitive to gender and gender inequality,
- develop a capacity to recognize gender bias in mundane, everyday interactions and social institutions that are usually taken for granted as natural or inevitable, and
- recognize gender bias in their own beliefs, held out of convention or upbringing

Feminist Theory is a cross-listed course. This means that students may enroll under either the PHIL or the WGST prefix. Regardless of which prefix you have enrolled under, please be aware that you are in a *Philosophy* course that it *about gender*. It would be a mistake to think that this is a course whose content is half Philosophy and half Women’s and Gender Studies. This is wholly a Philosophy course that is wholly about the topic of gender.

Required Texts

The main course text is *Feminist Theory: A Philosophical Anthology*, edited by Ann E. Cudd and Robin O. Andreasen (Blackwell, 2005). Please be aware that the financial cost of taking this course includes, along with tuition, your purchase of this book. You must possess a copy of this book before the third day of class.

We will also read several articles (denoted by *** in the schedule below) not contained in the Cudd & Andreasen anthology. These articles will be available on the course's online shell. (See below.)

Assessment

1. Three in-class exams, each consisting of three to four short essay comprehension questions. I will distribute a study guide for each exam a few days in advance. Study guides will contain all of the possible short answer questions for the exam, from which I will randomly select a subset for you to answer. Each exam constitutes 15% of your final course grade. Graded exams will be returned to you within two weeks of the exam date.

Make-up exams will be given only in extraordinary circumstances (which must be documented), must take place within one week of the regular exam time, will contain questions different from those on the in-class exam, and will incur a letter-grade (10%) penalty. Make-up exams cannot necessarily be scheduled at your convenience. If you will miss an exam, you must notify me in advance; if you are not present in class for the exam, and I haven't heard from you, you will not be given an opportunity to make it up. If you miss or cancel a scheduled make-up, you will receive a zero for the exam.

Exams are required; if you miss an exam, and do not make it up, you will automatically fail the course.

2. Two take-home essays, each constituting 20% of your final course grade, in which you defend a thesis in response to arguments made in assigned readings. Essays require that you write an original critical analysis, or critique, of some aspect of the views defended by authors in assigned readings. Graded essays will be returned to you within two weeks of their due date.

Essays shall be typed, double-spaced and 3-4 pages in length. Essays are due by the start of class on the date indicated on the schedule. Essays submitted late but within 24 hours of the time they are due will incur a 10% penalty. The penalty will increase by 5% every 24 hours after the deadline.

Essays should be submitted electronically at **turnitin.com**. Essays will not be counted as having been received until successful submission at turnitin.com.

Turnitin.com is a web-based service that compares submitted student text against a database of millions of previously submitted documents, including those on the public Internet, a proprietary collection of published articles, as well as every student paper ever submitted to Turnitin.com, including previously submitted EMU papers. When similarities between student text and an existing document are found, Turnitin highlights those similarities in an annotated document, displaying both the student text and the original source(s). Detection of similarities does not mean plagiarism has occurred, as the overlapping text might be properly referenced and cited.

Submission of both essays is required; if you fail to submit either, you will automatically fail the course.

3. Current Events Presentation: Each student will make a five minute presentation to the class of a recent news article relevant to feminism, gender, or gender (in)equality. The presentation will be graded and is worth 5% of your final course grade.

Presentations will occur at the beginning of class periods (following the quiz), starting September 15. One student will present in each class meeting date on which there is no exam or essay due. I will create a schedule based on the availability you report to me.

Students must send me by email a link to the article they wish to present *at least* one week prior to the class on which they are assigned to present, so that I may approve the selection. Students are expected to read each others' article selections, links to which I will distribute to the class by email, prior to the date of their scheduled presentation. For additional information, see the assignment description sheet.

4. Daily participation in class discussion is expected. For more detailed information on class participation, see the note on page 7. If you participate frequently and thoughtfully, I will raise your final grade in the class by as much as 1/3 of a letter (e.g., B+ to A-). If you participate rarely, never, or in a way that is disrespectful toward me, other students, or assigned authors, I will lower your final grade by as much as 1/3 of a letter (e.g., B- to C+).

