

SPRING 2014

PHIL 123: PHILOSOPHY AND FEMINISM

COURSE INFORMATION

Class Meetings: MWF 9:00-9:50am, DH 208.
Instructor: Prof. Christina Bellon
Office Hours: MW 10:00-11:30 in MND 3000; and by appointment.
Contact: MND 3000, 278-4759, www.csus.edu/indiv/b/bellonc.

Please keep all course related communications within Blackboard Messaging.

A Note on Availability: Other than during scheduled office hours, communication will be answered generally within one working day. After 5pm M-F or on the weekend, do not expect a response until the next business day.

CATALOGUE DESCRIPTION

Study of feminist perspectives on important philosophical questions. Examples of the questions treated are: mind-body dualism; reason and emotion; the fact/value distinction; the nature of the public and private realms; equal rights; and whether knowledge is intrinsically "gendered." Different feminist perspectives will be considered and compared with traditional approaches to these questions.

Note: There are no official pre-requisites for this course, but there will be a general expectation of familiarity with philosophical concepts and methods. This course is intended as an elective for the Philosophy major. Students will be expected to read considerable amounts of complex and technical material, write cogently and lucidly on difficult theoretical issues, and to come prepared to participate thoughtfully in class discussion.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Christine Overall, *A Feminist I: Reflections from Academia* (Broadview Press, 1998).
Anita Superson, *The Moral Skeptic* (Oxford University Press: 2009).
Miranda Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice: Power & the Ethics of Knowing* (Oxford University Press: 2007).
Sally Haslanger, *Resisting Reality: Social Construction and Social Critique* (Oxford University Press: 2012).

Each of these texts can be purchased from the bookstore, or from alternate sources, including used booksellers, for a discount. Whatever your mode of acquiring the books is, it will be expected that you have them for the start of semester. ALWAYS bring the current text to class!

LEARNING OUTCOMES

ASPIRATION/OBJECTIVE	PRACTICAL GOALS	ASSESSMENT TOOLS
Develop competence in feminist philosophical concepts and modes	1. Accurately describe and distinguish between a variety of	1. Content in each of: a. Analysis summaries

ASPIRATION/OBJECTIVE	PRACTICAL GOALS	ASSESSMENT TOOLS
of analysis.	philosophical concepts; 2. Express one's own critical judgements in a cogent and clear fashion; 3. Engage in cogent and respectful discussion of difficult and sometimes controversial issues; 4. Analyse specific arguments for consistency and credibility (including one's own); 5. Apply processes of critical analysis to texts.	b. On-line discussion c. In-class Discussion 3. Semester Research Essay Project
Develop and refine written communication skills, especially as those are associated with expository and argumentative writing, including philosophical research methods.	1. Writing competently in concise, precise and well developed logical style; 2. Expression of a point of view through the formulation of a coherent and consistent argument; 3. Presentation of an exposition of text in a coherent manner to an audience of peers. 3. Demonstrate competent research methods for philosophical inquiry.	1. Weekly Analysis Summaries and presentations. 2. Quality of the form (essay structure, logic) and mechanics (syntax, grammar) of each of the Research Essay Project.
Develop an appreciation of the diversity of the human condition, as this is formulated through feminist analysis.	1. Accurately describe and distinguish the central elements of feminist approaches against traditional philosophical methods and their historical and cultural context. 2. Demonstrate comprehension of the cultural values and historical developments which contribute to the development of feminist philosophy.	Discussion of the variations in feminist approaches, especially as these are informed by traditional philosophical methods and inquiry, through: a. written assignments b. on-line discussion c. in-class participation

EVALUATION

Students will be evaluated by several means. These will include a series of short written summaries, in-class presentation of summaries, weekly on-line discussions, and a major research essay project. The course is graded on the basis of 100pts (1pt = 1%). There will be opportunities throughout the semester to earn bonus points, for a maximum grade of 105/100.

ALL assignments and essays are administered within Blackboard, unless otherwise instructed. All assignments must be completed in the appropriate assignment or assessment area in Blackboard.

GRADING SCALE

A Outstanding (96pts and above)
B Range Satisfactory (80-89pts)
D Range Poor (60-69pts)

A- Very Good (90-95pts)
C Range Minimally Satisfactory (70-79pts)
F Unacceptable (below 60pts)

TECHNOLOGY COMPONENT

Please note, this course includes a significant Blackboard component. All assignments can be found there, as well as the required group discussion boards, course calendar, and instructor/class notification options. Technical problems must be directed to the ITC Help Line @ 278-7337.

