

FEMINIST PHILOSOPHY  
**Philosophy 265**  
**Professor Colleen Martell**  
**Fall 2012**

Class Meets: T/Th 10:20 - 11:30  
Office: Comenius 205B  
Email: martellc@moravian.edu  
Office Hours: Tuesday 11:30-12:30 and by appointment

**Course Description**

In this course we'll explore a diversity of feminist writing. Students will consider questions such as: How do the legacies of gender inequality persist today? What would gender justice look like? Is there such thing as gender-neutral point of view? And how do gender, race, class and sexuality relate?

Note: This course has a prerequisite of one prior course in philosophy or women's studies, or permission of instructor.

**Books Available at the Bookstore**

Minnich, Elizabeth Kamarck, *Transforming Knowledge, 2nd Edition*, Temple University Press, 2004. ISBN: 9781592131327.

Saul, Jennifer Mather, *Feminism: Issues and Arguments*, Oxford University Press, 2003. ISBN: 9780199249473.

Vincent, Norah, *Self-Made Man*, Penguin, 2007. ISBN-10: 184. ISBN-13: 9781843545040.



Ana Mendieta

## Learning Outcomes

Our goals are the following, specifically in reference to feminist philosophy:

- Enhanced knowledge of feminist philosophy and competence in the use of its analytical tools.
- Increased awareness of the complexity of major gender issues such as those examined in the course.
- Greater understanding of the moral issues related to gender, justice, and philosophy and ability to analyze the issues with attention to their depth and complexity.
- Increased knowledge of and analytical ability at how such issues as gender, race, class, and sexuality relate and compound questions.

In particular terms, this feminist philosophy course will meet these outcomes as follows:

- This course will use philosophical ethical methods, competing theories of justice, as well as various philosophical accounts of respect, rationality, consent, empowerment and other concepts arising in relation to women's issues,
- And apply them to such areas as:
  - a) the economic poverty of women (e.g., how does this relate to justice? What are the strengths and weaknesses of plans purporting to be more egalitarian?),
  - b) visions of justice across women of all groups, including "Third World" women, women of color, gay, lesbian and bisexual women, women with disabilities, (e.g. does "sisterhood" or equality mean liberation for all women?"
  - c) reproductive choice, freedom, and technologies issues (e.g., how has the history of sterilization abuse influenced policies on reproduction and their popularity?, what is it for a person to make an informed voluntary choice about abortion or sterilization – does it include the person thinking they have other options?)

This course fulfills the **Moral Life** Learning in Common (LinC) requirement. As such, we seek:

- An introduction to two or more theoretical frameworks for reflection upon a moral life, and
- Multiple realms of application for these frameworks (i.e., two or more significant contemporary issues that will be explored in light of these theoretical considerations).

As a Moral Life course and as a philosophy course, the learning outcomes expected are the following:

- An awareness of the complexity of moral issues and of the need for interdisciplinary understanding for informed moral decision-making;
- Grappling with the student's own values and moral position-taking;
- Enhanced capacity for moral discernment, criticism, and argument.

In addition to these Moral Life (LinC category) outcomes, goals specific to this course are that students:

- Achieve a broad understanding of the field of feminist philosophy, with a particular sensitivity to social justice and to how culture, race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and economic class issues.
- Strengthen skills for fair and sympathetic treatment of competing views and for critical reflection upon them.
- Develop verbal, writing, and thinking abilities to take positions, explain them, and back them up well.

As a course fulfilling the Moral Life rubric, Feminist Philosophy is an upper-division course. It requires sustained advanced analytical work. One must have an open mind to grapple with readings, topics and discussions that may be quite difficult intellectually, emotionally, and politically. (It can be quite difficult to struggle to understand a complex article, particularly one with views divergent from one's own.)