5. Extra credit opportunities. There are two forms of extra credit available in this class:

- **Quizzes:** At the beginning of each non-exam class period, I will administer a reading comprehension quiz consisting of three questions (e.g., true/false, multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank, etc.), each worth one point. Each quiz will be scored out of two; thus, if you answer two of three questions correctly, your quiz grade will be 100%. If you answer all questions correctly, your score will be 150% (i.e., you will have earned extra credit). Quizzes constitute 10% of your final course grade. Therefore, you can increase your final grade in the course by as much as 5% by doing well on quizzes. Quizzes are open-note, but closed-book. Quizzes may not be made-up, so you must be in class on time to take them.

- **Notecards:** If and only if you are present at the end of a class period, you may submit one 3"x5" notecard containing notes from that day's assigned reading and lecture. On the day of the exam, I will return each student's notecards for use during the exam. (Exams are otherwise closed-note and closed-book.) Please note that you must fill out your notecard during the course of class; you will not receive extra time at the end of class to fill it out.

Attendance is not directly scored. Nevertheless, there are many costs to missing class; if you miss class, you will:

- learn less;
- miss the daily extra-credit quiz;
- not be able to submit a notecard for use on the next exam;
- lose the opportunity to participate in class discussion;
- not understand assigned readings as well as you would have if you were in class; and
- not have access to course content presented only in lecture.

(If you miss class, you should make arrangements with another student to copy her or his notes. I do not distribute my notes to students, but am happy to answer questions about material you missed during office hours once you have completed the assigned reading and obtained notes from another student.)

Rationales for inclusion in General Education program

Gender is one of the principal characteristics determining identity and life experience for human beings. This course takes a philosophical approach to gender, examining beliefs about women and men from a wide variety of cultural and political perspectives. We consider both traditional justifications of the differential treatment of women and men in such institutions as marriage and family, as well as theories that challenge these traditional views.

This course is a general education course in the **knowledge of the disciplines** because it provides an introduction to the discipline of philosophy through the concept of gender, its methodology, and its contribution to the body of human knowledge. Students will acquire skills of critical reasoning and develop skills for evaluating and creating substantive arguments to support philosophical positions. Developing such skills is central to the process of higher education. Moreover, such skills will serve students throughout their educations across all disciplines, in their careers or in pursuing graduate or professional degrees, and in exercising their civic duties.

This course fulfills the **Global Awareness** requirement of the General Education Program because it considers a wide range of practices and beliefs about gender from across the globe, with an emphasis on the intellectual and ethical complexities of understanding and judging gendered practices in cultures other than our own.

WGST Undergraduate Student Learning Outcomes

This course will enable students to integrate diverse sources of evidence to support a research argument relating to women and gender through essay exams, which require students to defend a thesis developed in response to the arguments of multiple authors, using the method of critical reasoning. This course will also enable students to situate issues of women and gender in theoretical frameworks. Readings will present students with diverse and sometimes conflicting theories of feminism, gender equality, oppression, and global gender justice. Finally, through readings, essays, and class discussions, this course will enable students to evaluate the philosophical perspectives of others on women and gender, and to formulate their own views, providing students with the means to engage justly in their communities.

Online Course Shell

This course has an online shell accessible at <https://secure.ecollege.com/emu/>, available to you as of the first day of the term. *Even if you are enrolled in WGST 226, please note that the course that will appear for you upon login to EMU Online is PHIL 226.* The online course shell will contain various items you will need to participate successfully in this course: the syllabus, assignment descriptions, study guides, required readings not available in the course anthology, etc. (If you have technical problems, the Help Desk is available at 888-538-0515.)

Schedule

I will change exam and essay due dates only in extreme circumstances. However, you should expect changes to the reading schedule, which I will announce at the end of each class. You are expected to have completed the assigned reading before class on the date indicated. (**This is your daily homework.**) You will be accountable for understanding assigned readings on exams, whether or not we are able to discuss fully every aspect of them in class. This means that you should complete assigned readings before class so that you are prepared to ask questions about those aspects you did not understand.

