

Feminist Philosophy (PHIL10214)

2021/2022 Semester 1

Course Organiser: Dr. Filipa Melo Lopes // Filipa.MeloLopes@ed.ac.uk

Office Hours: please see Learn page.

Course Secretary: Ms. Ann-Marie Cowe // philinfo@ed.ac.uk

Times

Video Lecture	Monday	11:10 -13:00	Released Online
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Further information will be available on the Learn page.

Course Description

What is feminism about? Feminist Philosophy attempts to conceptualize and investigate the very problem that feminist movements address. *What does it mean to say that women are oppressed? What is at the root of gender-based oppression? What other parts of our social world are inextricably linked to gender-based inequality? And what would it mean to achieve feminist liberation?* This course provides an overview of some influential 20th century currents in feminist thinking, from a philosophical perspective. We will explore a range of diverse – and often divergent – traditions, including liberal, existentialist, transnational, and post-structuralist feminisms. The course will touch on themes such as sexuality; work and family; colonialism; and heteronormativity.

Learning Outcomes

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

- Engage in close and critical analysis of historical and current ideas and debates in Feminist Philosophy.
- Critically assess and discuss some of the most important texts in Feminist Philosophy.
- Develop their skills in argumentative essay writing.
- Develop their critical, analytic and communication skills through discussion in tutorial groups.

Accessing Lectures & Readings

All lectures will be made available on the course's Learn page.

Most readings will be available on the course's [Resource List](#).

Some optional readings and materials that are not accessible through the Library will be made available via Learn (weekly pages).

Topics and Readings

Week 1 **Introduction:** What makes women 'oppressed'? Some philosophical questions.

- Marilyn Frye

"Oppression" in *The Politics of Reality* (1983)

I - Diagnoses & Frameworks

Week 2 **Liberal Feminisms**

- Harriet Taylor Mill

Enfranchisement of Women (1851) p. 95-101

- Betty Friedan

"The Problem that Has No Name" in *The Feminine Mystique* (1963)

- bell hooks

"Black Women Shaping Feminist Theory" in *Feminist Theory from Margin to Center* (1984)

Week 3 **Radical Feminisms**

- Catharine A. MacKinnon

"Sexuality" in *Toward a Feminist Theory of the State* (1989)

- John Stoltenberg

"How Men Have (a) Sex", "What is 'Good Sex'" in *Refusing to be a Man* (1989)

Optional:

Catharine A. MacKinnon: "Sex Equality: On Difference and Dominance" in *Toward a Feminist Theory of the State* (1989) [Available on Learn]

Week 4 **Existentialist Feminisms**

- Simone de Beauvoir

"Volume I - Introduction" in *The Second Sex* (1949)

- Nancy Bauer

"Beauvoir on the Allure of Self-Objectification" in *How to do Things with*

Pornography (2015)

Optional:

Nancy Bauer: "Lady Power" in *How to do Things with Pornography* (2015)

Week 5 Marxist Feminisms

- Heidi Hartmann

The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism (1981)

- Silvia Federici

"Why Sexuality is Work" in *Revolution at Point Zero* (1975)

Week 6 Lesbian & Heterosexual Feminisms

- Monique Wittig

"The Category of Sex", "One is Not Born a Woman" in *The Straight Mind* (1992)

- Ryan, Barbara

Beyond Embarrassment: Feminism and Adult Heterosexual Love (1993)

Week 7 Post-Structuralist Feminisms

- Judith Butler

Gender Trouble (1990) Chapter 1, sections I-V pp. 1-34

Optional:

Linda Martín Alcoff: "The Identity Crisis in Feminist Theory" in *Visible Identities* (2006)

Anne-Fausto Sterling: "The five sexes: why male and female are not enough" (1993)

Week 8 Black Feminisms & Transnational Feminisms

- Patricia Hill Collins

Learning from the Outsider Within: The Sociological Significance of Black Feminist Thought (1986)

- Uma Narayan

Contesting Cultures: "Westernization", Respect for Culture and Third-World Feminists in Dislocating Cultures (1997)

II - Feminist Liberation

Existentialist Liberation

Week 9 • Simone de Beauvoir

"The Independent Woman", "Conclusion" in *The Second Sex* (1949)

Week 10 Trans* Feminisms & Posthuman Feminisms

- Sandy Stone

The Empire Strikes Back: A Posttranssexual Manifesto (1992)

- Rosi Braidotti

Four Theses on Posthuman Feminism in Anthropocene Feminism (2017)

Optional:

Laboria Cuboniks “Xenofeminism” (2018)

Week 11 Future Genders?

- R.W. (Raewyn) Connell

“Present and Future” in *Gender and Power* (1987)

- Riki Wilchins

“The Limits of Transgender?” In *Burn the Binary!* (2017)

- Judith Lorber

“Paradoxes of Gender Redux” in *Gender Reckonings: New Social Theory and Research* (2018)

Assessment

- **Midterm Essay** (1500 words) 40 %

DUE: Thursday 21st October, by 12 noon

- **Final Essay** (2500 words) 55 %

DUE: Thursday 9th December, by 12 noon

- **Participation** 5%

6 biweekly Learn quizzes (lowest score dropped)

Biweekly quizzes

There will be 6 quizzes testing your comprehension of key points from the lectures. Quizzes will be available on Learn on Monday morning and must be completed by the following Friday 11:59 pm. Your quiz with the lowest score will be dropped (i.e. only 5 quizzes will be counted towards your mark). The first quiz will be available at the start of week 2 via Learn.

Questions?

For all **general questions about the course and about our Learn page** please use the “GENERAL COURSE QUESTIONS” discussion forum. This includes questions about the Learn page, availability of lectures and readings and general academic matters.

Before you post, look in the forum to see if someone already posted the same question. Questions will be answered regularly, throughout the week.

If you have a question or comment regarding **specific lecture content** you can ask them in the discussion forum for that week. Click the link on the weekly page, next to the video lecture, to access it.

For **administrative questions** (e.g. about submission of assignments), you should contact the Course Secretary