

Savage
TTH 11:30-1
TBA

Philosophy of Woman

Feminism: In the Ivory Tower and On the Streets

Instructor: Heidi Savage
Office: Welles 105B
Tel.: 245-5999 ext. 4215
Email: savage@geneseo.edu
Office hours: TBA
Webpage: <http://sites.google.com/site/heiditiedke1975>

This is an introduction to the history and legitimation of feminism as political movement and as an area of academic study. We will examine feminism as a political ideology concerned with various issues, such as, equal rights between the sexes, violence and sexuality, ethics and morality, and finally identity, autonomy, and character.

As with all political ideological movements, feminism itself has been good for many of the people with which it has concerned itself. But, as with any political movement that gains power, no matter how little, there is always the danger of abusing that power in such a way that the people that are supposed to benefit from it are actually hurt. It is clear from some recent occurrences that feminism is now in that position. That is, academic feminists have a certain amount of power and privilege and feminists should really begin to examine how to use it in non-exclusionary ways. There has been much written about this effort, but it has yet to come to fruition.

We will look closely at the power that the feminist movement has historically had or lacked and from whence it came. We will also examine the effects of feminism becoming an important area of study for women and the impact this has for feminist practice, and on women in general.

Now that feminism is an established academic area of study, and has a relatively strong following, certain questions need to be asked: Who are academic feminists? What is their object of study? For whom are academic feminists writing? Is there a feminist ivory tower that is now disconnected from the lived experiences of women? Is feminism concerned with equality for all women or only women who subscribe to feminism themselves? What expectations does having a strong feminist presence on most campuses and institutions of higher learning generate for women in general?

To address these questions, we will look at current feminist scholarship take a broader look at how it both does and does not perpetuate the status quo, and its impact on the lived experience of practicing academic feminists and on the lived experience of non-academic feminists.

Students will be asked (1) to attend classes, and to participate in those classes (2) to read substantial selections from the assigned authors (3) to take two tests (4) to write two short critical analyses the due date for which will depend upon your chosen topic.

At the beginning of the semester, you will choose two topics from those covered in the course on which you will write your short three page critical analyses. The due date for these analyses will be determined by the course schedule. An assignment sign-up sheet will be distributed during the first week of class.

Each test will count for 20% of your final grade, as will each critical analysis. The other 20% of your final grade will depend upon your participation in the class. 10% of this grade will be determined on the basis of your individual participation in class, and the other 10% on your participation in your working groups.

Missed exams will be excused only if there is a good reason presented to the instructor within a reasonable period of time and arrangements to take the missed test are made within a week of the official testing date. Written assignments without a good reason for being late will be penalized 1/3 of a letter grade per day late. Whether you have a good reason for missing any of your deadlines will be assessed on a case by case basis.

You are highly encouraged to work collaboratively with me on your written work. If you would like to submit drafts, please do so 10 days before the official deadline.

Additionally, any students receiving an A-range grade may have their work distributed to their fellow classmates in an anonymous form. If you do not wish this, please get in touch with me via email to ensure your work is not distributed to the other students in the class.

You will be expected to know which readings you are responsible for each class. To aid in this endeavor, you should check Dr. Savage's announcements page for this class on her professional website in addition to attending classes. The readings will be covered in the order in which they are presented below.

You will also be expected to keep a running journal answering five questions about every reading each week for your working groups. These questions will be distributed. You will be expected to submit the results of these journals from your working groups in order to meet the participation requirements of the course.

We will read excerpts from several books and articles, but we will also incorporate information from the media as well as examine real life examples.

Class Topics

I. The History and Nature of the Feminist Movement

1. What is Feminism and its Concerns?
 - a) Equality of the sexes and oppression
 - i. Equality as sameness in treatment
 - ◆ Cady Stanton
 - getting the vote and equal rights under the law
 - ii. Equality as fairness in treatment
 - ◆ Anderson "What is the Point of Equality?"
 - ◆ Young *Justice and the Politics of Difference*
 - Do women need different rules to be treated equally
 - iii. What is Oppression
 - ◆ Frye "Oppression"
 - ◆ Bison "They're Made of Meat"
 - implicit bias tests

II. Sex and Gender

1. What is sex or what are men and women: biological and cultural markers?
 - ◆ Fausto-Sterling “The Five Sexes: Why Male and Female are Not Enough”
 - ◆ Spelman *Inessential Woman*
 - ◆ Sections of Stanford Encyclopedia article on sex and gender
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminism-gender/#WomGro>
 - ◆ Meta-morphosis <http://www.metamorpho-sis.com/blog/>
 - Trans women
 - Competitive sports
 - Dimorphism
2. What is gender?
 - ◆ Simone de Beauvoir *The Second Sex*
 - ◆ Rubin “The Traffic in Women: Notes on the ‘Political Economy’ of Sex”
 - ◆ Sections of Stanford Encyclopedia article on sex and gender
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminism-gender/#WomGro>
 - Gender presentation, identification, and assignment
 - Gender as social construction