## Course Requirements

### *Participation and attendance (both qualitative and quantitative)*

This course will be based on discussion rather than lecture. Discussion is an integral part of this course—and the success of your learning experience depends on participating in our discussions. You must come to class prepared, having completed the assigned reading, and ready to discuss the material (this includes bringing to class the book/essays we are discussing that day, having marked all the reading assignments for the day, etc.). I will assess your participation grade in this class based on the *consistency* with which you contribute to class discussion and also on the degree to which your contributions demonstrate a *genuine* and *thoughtful* engagement with the reading.

Your participation grade will also include occasional quizzes, worksheets, collective work projects and/or other brief in-class assignments (some graded by letter or number, some simply for credit as satisfactory or unsatisfactory).

Note: in addition to the attendance grade here, unexcused absences beyond two will count against your final grade at a rate of 0.5% each. Please inform me before the date of an excused absence, giving relevant documentation in advance.

### *Presentation (These may be done alone or in a pair.)*

In this presentation of 8-10 minutes (on assigned class days), you should provide an overview of the main points of the readings for that day explained in your own words (though you may point to sections of the text for clarification and support), offering your own analyses, questions, and responses to them.

### *Three Questions*

Ten typed-out sets of “Three Questions,” submitted prior to the discussion of readings for that day. These should be your own questions for the author remaining in your mind after grappling with the readings for that day. These may be submitted at the beginning of any class meetings, with at least five of them being submitted prior to Oct. 18.

### *Exams*

There will be two exams, a mid-term and a final. Both exams will involve a combination of paragraph and essay writing with shorter answer questions.

### *Short Essays*

Five short (3-4 page) essays in response to a reading of your choice. In each essay you will demonstrate your grasp of the chosen course reading and go beyond it to develop your own positions and arguments. These essays will not necessarily be research papers involving outside research and sources beyond the books for the course. Rather, they may simply involve working with the texts for class and responding to them critically, showing how and why you agree or disagree with the author’s central argument on a topic. They will be graded for level of comprehension of chosen readings, depth of analytical thinking in your analysis, and clarity and coherence of your writing. These may be submitted at the beginning of any class meetings, with at least two response essays being submitted prior to Oct 18.

## **Course Policies**

*Coursework:* Before each class meeting, read and reflect upon everything that we are covering in class. Fair warning: there is no way to master the material except by doing lots of reading, discussing, and reflecting upon the material.

*Intellectual Environment:* Teaching and learning requires consistent effort. An atmosphere supporting high intellectual levels of discussion and written work is invaluable.

*Work Expectations:* These readings will range from moderately difficult to extremely difficult. To be understood they must be read, reread, and questioned in great detail. One needs to be able to express the author's ideas in one's own words precisely. Expect to work hard to understand the readings, then still harder to respond to them.

*Seeing Me:* If you have any trouble with any of the material, please bring it up in class, email me, or come see me. Don't wait. Come to my office hours. If you cannot make these, let me know and we can set up another time to meet. You can be sure that others are having similar difficulties or questions. Try to identify what your specific difficulties are, e.g., motivation, interest, reading comprehension, note-taking, writing, quiz and test-taking skills, philosophical reasoning. I can best help you get on track by seeing where in particular you have gone wrong. If you need to get something to me, leave it at my office.

*Seeking help:* Please see me with any questions you may have. Come to office hours. If those do not work out for you, arrange an appointment outside of office hours. Email me with questions, to find a time to meet, etc. I am available to talk over essay topics and to look at essay drafts as well.

*Learning Services:* If you know or suspect you might be in need of Learning Services assistance, in anything from study skills or time management to possible disability issues, please contact Learning Services as soon as possible. This is particularly urgent if you know or suspect you might need accommodations to negotiate disability issues with the class. The office would simply contact me about the accommodation requested; they respect privacy.

*Class Protocol:* Since we are all adults, I need not specify all of the various ways in which we ought to treat each other with respect, being silent (especially while another person is speaking), being on time, having cell phones and pagers turned off, etc. Treat one another with kindness and respect. Be sure to make any criticisms as constructive as possible, challenging an idea without attacking a person. Anyone appearing to be disruptive or disrespectful will be asked to leave class. On a second occurrence the person would be dismissed from the course altogether.

