

Feminist Philosophy

Course Information

Instructor: Anna Brinkerhoff

- Email: anna_brinkerhoff@brown.edu
- Office Hours: TBA

Location: TBA

Time: TBA

Course Description

This course is an introduction to feminism through contemporary analytic philosophy. It is broken into five units. Each unit explores the work of contemporary analytic philosophers on feminist topics in a subfield of philosophy. The first unit is on feminist topics in metaphysics: the metaphysics of gender and sexual orientation, the distinction between gender and sex, (dis)analogies between gender and race. The second unit is on feminist topics in epistemology: epistemic injustice, the rationality of sexist beliefs, emotions and knowledge. The third unit is on feminist topics in philosophy of language: pornography, truth conditions of generalizations, gender- and trans- inclusive language reform. The fourth unit is on feminist topics in political philosophy: justice and gender, the politics of work and family. And the fifth unit is on feminist topics in ethics: reproduction (reproductive rights, abortion, surrogacy, adoption), criticizing/reforming sexist practices in other cultures.

Course Materials

Jennifer Mather Saul, *Feminism: Issues and Arguments*.

All other readings will be available on the course site on Canvas.

Time Commitment

Our course will meet 35 times (for a total of 35 hours). Doing the readings and writing up summaries and reflections should take about 2 ½ hours for each class, for a total of 90 hours. For each of your three papers, you should expect to spend 15 hours reading, reviewing notes, outlining, drafting and polishing your work. Each rewrite should take 5 hours. So the total number of hours spent for the course is around 180 hours.

Accessibility and Accommodation

Please inform me early in the term if you have a disability or other conditions that might require accommodations or modification of any of the course procedures. You may speak with me after class or during my office hours. For more information, please contact Student and Employee Accessibility Services at 401-863-9588 or SEAS@brown.edu.

Grade Breakdown

Attendance & Participation	10%
Expert Presentation	10%
Reading Summaries & Reflections	20%
Papers	20% each

Course Requirements

Attendance & Participation: After shopping period, I'll take attendance with a sign-in sheet. For each class meeting, it will be your responsibility to (a) sign in or (b) send me an email in advance of the class explaining why you cannot attend. For each unexcused absence over 3, your attendance grade will be lowered by 10%. This is a discussion-based course and so informed and respectful participation is expected. In addition to in-class contributions, you may earn participation credit through e-mail correspondence with me and office hour discussion.

Expert Presentation: You will each be assigned a reading from the course reading list on which you will become an expert. On the day that your reading is assigned, you are expected to come to class prepared with a 10-15-minute presentation on the reading. The presentation should include a thorough summary of the reading as well as your own reaction to it in order to jump start that day's discussion. You should have an outline handout for the class to pass out.

Reading: I'll assign regular readings, which will generally be around 20-30 pages. You will need to do each assigned reading carefully, preferably more than once. To hold you accountable for doing the readings, I'll expect you to write up a summary and a reflection – comment, question, or criticism – on each day's reading. Summaries should be short (100-200 words) and reflections can be even shorter (20-50 words). Summaries and reflections for a given day's reading must be posted on the relevant discussion board on Canvas *before* the start of class (10am). Late posts will not be accepted. You will be able to see each other's comments and reflections only after you post your own. For each missed post over 3, your reading grade will be lowered by 10%.

Papers: You will write three papers throughout the course. The first paper is on metaphysics or epistemology, the second is on political philosophy or philosophy of language, and the third is on ethics. Papers should be around 1500 words, but no less than 1200 and no more than 2000. For each paper, you will choose any one of the assigned readings of the relevant unit(s) to write on. Around half of each paper should be devoted to clearly, accurately, and charitably presenting the author's argument. The other half of the paper should be devoted to your own original philosophical evaluation of that argument. You will have the opportunity to rewrite each of the first two papers. If you turn in a rewrite for a paper, the recorded grade for that paper will be the average of the grades of your original paper and your rewrite.

Course Schedule

Unit 1: Feminism & Metaphysics

What is gender?

Session 1 Haslanger, "The Metaphysics of Gender and Race"

Session 2 Stoliger, "Different Women"

What is the difference between gender and sex?

Session 3 Sveinsdóttir, "The Metaphysics of Sex and Gender"

What are the (dis)analogies between gender and race?

Session 4 Heyes, "Changing Race, Changing Sex"

What is sexual orientation?

Session 5 Dembroff, "What Is Sexual Orientation?"

Session 6 Discussion Day

Session 7 Writing Workshop

Unit 2: Feminism & Epistemology

How can women be harmed as knowers?

Session 8 Fricker, "Testimonial Injustice"

Session 9 Fricker, "Prejudice in the Credibility Economy"

Can sexist beliefs be rational?

Session 10 Basu, "The Wrongs of Racist Beliefs"

Do emotions get in the way of knowledge?

Session 10 Jaggar, "Love and Knowledge"

Session 11 Discussion Day

Unit 3: Feminism & Philosophy of Language

If pornography is speech, what does it say?

Session 12 First half (pp. 293 – 314) of Langton, "Speech Acts and Unspeakable Acts"

Session 13 Second half (pp. 314 – 330) of Langton, "Speech Acts and Unspeakable Acts"

Session 14 Maitra and McGowan, "On Silencing, Rape, and Responsibility"

Are generalizations like "women are submissive" true?

Session 15 Leslie, "Dual Character Concepts, Generics, and Gender"

Session 16 Haslanger, "Ideology, Generics, and Common Ground"

Should we push for gender- and trans-inclusive language reform important?

Session 17 Saul, "Feminism and Language Change"

Session 18 First half (pp. 371-388) of Dembroff and Wodak, "He/She/They/Ze"

Session 19 Second half (pp. 388-403) of Dembroff and Wodak, "He/She/They/Ze"

Session 20 Discussion Day

Unit 4: Feminism & Political Philosophy

What do contemporary theories of justice say about gender?

Session 21 First half (pp. 42 – 52) of Okin, "Gender and Justice"

Session 22 Second half (pp. 52 – 72) of Okin, "Gender and Justice"

What role does/should the family play in politics?

Session 23 Saul, "The Politics of Work and Family"

Session 24 Barclay, "Liberal Daddy Quotas"

What rights do parents have with respect to their children?

Session 25 Brighthouse and Swift, "Parents Rights' and the Value of the Family"

Session 26 Discussion Day

Unit 5: Feminism & Ethics

Are there any procreative rights? What, if anything, limits them?

Session 27 Overall, "Reproductive Free, Autonomy, and Reproductive Rights"

Session 28 Friedrich, "A Duty to Adopt?"

What is the moral status of abortion?

Session 29 Saul, "Abortion"

Is it morally permissible to take money for bodily services?

Session 30 Nussbaum, "Taking Money for Bodily Services"

Session 31 Anderson, "Is Woman's Labor a Commodity?"

Is it morally permissible (obligatory?) to criticize/reform sexist practices in other cultures?

Session 32 Saul, "Feminism and Other Cultures"

Session 33 Nussbaum, "Judging Other Cultures: The Case of Genital Mutilation"

Session 34 Discussion Day

Session 35 Class Wrap Up