A NOTE ON PARTICIPATION

As this is an upper division course, it should be taken as an opportunity for you to enhance your communication skills. I strongly encourage you to come regularly, do the readings ahead of time, and participate in class discussions and activities. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of every class.

WRITTEN SUMMARIES AND PRESENTATIONS (30PTS, 10 X 3PTS EACH)

Each week you will be required to write and submit a short (500-750 words) philosophical summary of the assigned reading for the week, submitted both in Blackboard, before class begins, and in class. Each summary will follow the specific instructions provided in Blackboard. Each summary will be accompanied by a proposed discussion question for the class.

Each class period will begin with a student presentation of their written/submitted summary and discussion question (approx 10min). The discussion question will serve to begin class discussion. The instructor will select the day's presenter. Students unprepared to present will receive a 0/3 on this assignment, regardless of having submitted a written summary. Students absent but called upon will similarly receive a 0/3 on this assignment.

If more than ten opportunities are provided, your grade for this component of the course will consist of your best ten scores.

These submissions will be graded as excellent (A: 3.0), good (B: 2.5), satisfactory (C: 2), unsatisfactory (D: 1.5) on a three-point scale. Failure to submit a summary during the class period assigned will result in a zero grade (F: 0). Failure to present your summary when called upon will result in a zero grade (F: 0). No make-ups, no late submissions.

RESEARCH ESSAY PROJECT (50PTS)

For this course, you will write one substantive research essay on a topic of your choice. You will write the essay in four stages, each of which will be commented upon by the instructor and revised by you before submitting the next stage (see the weekly schedule for due dates). Specific instructions and timelines are found in the relevant area of Blackboard.

You must submit all components of the essay for grading to complete the course. Failure to do so will result in a grade of F for the course.

ON-LINE DISCUSSION (20PTS)

Every student will be required to contribute at least 12 times to the on-line discussion in the discussion boards area of Blackboard, including at least three times to each of the four discussion topics. Each student is also expected to read and follow the discussions of their class-mates. Contributions may consist of:

- (i) asking philosophical questions which probe the reading and engage in further explication and analysis of the text,
- (ii) responding thoughtfully to someone else's question,
- (iii) suggesting connections between this reading and other course material,
- (iv) bring current events and other empirical facts/evidence to bear on the reading.

All of this must be conducted in the effort to better understand the texts and to further our appreciation of the material's strengths and weaknesses. Polemics, ideological shortcuts, and other rather thoughtless and unscholarly contributions will not satisfy this requirement and should be resisted. Proper on-line etiquette is expected; violations will not be tolerated.

Each student must have made a total of 12 contributions to on-line discussion by the end of semester (with at least three postings to each of the four course sections). Further, *each student must have read at least ¾ (three-quarters) of the available contributions of their fellows to qualify for a satisfactory grade of C- or better (regardless of how many submissions they have made).*

BONUS OPPORTUNITIES

Throughout the semester, students will have the opportunity to earn bonus points by attending specified events and writing an analysis of it. Details and Instructions can be found in the Bonus Opportunities area of Blackboard. Students can earn up to a maximum of 5 bonus points in this way.

COURSE POLICIES AND ETIQUETTE

EXPECTATIONS

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance is expected from all class participants. Disruptions, rudeness and private discussions, including cell phone disruptions, will not be tolerated. This means while in class, you should be focused on classroom activities and material. Sleeping, using a cell phone, reading a newspaper, doing assignments for other classes, or otherwise engaging in disruptive or disrespectful behavior will be met with a loss of ½pt (per incidence) from the final course grade. **All cellular devices and iPods/music players must be turned off during class unless being used explicitly for class activities.**

DIVERSITY AND RESPECT

CSUS attracts a diverse population of students, faculty and staff with a wide range of cultural norms, lifestyles, beliefs and backgrounds. Opinions may vary on many issues, but students and faculty in this class will be expected to converse and debate in a respectful and tolerant manner.