WEEK	MONDAYS	WEDNESDAYS
1		3-Sep
		introduction to course (no reading due)
2	8-Sep	10-Sep
	introduction to feminism (no reading due)	CUDD & JONES (chapter 6)
3	15-Sep	17-Sep
	***FINE, <i>Delusions of Gender</i> (chapter 5)	MILL (chapter 2)
4	22-Sep	24-Sep
	***FINE, <i>Delusions of Gender</i> (chapters 2, 13 and 15)	BEAUVOIR (chapters 3 and 27)
5	29-Sep	1-Oct
	BEAUVOIR (chapters 3 and 27), cont.	EXAM 1
6	6-Oct	8-Oct
	CLASS CANCELLED	***OKIN, "Vulnerability by Marriage"
7	13-Oct	15-Oct
	***OKIN, "Vulnerability," cont.	YOUNG (chapter 8, pp. 91-95)
8	20-Oct	22-Oct
	FRYE (chapter 7)	FRYE, cont. ESSAY 1 DUE
9	27-Oct	28-Oct
	FRYE, cont.	OKIN (chapter 29)
10	3-Nov	5-Nov
	OKIN (chapter 29), cont. HOOKS (chapter 5)	HOOKS (chapter 5), cont.
11	10-Nov	12-Nov
	EXAM 2	***NARAYAN, "Male-Order Brides"
12	17-Nov	19-Nov
	***NARAYAN, "Male-Order Brides", cont.	***OKIN, "Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?"
13	24-Nov	26-Nov
	***OKIN, "Multiculturalism," cont. ESSAY 2 DUE	THANKSGIVING RECESS - NO CLASSES
14	1-Dec	3-Dec
	NUSSBAUM (chapter 22)	NUSSBAUM (chapter 22), cont.
15	8-Dec	10-Dec
	***JAGGAR, "Saving Amina"	***JAGGAR, "Saving Amina," cont.
16	15-Dec	17-Dec
		FINAL EXAM: 3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Additional information and advice

As students enrolled in an Honors course, you know that mere physical presence is not sufficient to pass this course. In order to do well, you must thoughtfully complete each reading and regularly participate in discussion.

Most students find Philosophy courses more difficult than other courses at the same level due to the unique and, for many, unfamiliar method of inquiry it employs (critical analysis). You will probably need to work harder in this course to earn the sort of grade you are accustomed to receiving in non-Philosophy courses, especially if you have not taken many Philosophy courses in the past. I employ the following grading scale:

A (93.3 - 100)	excellent work	C (73.3 - 76.6)	adequate work
A- (90 - 93.2)		C- (70 - 73.2)	
B+ (86.7 - 89.9)		D+ (66.7 - 69.9)	
B (83.3 - 86.6)	good work	D (63.3 - 66.6)	minimally acceptable work
B- (80 - 83.2)		D- (60 - 63.3)	
C+ (76.7 - 79.9)		F (0-59.9)	unmeritorious work

If you find the material in this class difficult, I am very happy to assist you in your effort to understand and engage with it. You may meet with me during office hours, by appointment outside of office hours, or seek help over e-mail. Students often fail a course because they do not seek help when they need it. Don't wait until the last minute – or worse, until you've already failed an exam – to seek assistance if you are struggling.

How can you succeed in this course? Here is some advice:

1. **Read** the assigned material *slowly, carefully and critically* before the class on which it is due.
2. **Take notes** on the reading before class. See the suggestions for note taking below.
3. **Attend** every class period from beginning to end, giving the class your full attention.
4. **Take notes** in class.
5. **Participate** in class discussion. Ask questions when you feel confused.
6. Submit a **notecard** at the end of class to help with difficult points on the exam.
7. **Re-read** the more challenging articles a second time after class.
8. Use the **study guide**. Answer all of the questions I list without relying on your notes.
9. Write a polished **draft** of your essay well in advance of the due date and have someone else (e.g., UWC staff) read it and give you feedback before submitting it to me.
10. **Talk to me** outside of class in my office if you are struggling.

Required pre-class preparation

In addition to completing assigned readings before class on the date indicated, you should take notes on the reading before class as well. This will enable you to thoughtfully participate in class discussion, and will aid in your understanding of the material. A good way to take notes on philosophy is to, first, read the article straight through (slowly and carefully), annotating the text in the margins and underlining the most important points. Once you've done this, create a separate page of notes in which you answer the following questions:

- What is the main claim (thesis) that the author defends?
- What reasons or evidence does the author provide to support this claim?
- What objections to her arguments does the author consider? How does she respond?
- Are there any compelling objections to the author's arguments that she fails to consider? (If so, explain.)
- Did the author make any points that you did not understand? (If so, explain.)