*Academic Integrity:* Be sure to observe strictly Moravian College policies on academic integrity. Do your own work. Give credit any time you quote, paraphrase, or use anyone else's words or ideas. Give credit wherever it is due. Failure to do so—*whether intentional or accidental*—is academic dishonesty and is taken seriously, resulting in at least a 0 on the relevant assignment. For further specific information and resources on academic honesty, see the Student Handbook, the professor, or the Academic Dean's Office.

*Documentation:* You must document your work correctly. Use a style manual (such as MLA or Chicago). Access one through the Internet, or use a library copy. Please see a librarian or me if you need help with documentation. Pay special attention to the documentation of any Internet sources. If you use an Internet source, you must include the web address plus a hard copy of the article used, attaching these as an appendix.

*Disability Issues:* Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact Elaine Mara, assistant director of learning services for academic and disability support at 1307 Main Street, or by calling 610-861-1510. Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the Academic Support Center.

*Responsibilities of each class member:*

- Come to class prepared, having done the readings and any assignments before class, having carefully and reflected upon them, with notes jotted down for questions, comments, and clarifications.
- Participate fully in class, giving full attention to whomever is speaking, refraining from side talking.
- Contribute to an atmosphere of learning, being focused and respectful of the ideas at stake, of the course materials, and of each other.
- Regular participation in presentations, discussions, group work, etc.
- Honest self-assessment on these criteria. (I may periodically ask you assess yourselves on these criteria.)

### **Grading and Academic Integrity**

Grading and academic integrity policies for this course are in accordance with Moravian College standards, as expressed in the Catalog (p. 43). Please note the following about grading.

Grading scheme: 97-100=A+ 93-96.9=A 90-92.9=A- 87-89.9=B+ 83-86.9=B 80-82.9=B- 77-79.9=C+ 73-76.9=C 70-72.9=C- 67-69.9= D+ 63-66.9=D 60-62.9=D- 0-59.9 =F

A (4.00 points) and A- (3.67): “These grades indicate achievement of the highest caliber. They involve expectations of independent work, original thinking, and the ability to acquire and effectively use knowledge.”

B+ (3.33), B (3.00), and B- (2.67): “These grades indicate higher than average achievement. Evidence of independent work and original thinking is expected.”

C+ (2.33), C (2.00), and C- (1.67): “These grades are given when the student has devoted a reasonable amount of time, effort, and attention to the work of the course, and has satisfied the following criteria: familiarity with the content of the course, familiarity with the methods of study of the course, and active participation in the work of the class.”

D+ (1.33), D (1.00), and D- (0.67): “These grades indicate unsatisfactory work, below the standard expected by the College. They indicate work which in one or more important aspects falls below the average expected of students for graduation. The work is, however, sufficient to be credited for graduation, if balanced by superior work in other courses.”

F (0.00): “This indicates failure.”

Moravian College standards on academic integrity and plagiarism are available in *Academic Honesty at Moravian College*, available from the Office of the Dean of the College (in Colonial Hall, first floor). Plagiarism is very serious, resulting in automatic failure on the relevant assignment, even if the action is unintentional, such as the failure to cite the source of paraphrased ideas. We will discuss these issues on particular assignments, such as essays. For this course, the following pointers may be helpful. Follow instructions on graded assignments, doing your own work unless the assignment is explicitly given as a group project or as allowing for open-book work. In doing essays, be sure to give references and credit for any ideas which are not entirely your own. That is, when quoting or paraphrasing or even referring to the idea(s) of another, cite the source. If you are not sure whether a reference is required, give a reference anyway. If in doubt, err on the side of overly generous reference giving, and consult with the professor for guidance.