III. Multiple Feminist Theories

1. Libertarian Feminism
 - a) Equity Feminism
 - ◆ Taylor *Reclaiming the Mainstream: Individualist Feminism Rediscovered*
 - Implications for definitions of oppression
 - b) Cultural Feminism
 - ◆ Young ‘Enforcing Virtue.’
 - Implications for policing gender inequality
2. Liberal Feminism
 - ◆ Martha Nussbaum ‘The Future of Feminist Liberalism.’
 - leveling the playing field
3. Marxist Feminism
 - ◆ Firestone *The Dialectic of Sex*
 - ◆ Woolf *A Room of One's Own*
 - Implications for the welfare state
4. Radical Feminism
 - ◆ McKinnon *Toward a Feminist Theory of State*
 - Implications for healthy sexual relationships
5. Standpoint Feminism
 - ◆ Sandra Harding *The Science Question in Feminism*
 - Implications for what counts as knowing
6. Black Feminism
 - ◆ Patricia Hill-Collins *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment*
 - Implications for the aims of feminism
7. Post Modern Feminism
 - ◆ Butler *Gender Trouble*
 - Implications for the concept of gender and trans individuals

8. Queer Theory
 - ◆ Jogose *Queer Theory: An Introduction*
 - Implications for finding the answers

IV. Early Uniformity of the Feminist Movement and Its Demise

1. First Wave Feminism
 - ◆ Wollstonecraft and Cady Stanton
 - Implications of having a unified goal
2. Second Wave Feminism
 - ◆ Betty Friedan *The Feminist Mystique*
 - White middle class feminism
 - ◆ Andrea Dworkin *Pornography: Men Possessing Women*
 - ◆ Eileen Willis *In Powers of Desire: The Politics of Sexuality*
 - The feminist sex wars
 - legacies
3. Third Wave Feminism
 - ◆ bell hooks *Feminism is for Everyone*
 - ◆ Naomi Scheman "Centering the Queer by Queering the Center"
 - the undoing of the universality of the experience of womanhood

V. Who are The Feminists with a Voice?

1. What counts as legitimate feminist scholarship and who is doing it?
 - a) Credentials
 - ◆ Yee <http://globalcomment.com/deconstructing-feminism%E2%80%99s-ivory-tower-a-review-of-feminism-for-real/#>
 - Who gets to determine the nature of feminist thought?
 - b) Race and class
 - ◆ The Feminist Griote <http://thefeministgriote.com/my-beef-with-the-ivory-tower-of-feminism/>
 - ◆ Grey https://www.academia.edu/1330316/Decolonising_Feminism_Aboriginal_Women_and_the_Global_Sisterhood
 - Who has the opportunity to contribute to feminist thought?
 - c) Feminist Media and the Web
 - ◆ Inside Higher Ed <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2013/04/25/suny-geneseo-students-outraged-planned-sexual-assault-lecture>
 - ◆ Feminist philosophers blog <http://feministphilosophers.wordpress.com/2013/04/24/suny-geneseo-colloquium-perhaps-not-what-it-seemed/>
 - The Implications of SUNY Geneseo and Sexual Assault Awareness Week Philosophy Talk April 2013

II. The Impact of the Feminist Movement

1. Women and the academy
 - a) Academic feminists, feminist activists, and "ordinary" women
 - b) The objectification of "ordinary" women as objects of study
 - ◆ Suny Geneseo's study of sexual assault on campus
 - The discounting of qualitative data

- ◆ The infantilization of women as in need of rescue
 - White feminists to the rescue
 - c) “Ordinary” voices
 - ◆ Answers in SUNY Geneseo's sexual assault survey
 - The implications of treating women as victims of false consciousness
 - ◆ Testimony treated as a rhetorical strategy by feminists
 - The way to treat the public testimony of sexual assault victims
 - d) Closing ranks
 - ◆ Daniel <http://www.secondshiftblog.com/2014/09/on-closing-ranks/>
 - Who gets left out and why?
2. Women in the academy
- a) Sexual harassment and assault
 - ◆ <http://beingawomaninphilosophy.wordpress.com/>
 - The McGinn Case
 - The Cudd Case
 - The Ludlow Case
 - b) Women in male-dominated fields -- STEM, Mathematics, Computer Science, and Philosophy
 - ◆ <http://whatweredoingaboutwhatitslike.wordpress.com/>
 - What is the solution to closing the gender gap?
 - c) Women in the academy and academic feminism
 - ◆ Charleswell http://www.hamptoninstitution.org/fourth-wave-feminism.html#.VB3xl_IdWPw
 - The confining of women to certain areas of study
 - Expectations of women's areas of interest