If you have difficulty answering these questions, you should read the article a second time. Even the most difficult philosophy articles make a lot more sense the second time through.

Guidelines for participation in class discussion

Each student should contribute to class discussion on a regular basis (i.e., at least once per class period). This can take many forms, but typical contributions involve either:

- asking questions about points in the reading or lecture that you don't make sense to you,
- raising criticisms of claims made by authors that seem potentially objectionable,
- providing (possibly personal) examples of concepts discussed by the author, or
- raising questions about the topic that seem important but that the author does not address.

If you read the assigned article carefully and thoughtfully before class, and take notes on it, answering the questions I mention above, coming up with interesting things to say in class should be easy.

Students who actively take part in discussions about the concepts and principles relevant to a philosophy course develop an understanding of the material that is substantially more sophisticated than those who don't. This is important not only for its own sake but also because it will positively affect your performance on exams. Those who truly understand the material don't need to stay up all night cramming, and those who try to get by with mere memorization will inevitably perform worse than those who possess a critical understanding of the material. What's more, class will be far more enjoyable if you're engaged in the discussion; passively listening to other people talk for 75 minutes is boring!

Please note that I grade class participation for both quantity and quality. If you do not participate, or participate very rarely, I will lower your final grade by one-third of a letter (e.g., B- to C+). I will also lower your final grade by this amount if your participation in class is distracting or disrespectful (toward me or other students), even if you participate frequently. Please observe the following rules regarding classroom behavior and participation:

1. All students must devote their full attention to lecture and discussion from the beginning to the end of the class period. Students who are whispering to other students, texting, reading anything other than assigned material, using their laptop for any purpose other than taking notes, wearing headphones or earphones, or sleeping are not giving their full attention to the class. Such students will likely not understand the assigned reading material, and will probably perform poorly on exams. Moreover, I will lower the participation grade of students engaged in such behaviors.

In accordance with this, cell phones must be turned off or set to "silent" (not "vibrate") during class, and must be put away; your phone should not be visible to you or to me during class.

2. Raise your hand and wait for me to call on you before speaking in class. I will call on all students who raise their hands, in the order they raised their hands, inasmuch as I can keep track, with one exception: I will give priority to students who have not yet spoken during the current class period.

3. All comments must be public. There should be no private discussions in class; all comments must be addressed to the entire class.

4. All comments must be respectful of other students, the assigned authors, and of me. Whether you agree or disagree with something that has been said, if you wish to respond, you must do so in a conscientious and civil way. This excludes not only general ridiculing and laughing, but also sexist, racist, or homophobic comments directed at other students, me, or the author.

Email Etiquette

I encourage students to contact me by email (phiggin1@emich.edu) when they have questions related to the course. Unfortunately, students occasionally send messages to their professors by email that are unprofessional, even rude (even when no disrespect is intended). This reflects negatively on the student's attitude toward her/his professor and the class. To avoid this, please observe the following basic rules of courtesy in email communication in this and in all of your classes.

1. Your email should begin with a salutation, such as "Dear Professor," or "Hello, Dr. So-and-so." To begin an email without a salutation (instead rushing into the body) conveys – even if you don't intend it – a lack of respect and an attitude of entitlement.
2. Your email should be thoughtfully constructed, and free of spelling and grammar mistakes. Emails that contain spelling and grammar mistakes convey a lack of care and a negative impression of your attitude toward the class and your professor.
3. Please be considerate of your professors' time by consulting the syllabus before emailing to ask about basic course information and procedures. (Exam dates, for example, are usually noted on the syllabus.)
4. Professors at EMU teach 3-4 classes, and often have over 100 students, each semester. We receive many emails from students, and cannot always reply immediately. Please allow 48 hours for a response.
5. It is easy to misinterpret a person's intentions in written communication. Be mindful as you write and consider whether the tone of your email suggests disrespect, arrogance, entitlement or hostility.
6. Your email should always contain a closing in which you thank your professor in advance for the time and effort she expends in fulfilling the request you've made, and a signature.
7. If it is apparent that your professor has expended a significant amount of time or effort to address your query, it is courteous to acknowledge this by thanking her in a reply email.

