

# Advanced Topics in Feminist Philosophy (PHIL10214)

2021/2022 Semester 1

**Course Organiser:** Dr. Filipa Melo Lopes // [Filipa.MeloLopes@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Filipa.MeloLopes@ed.ac.uk)  
Office Hours: TBA please see Learn page.

**Course Secretary:** Ms. Ann-Marie Cowe // [philinfo@ed.ac.uk](mailto:philinfo@ed.ac.uk)

## Course Description

This course will focus on Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*. First published in 1949, it became one of the most influential feminist texts of the 20th century and it continues to inform Feminist Philosophy today. But this is also a controversial book that has been criticized by both feminists and anti-feminists. In it, Beauvoir brings together ideas and methods from intellectual traditions like existentialism, phenomenology, psychoanalysis, and anthropology. We will work through the two volumes of *The Second Sex* and will have the opportunity to discuss issues like the relation between gender inequality and biology; the role of love in women's subordination; the ethical status of sex work; our social ideals of masculinity; and the cultural association of women and Nature.

## Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course students will be better able to:

- Effectively present close and critical analysis of a historical philosophical text.
- Present and defend their own reasoned ideas about the issues discussed.
- Demonstrate their capacity to articulate arguments succinctly and clearly in a written essay format.
- Critically evaluate gender dynamics and feminist politics in their own lives.

## Format & Times

Seminar	Tuesday	16:00 - 18:00	TBA
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The course will be run as a discussion-based seminar. We will try to understand and critically evaluate a complex philosophical text, so it is **crucial** that you do the required readings in advance of the seminar. As you read, you should take notes and bring those with you to class.

## Readings

You must purchase a copy of *The Second Sex*, Vintage Books edition (2015), translated by Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier (other translations are not acceptable). This will be our edition of reference for this course.

You can purchase a copy of this edition from Blackwell's on Southbridge in person or online directly through [this link](#).

## Weekly Topics

### Volume I – *Facts and Myths*

- Week 1* • Watch Introductory Lecture Video + Introduction
- Week 2* • Part 1 *Destiny*
- Week 3* • Part 2 *History* - Chapters 1-4; last section of chapter 5 (from “Several conclusions come to the fore ...”)
- Week 4* • Part 3 *Myths* - Chapter 1

### Volume II – *Lived Experience*

- Week 5* • Introduction; Part 1 *Formative Years* - Chapter 1
- Week 6* • Part 1 - Chapter 2
- Week 7* • Part 1 - Chapters 3, 4
- Week 8* • Part 2 *Situation* Chapter 6
- Week 9* • Part 2, Chapters 7, 8
- Week 10* • Part 3 *Justifications*
- Week 11* • Part 4 *Towards Liberation*

## Assessment

- **Midterm Essay** (1500 words) 40 %  
DUE: Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> October, by 12 noon
- **Final Essay** (2500 words) 55 %  
DUE: Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> December, by 12 noon
- **Final Essay Proposal** 5%  
DUE: Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> November, by 12 noon

### Final Essay Proposal

Students will have the opportunity to develop their own final essay prompt, based on the topics we have covered. They must engage with *The Second Sex* and at least one piece of secondary literature.

Students must submit an essay proposal in advance of (2 pages double space max.). This should include an essay topic, a thesis, an argument plan, and a preliminary bibliography. Detailed guidance will be given during the semester. Students will receive feedback on their proposal that they can use to write their final paper.