

Decolonial and Intersectional Feminism(s)

PHL367: Philosophy of Feminism, Friday 12-3, OI 5230

Instructor: Emma McClure, emma.mcclure@mail.utoronto.ca

Office Hours: Friday 3:10-4:40, JHB519

Contact Policy: If you email me, you must include the course code (PHL 367) in the subject line. See Class Policies for more information about emailing and office hours. Announcements about the class (including changes to the schedule) will be made over Quercus and sent to your university email account. You are responsible for checking these accounts regularly.

Starting Point:

We all come from different backgrounds. Some of you will be new to feminism. Some of you may resist it: feminism asks too much of us or exaggerates its claims. Others will be experienced with feminist discourse—from previous classes or social media. Perhaps this experience will also make you resistant: feminism doesn't go far enough to incorporate diverse perspectives.

Whichever group you find yourself in, welcome to my class. I look forward to introducing you to feminism, deepening your understanding of these philosophers, and debating topics relevant to our daily lives. The readings and discussions will be challenging, even disturbing. It may be hard to admit how we've participated in oppression. It may be equally hard to admit how we've been shaped and limited by oppression. You may feel guilty or ashamed. Fearful or angry. Hurt. Vulnerable. I know I've felt all these things at various times over the years.

I want us to learn to live with, and work through, these feelings of discomfort. Listen to your classmates and engage with them respectfully. Allow yourself to learn and change your mind. I expect to learn from this experience as well.

Plan for the Course:

The course divides into four units:

1. (Weeks 1-3) Clears up common misconceptions and introduces key concepts. We'll discuss why feminism is still relevant, and what it means to be intersectional.
2. (Weeks 4-6) Considers tensions within the feminist movement: What is white feminism? Is it possible to be too woke? We'll conclude the first half with a recent hot-button issue: the #metoo movement.
3. (Weeks 8-10) Decolonial feminism pushes the boundaries still further. We will problematize not just white feminism, but Western and Eurocentric feminism—both abroad and here at home, in Canada.
4. (Weeks 12-13) The semester culminates on a note of hope. We'll discuss non-toxic forms of masculinity, and watch Barry Jenkins' *Moonlight* together on the last day of class. This film acknowledges the pressures of modern society but challenges us to choose "Who is you?"

Required Texts:

All readings are available on the “Readings” section of the Quercus course page. You are expected to complete the readings *before* the scheduled class. The amount of reading per week will be ~ 20-30 pages. You are expected to bring the readings to class—either print a copy or save one to your laptop/tablet/phone. Let me know if this isn’t feasible for you.

Class Schedule:

CW: Sexual Violence, Racism, Homophobia, and Transphobia

Most classes will touch on these topics, and sometimes they will be discussed in depth. I know this will make reading and attendance difficult for some of you, and you may not always know in advance whether you can write on a particular reading or attend that day’s class. I am open to accommodating your needs and provide make-up assignments, as necessary. However, when possible, I think it is important to work through these topics together. As a survivor of sexual violence, I know the costs of being reminded of past experiences, but I also know the benefits of finding solidarity. I hope you, too, can take these intersectional feminist discussions as an opportunity for growth and healing. See Class Policies for more information and resources.

Week 1. What is Feminism? (pre-reading optional)

bell hooks *Feminism is for Everybody* Intro and Chapter 1

(cw sexual violence) Marilyn Frye, “Oppression”

Chimamanda Adichie and Trevor Noah, [“Interview on *The Daily Show*”](#)

Week 2. What is Gender?

Sally Haslanger, “Gender and Race: (What) Are They? (What) Do We Want Them To Be?”

Katharine Jenkins, “Amelioration and Inclusion: Gender Identity and the Concept of *Woman*”

Week 3. Intersectionality and Agency Under Oppression

Patricia Hill Collins, “Learning from the Outsider Within”

(cw police violence) Alisa Bierria, “Missing in Action: Violence, Power, and Discerning Agency”

Week 4. White Feminism and Anger within the Feminist Movement

Marilyn Frye, “On Being White”

Audre Lorde, “The Uses of Anger”

Kat Blaque, [“FAKE OUTRAGE AND WOKENESS ARE CANCELLED IN 2018”](#)

Week 5. The Importance of Small Harms

Saba Fatima, “On the Edge of Knowing: Microaggressions and Epistemic Uncertainty as a Woman of Color”

Rachel McKinnon, “Allies Behaving Badly: Gaslighting as Epistemic Injustice”

Assignments: you must have submitted at least ONE reading response by this class.