EMU Writing Support

The **University Writing Center** (115 Halle Library; 487-0694) offers one-to-one writing consulting for both undergraduate and graduate students. Students can make appointments or drop in between the hours of 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays and from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Fridays. The UWC opens for the Fall 2014 semester on Monday, September 8 and will close on Thursday, December 11. The UWC also has several satellite locations across campus (in Owen, Marshall, Pray-Harold, and Mark Jefferson). These satellites provide writing support to students in various colleges and programs across campus. Satellite locations and hours can be found on the UWC web site: <http://www.emich.edu/uwc>. Students seeking writing support at any location of the University Writing Center should bring with them a draft of what they are working on and their assignment sheet.

The **Academic Projects Center** (116 Halle Library) also offers one-to-one writing consulting for students, in addition to consulting on research and technology-related issues. The APC is open 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays for drop-in consultations. Additional information about the APC can be found at <http://www.emich.edu/apc>.

University Policies

Academic Dishonesty: “Academic dishonesty, including all forms of cheating, falsification, and/or plagiarism, will not be tolerated in this course. Penalties for an act of academic dishonesty may range from receiving a failing grade for a particular assignment to receiving a failing grade for the entire course. In addition, you may be referred to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards for discipline that can result in either a suspension or permanent dismissal. The Student Conduct Code contains detailed definitions of what constitutes academic dishonesty but if you are not sure about whether something you are doing would be considered academic dishonesty, consult with the course instructor. You may access the Code online at: www.emich.edu/student_conduct/.”

Religious Holidays: “Current University policy recognizes the rights of students to observe religious holidays without penalty to the student. Students will provide advance notice to the instructor in order to make up work, including examinations, they miss as a result of their absence from class due to observance of religious holidays. If satisfactory arrangements cannot be made with the instructor, the student may appeal to the school director or head(s) of department(s) in which the course(s) is / are offered.”

Classroom Behavior: “Students are expected to abide by the Student Conduct Code and assist in creating an environment that is conducive to learning and protects the rights of all members of the University Community. Incivility and disruptive behavior will not be tolerated and may result in a request to leave class and referral to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards (SJS) for discipline. Examples of inappropriate classroom conduct include repeatedly arriving late to class, using a mobile/cellular phone while in the class session, or talking while others are speaking. You may access the Code online at www.emich.edu/studentconduct/.”

Student and Exchange VISitor Statement (SEVIS): “The Student exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) requires F and J students to report the following to the Office of International Students 244 EMU Student Center within ten (10) days of the event:

- Changes in your name, local address, major field of study, or source of funding;
- Changes in your degree-completion date;
- Changes in your degree-level (ex Bachelors to Masters)
- Intent to transfer to another school.

Prior permission from OIS is needed for the following:

- Dropping ALL courses as well as carrying or dropping BELOW minimum credit hours;
- Employment on or off-campus;
- Registering for more than one ONLINE course per term (F visa only)
- Endorsing I-20 or DS-2019 for re-entry into the USA.

Failure to report may result in the termination of your SEVIS record and even arrest and deportation. If you have questions or concerns, contact the Office of International Students at 734.487.3116, not the course instructor.

Special Needs Accommodations: “If you wish to be accommodated for your disability, EMU Board of Regents Policy 8.3 requires that you first register with the Students with Disabilities Office (SDO) in 240 EMU Student Center. You may contact SDO by telephone (734.487.2470). Students with disabilities are encouraged to register with the SDO promptly as you will only be accommodated from the date you register with them forward. No retroactive accommodations are possible.”

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA): “The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a Federal law designated to protect the privacy of a student’s education records and academic work. The law applies to all schools and universities which receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education and is applicable to students at EMU. All files, records, and academic work completed within this course are considered educational records and are protected under FERPA. It is your right, as a student in this course, to expect that any materials you submit in this course, as well as your name and other identifying information, will not be viewable by guests or other individuals permitted access to the course. The exception will be only when you have given explicit, written, signed consent. Verbal consent or email is insufficient.”