This class will only be rich if everyone feels free to express her/his views and personal understanding of the course material. Because this is a philosophy class, and philosophy prompts us to think in ways that may be unfamiliar, let

us all be mindful and respectful of each other's opinions. Everyone has a responsibility to make the classroom environment a place where we can respectfully agree to disagree, and perhaps even settle some long unsettled questions.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS

All assignments are due at the date and time specified in the assignment. Late assignments will be penalized at a rate of 10% per calendar day (not merely class period) beginning with the due date. After three late days, acceptance of the assignment is at the instructor's discretion. If you know you will not be able to meet a due date, it is your responsibility to consult with the instructor before the assignment is due. ***When submitting any assignment in Blackboard, ALWAYS check its status to ensure it was submitted. Do not merely hit "submit" and leave. It is your responsibility to ensure your assignment was submitted accurately and timely. Do not wait for the instructor to ask you about it or for a "0" to appear in your grade column!***

No extensions, no exceptions. It is your responsibility to know the due dates and to plan accordingly. Leaving an assignment until the day or two prior is risky and makes you more vulnerable than you already are to factors and events in the universe beyond your control!

PLAGIARISM/CHEATING

Plagiarism and cheating are serious academic offences which will not be tolerated in this class. Assignments in which plagiarism or other forms of cheating are found will at be graded as 0 (not just an F). Repeated violations of the university honesty policy will result in an F for the course, in addition to any administrative penalties imposed by the institution. ALL incidents of cheating and plagiarism will be reported both to the Department Chair and to the Office of Student Conduct for possible further administrative sanction. ***It is your responsibility to know and comply with the University's Academic Honesty Policy***

<http://www.csus.edu/um anual/AcademicHonestyPolicyandProcedures.htm>

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

Every effort has been made to ensure this course is designed to maximize opportunities for student success across the diversity of the student body. However, it may be the case that some elements of the course will require modification to ensure equal opportunity for students with documented disabilities to succeed. Students who have a documented disability (visible or invisible) and require accommodation or assistance with assignments, tests, attendance, note taking, etc., must see the instructor by the ***end of the third week of semester*** to allow arrangements to be made. Failure to notify and consult with the instructor by this date might impede her ability to offer you the necessary accommodation and assistance in a timely fashion. Also be sure to consult with the Services for Students with Disabilities (Lassen Hall, <http://www.csus.edu/SSWD/>) to see what other campus services and accommodation options are available for you. All information shared with the instructor will remain confidential.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Assigned readings should be read completely by the first day of the week in which we discuss them.

Week	Topic	Readings and Assignments
Jan 27-31	Introduction to Philosophical Methods and Feminist Philosophy	Read: <i>Introductions</i> (Available on PDF in Blackboard) from each of Superson, Fricker, Haslanger. Due Opening Homework – Available on Blackboard, bring to class.
Unit 1: Being a Woman Philosopher		
Feb 3-7	Out of Place: Sex, Class, Roles	Read: Overall, Chh 1-4, pp 15-106.
Feb 10-14	From faking it to changing it	Read: Overall, Chh 5-8, pp 107-199.
Unit 2: Feminist Moral Philosophy		
Feb 17-21	Responding to Moral Skepticism	Read: Superson, Ch 2 & 3, pp 18-62.
Feb 24-28	Desire & Self-Interest	Read: Superson, Ch 4 & 5, pp 63-126.
Mar 3-7	Motivating Morality	Read: Superson, Ch 6 & 7, pp 127-178.
Mar 10-14	Interdependency	Read: Superson, Ch 8, pp 179-206.
Unit 3: Feminist Epistemology		
Mar 17-21	Power & Credibility	Read: Fricker, Chh 1 & 2, pp 9-59.
Mar 24-31 Spring Break + Cesar Chavez Day– Campus Closed		
Apr 2-4	Testimony	Read: Fricker, Chh 3, 4, 5; pp 60-128.
Apr 7-11	Silence, Knowers, & Hermeneutics	Read: Fricker, Chh 6 & 7, pp 129-177.
Unit 4: Feminist Metaphysics		
Apr 14-18	Social Constructivism	Read: Haslanger, Chh 1, 2; pp 35-112.
Apr 21-25	Ontology	Read: Haslanger, Chh 4, 6, pp 139-157, 183-220.
Apr 28-May 2	Gender and Race	Read: Haslanger, Chh 10, 11; 298-340.
May 5-9	Metaphysics Revisited	Read: Haslanger, Chh 12, 14, 17; pp 341-364, 381-405, 446-478.
May 12-16	Wrapping up...	Open discussion.
May 19-23 Exam Week – No classes. Stage 4: Revised Final Version of Essays due Thursday, May 21 at noon, Time Certain. Final Discussion Topic closes.		