Week 6. #metoo Movement

(cw sexual violence) Kate Manne, *Down Girl* (excerpt)

(cw sexual violence) Katie Way, "I went on a date with Aziz Ansari"

Caitlin Flanagan, "The Humiliation of Aziz Ansari"

(cw sexual violence) Lauren Shields, "Me, Too? Aziz Ansari and the Crap I Don't Want to Process"

Week 7. Latina Feminism and the Borderlands

Maria Lugones, "Playfulness, 'World'-Traveling, and Loving Perception" and "Hablando Cara a Cara/Speaking Face to Face: An Exploration of Ethnocentric Racism"

Week 8: Western Feminism and Imperialism

(cw incest) Linda Alcoff, "The Problem of Speaking for Others"

(cw assault) Martha Nussbaum, "Women and Cultural Universals"

Assignments: you must have submitted at least TWO reading responses by this class.

Week 9: Returning to Canada—Burqa Ban and Indigenous Traditions

Serene Khader, "Transnational Feminisms, Nonideal Theory, and 'Other' Women's Power"

Renée Elizabeth Mzinegiizhigo-kwe Bédard, "Keepers of the Water: Nishnaabe-dwewag Speaking for the Water"

Week 10: IN-CLASS EXAM

Study ALL the material we've covered using the reading response questions as a study guide. I anticipate that you won't need the full three hours. If you need to make further accommodations through Test and Exam Services, please do so at least 2 weeks in advance.

Week 11: Masculinity

bell hooks, "healing the hurt"

Aída Hurtado and Mrinal Sinha, "More Than Men: Latino Feminist Masculinities and Intersectionality"

Justin Baldoni, "[Why I'm done trying to be 'man enough'](#)"

Assignments: you must have submitted all THREE reading responses by this class.

Week 12: Application in Film (watch in class)

Barry Jenkins, *Moonlight*

Assignments: Final Paper due after the last day of class

Evaluation

Note: If you know that you will not be able to complete a required activity, we can discuss alternative evaluation schemes.

Participation	16%
Reading Responses	24% (8% each)
In-Class Exam	25%
Final Paper	35%

Participation (in-class, daily): Philosophy happens in conversation. Once you leave the classroom, you'll need to be able to defend your ideas and productively engage with the ideas of other people. Points are earned through completion of in-class writing activities and contributions to class discussion (8%, assessed by me). Points are also earned through active participation in small-group discussions (8%, assessed by you and your peers). We'll discuss how good participation requires preparation, attendance, and thoughtful contributions—but it also requires listening carefully to the rest of your group and not dominating the conversation, especially if you lack lived experience about the topic.

Reading Responses (max. 600 words each): Philosophy also requires charitable and active reading. Your philosophical education can continue long after graduation, but only if you learn how to engage with written texts. We will be practicing these skills in class, and I hope to see you improve over the course of your three responses (8% each). But the only way to know if you're improving your reading skills is to complete these assignments BEFORE we cover the topic in lecture. These responses will also help you to be prepared for group discussion and to study for the in-class exam. Note: You are welcome to complete more than three responses. Your best three grades will count towards your total class grade. You are also welcome to choose which weeks you write Reading Responses for. I will post a prompt by the Sunday before class, if not earlier.

In-Class Exam: Most of the benefits of taking tests come from studying for the exam. For this class, you will take a type of exam called a Quote Identification Test:

- *10 points.* You will be given ten quotes and asked to identify who the author is for each of them. This means you will need to study the readings so that you can recognize the passages and know how to spell the author's names.
- *40 points.* Then, for each quote, you will be asked to explain how the quoted passage fits with the author's main argument. This means you will need study the lecture slides (and read the comments on your reading responses) so that you know what the author's main argument is.

Note: Even if you end up misidentifying the author, if you can make a plausible argument about how the quote is connected to a different reading, you'll still get some points. I'll give you a practice question a couple weeks beforehand so you can see how this works.

Final Paper (max 1800 words) builds on the skills we've been practicing throughout the course. You'll put an author from the first half in conversation with an author from the second half. This will require you to charitably summarize both authors, and most importantly, to find a tension between their two views. We'll generate possible topics during class discussions. You're also welcome to write on your own topic—if you run it by me during office hours at least one week in advance of the deadline.