In addition, borderline grades *may* swing up or down (say, from a C- to a C, if the numerical grade is just on the line between those), depending upon a student’s course contribution. Missed presentations, exams, quizzes, and other assignments are only eligible for make-up in cases of emergency circumstances, at the professor’s discretion. Contact the professor immediately in such a case. In the interests of fairness, documentation may be required.

*Final note on grading:* Please be aware that there is a qualitative component to grading that is up to the professor’s judgment. If you do not understand the comments or grade on any assignment (or for the course), please ask me about it. However, please do not ask for reconsideration of your grade. If you have concerns, you may appeal to the department chair, Professor Bernardo Cantens.

This syllabus may be revised with the notice of the professor.

**Grade Distribution**

Enthusiastic Participation	15%
Ten sets of three questions	5%
Presentation	5%
Examinations:	
Mid-term	25%
Final Exam	25%
Short Essays:	
Five 3-4 pg. essays, 5% each,	25%

## Tentative Course Schedule\*

### Week One

- Aug. 28 T Syllabus, Introductions  
Aug. 30 Th Iris Young, "Throwing Like a Girl," from *On Female Body Experience: Throwing Like a Girl and other Essays*, NY, NY: Oxford, 2005. (handout)

### Week Two

- Sept. 4 T Norah Vincent, *Self-Made Man* 1-91  
Sept. 6 Th *Self-Made Man* 92-183

### Week Three

- Sept. 11 T *Self-Made Man* 184-292  
Sept. 13 Th Convocation—No Class

### Week Four

- Sept. 18 T *Feminism: Issues and Arguments* 1-44, Politics of Work and Family  
Sept. 20 Th *Feminism: Issues and Arguments* 45-73, Sexual Harassment

### Week Five

- Sept. 25 T *Feminism: Issues and Arguments* 74-139, Pornography & Abortion  
Sept. 27 Th *Feminism: Issues and Arguments* 140-169, Feminine Appearance

### Week Six: Ecological Feminism

- Oct. 2 T Merchant, "Ecofeminism"  
Vandana Shiva, "Development as a New Project of Western Patriarchy"  
Irene Diamond, "Babies, Heroic Experts, and a Poisoned Earth"

- Oct. 4 Th Donna Haraway, "Cyborg Manifesto"  
Deborah Slicer, "The Body as Bioregion"

Note: Friday, October 5 is the mid-point of the semester

### Week Seven

- Oct. 9 T No class, Fall Break, Sat. Oct. 6 - Wed. Oct. 10 7:30 a.m.  
Oct. 11 Th *Feminism: Issues and Arguments* 170-231, Feminism and Language Change & Women's 'Different Voice'

### Week Eight

- Oct. 16 T *Feminism: Issues and Arguments* 232-260, Feminism, Science, and Bias, Review  
Oct. 18 Th Mid-Term

### Week Nine: Black Feminism & Lesbian Feminism

- Oct. 23 T TBA  
Oct. 25 Th TBA

### Week Ten

- Oct. 30 T Minnich, *Transforming Knowledge* xii-xviii, 1-24



Nov. 1 Th *Transforming Knowledge* 25-61

**Week Eleven: Postcolonial Feminism**

Nov. 6 T Note: This is Election Day!

Nov. 8 Th TBA

**Week Twelve**

Nov. 13 T *Transforming Knowledge* 62-102

Nov. 15 Th *Transforming Knowledge* 103-168

**Week Thirteen: French/Psychoanalytic Feminism**

Nov. 20 T TBA

Nov. 22 Th No class, Thanksgiving Break!

**Week Fourteen**

Nov. 27 T *Transforming Knowledge* 169-231

Nov. 29 Th *Transforming Knowledge* 232-276

**Week Fifteen: Postmodern/Poststructuralist Feminism**

Dec. 4 T Readings TBA

Dec. 6 Th Readings TBA

Classes end Dec. 7

Final Exam:

\*Schedule subject to change. I may supplement this schedule and readings with additional materials from time to time.