Course Policies:

Contact Policy:

You are required to check your university email accounts regularly. All announcements and grades will be posted on Quercus, and papers will be returned over Quercus.

I can be reached at office hours or over email: emma.mcclure@mail.utoronto.ca

If you email me, please include the course code (PHL 100) in the subject line. I will not answer substantive philosophical questions over email. My response time for other emails will be ~24 hours. If you haven't heard back within 48 hours, please email me again to remind me.

Office Hours:

Please feel free to drop by my office hours, or if you are unavailable during that time, email me to make an appointment. You are not bothering me by coming to my office hours. These are times I have set aside so that I can speak with you one-on-one. You can come with particular questions or you can come just wanting to chat about course material, philosophy, current events, graduate school, etc. My biggest regret about my own time as an undergrad was not taking advantage of office hours. Don't be like me! Come to office hours.

Class Attendance and Participation:

This class works best if you come to class and participate in discussion. However, I know that not everyone will be comfortable participating in large groups, so I'll offer many opportunities for small-group participation and in-class writing assignments.

If you know you will routinely have to miss class—due to work, family obligations, accessibility reasons, religious obligations, prolonged sickness, or trauma—please contact me as soon as possible so we can find an alternative method of participation (e.g. over email or via discussions with peers outside of class). Note: If you are a caregiver, you are welcome to bring your infants/children to class with you.

Late Assignments:

The reading responses cannot be submitted late, but you are free to choose which weeks to submit. If you are unable to attend class on the day of the in-class exam, I will schedule a make-up exam the following week. I will accept the paper up to 3 days late (Monday April 7th, 11:59 pm) without penalty, and up to 7 days late (Friday April 12th, 11:59 pm) with a 3% penalty/day. The late penalty can be waived and the deadline extended if you find yourself in exceptional circumstances (due to accessibility reasons, trauma, family problems, etc). Please reach out if you are struggling to meet deadlines.

Accessibility:

I am happy to provide any accommodations needed to ensure that all materials and activities are accessible to all students. All readings and handouts will be available on Quercus in PDF form, and I will use a microphone during my lectures. Class attendance and late-assignment policies were constructed with an eye towards making this class as accessible as possible. Please let me know if you require any other accommodations, at any point throughout the term. If you know that you won't be able to perform a required activity, we can discuss alternative evaluation schemes.

Sexual Violence:

Given the subject matter of this course, you may also want to contact the Sexual Violence Prevention and Support Centre. As the SVPS Centre emphasizes and I'd like to echo, if you are a survivor of sexual violence: "You are not alone and this is not your fault."

E-Mail: thesvpcentre@utoronto.ca

Website: www.safety.utoronto.ca

Phone: 416-978-2266

Mental Health:

Academic work is difficult and psychologically demanding. It's important to work hard and push yourself but it is even more important to be kind to yourself. The University has a number of resources available if difficulties arise:

<http://discover.utoronto.ca/health-wellness>

<http://life.utoronto.ca/get-help/counselling/>

<http://mentalhealth.utoronto.ca/>

Academic Integrity:

The purpose of the assignments is to improve your skills in reading, writing, and critical thinking. The purpose of grades is to reflect your competency in these skills. Plagiarism undercuts these aims. You have plagiarized if you a) include writing that is not your own AND b) do not cite your sources. I will investigate suspected cases of plagiarism and academic dishonesty, in accordance with the procedures outlined in the University of Toronto's Code of Behavior on Academic Matters (available online at: <http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>).

If you have questions about what constitutes appropriate academic behavior or appropriate research and citation methods, you are expected to seek out additional information from other institutional resources. (http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QPA_plagiarism.html is a good place to start.)

Writing Help:

Writing a philosophy essay can be difficult. We will spend some time in class and tutorials talking about techniques for good writing and argumentation. More detailed information is available here:

<http://www.sfu.ca/philosophy/resources/writing.html>

For in person help—especially with grammar or syntax—make an appointment at the Writing Centre:

<http://writing.utoronto.ca/writing-centres/arts-and-science/> The Philosophy Essay Clinic is a particularly helpful resource: <http://philosophy.utoronto.ca/st-george/undergraduate-at-st-george/philosophy-essay-clinic/>

You may also come to my office hours (or make an appointment) to receive advice from me. I will not read full drafts, but I will comment on particular paragraphs or discuss your ideas with you. I can also help you brainstorm ideas if you're having difficulty starting the assignment, or answer questions about the topics we've discussed in class.