

## Course Syllabus

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**Office Hours:** MW 12:30-2:00; TR 12:30-2:00; and by appointment

**Textbook:** There is no required textbook for this course. However, a steady stream of **Lectures** serves the same purpose—background information students are expected to read prior to class. Lectures are available on the D2L site. Please bring a copy to class, to avoid excessive, ineffective and distracting note-taking. **Reading assignments** will be distributed in class or posted on D2L.

**Unit Tests:** Unit tests have two parts: (1) Test essays and (2) Multiple-choice questions.  
 (1) Essays will be given in advance. Students may write these essays before class. The essays can also be written during class, on the day of the test; no notes may be used during class.  
 (2) Multiple-choice questions are based on Lectures, reading assignments and classroom work. A Study Guide will be posted on the D2L site.

**Final Exam:** The Final Exam has two parts: (1) Final Exam Essays and (2) Multiple-choice questions. This is a cumulative test, with multiple-choice questions taken from Tests 1-4.

**Waiver opportunity:** Students with at least a 92% average on the multiple-choice sections of tests 1-4 need not take the multiple-choice part of the Final.

**Note:** These students are required to submit the Final Exam Essays.

**Grades:** Final grades are based on three categories of work, weighted as follows:

Classroom work & Written Assignments:	20%
Unit Tests:	60%
Final Exam:	20%

### **Course Objectives**

This course satisfies Goals X and X of the SCSU general education program. ???designed to provide students with an opportunity to acquire those skills. And it is a diversity class...

This course can be used as an elective in Philosophy major and minor programs, and Women's Studies major and minor programs. It is therefore designed to provide students with an opportunity to accumulate knowledge, acquire skills, and deepen understanding of concepts and issues in each of those disciplines.

Three basic questions shape the way issues are approached in this class:

- (1) What is feminism?
- (2) What are your own views on the issues we discuss?
- (3) What are our moral obligations to people, around the world and here at home, who are subject to severe human rights violations?

**Course Policies**

Missed multiple-choice tests may be taken up to 5 days late, but with a 20% penalty.

Students who miss a multiple-choice test may send the test essay, via e-mail to the instructor, on or before the day of the test. No penalty will be applied.

Test essays will not be accepted after the day of the test.

Exceptions to these rules are made for school related activities and military duties.

University policies with respect to cheating and plagiarizing will be enforced.

**GRADE CALCULATION FORM**

Category	Points Possible	Points Earned
<b>Classroom Work</b>	200	
<b>4 Unit Tests</b> -Max pts/Test Essays: 50 -Max pts/Multiple-Choice Questions: 100	600	
<b>Final Exam</b> -Max pts/Final Exam Essay: 60 -Max pts/Multiple-Choice Questions: 140	200	

Total Possible: 1,000

Total Earned: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade	%	Total Points Earned
A	92-100	915-1000
A-	90-91	895-914
B+	87-89	865-894
B	83-86	825-864
B-	80-82	795-824
C+	77-79	765-794
C	73-76	725-764
C-	70-72	695-724
D+	67-69	665-694
D	63-66	625-664
D-	60-62	590-624
F	0-59	0-589

## Course Overview

### **Unit 1: Defining Feminism**

Feminism is a social movement with the basic goal of achieving equality between women and men.

The first two Lectures focus on the second part of that definition: the goal of feminism is to implement human rights standards laid out in the UDHR, using CEDAW to ensure that women's human rights are protected on an equal basis as those of men.

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> Lecture we address the first part of the definition of feminism—feminism as a *social movement*. In the United States, feminism as an organized social movement officially began in Seneca Falls in 1848. That event was preceded by 2,000 years of discussion about gender. The centerpiece of our look at the history of feminist thought is Christine de Pizan, who published *The Book of the City of Ladies* in 1404.

Questions about the definition of feminism will continue through the semester. Students are encouraged to put substance into the concept by developing their own positions on the issues we study. We'll pay special attention to diversity of thought within feminism, exploring the limits of disagreement.

#### Readings

Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)  
The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)  
The Declaration of Sentiments (1848)

### **Unit 2: Women & Religion**

The human rights standards laid out in CEDAW have elicited very strong resistance from religiously motivated groups around the world. Both in the U.S. and elsewhere, its call for equal opportunity is perceived as a direct threat to cultural/religious identity. The international feminist movement has become, therefore, a focal point for the challenge of integrating *universal* rights with genuine respect for cultural/religious diversity.

One way to avoid cultural imperialism is to follow the lead of *insiders*—women's rights activists who share the cultural/religious perspectives of the community in question. We study two examples, the Catholic Women Priest movement, and Evangelical Feminism.

Students write a philosophical research paper, giving them an opportunity to find their own non-U.S. example of "insider activism" which they share with the rest of the class.

#### Readings:

*Declaration on the Admission of Women to the Ministerial Priesthood* (Vatican, 1976); *Commentary on the Declaration Apostolic Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on Reserving Priestly Ordination to Men Alone*, 1994.  
Pope John Paul II. *Letter to Women*. 1995.  
Catherine Cavanagh. *Women Priests, Answering the Call*, Butternut Publishing, 2010.  
Gary Macy. *The Hidden History of Women's Ordination*, Oxford University Press, 2008.  
Rosemary R. Ruether. *Women priests offer differing approaches...*, *National Catholic Reporter*, 8/10/10.  
Rebecca M. Groothuis. *Equal in Being, Unequal in Role*, in *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity Without Hierarchy* (Intervarsity Press, 2005).

### **Unit 3: Personal Decisions**

Many people no longer accept a religiously motivated account of women's nature that demands submission to a husband's authority in the home, and insists that all women dedicate their lives to nurturing children. But the traditional patterns of women's lives remain a strong cultural force in our society.

In this Unit, students are asked to consider a series of personal decisions that involve feminist challenges to traditional gender dynamics: Do you want to have children? Do you want access to contraceptives and abortion procedures, to help you control the number and timing of your children? Do you want to "stay home" to raise your children? Do you want a long-term intimate relationship? Do you want to marry that person? If you marry (same-sex or otherwise), will you change your name?

#### Readings:

Justice Blackmun. *Roe v. Wade*, Supreme Court Decision, 1973.

Guttmacher Institute. *Facts on Induced Abortion Worldwide*, 2012.

Guttmacher Institute. *Unintended Pregnancy in the U.S.*, 2012.

Moira Stephens, Christopher Jordens, Ian Kerridge, Rachel Ankeny. *Religious perspectives on Abortion and a Secular Response*, *Journal of Religion & Health* (2010) 49: 513-535.

Christine Overall. *Why Have Children? The Ethical Debate*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press (2012).

Alice Stone Blackwell. *Lucy Stone, Pioneer of Women's Rights*. Boston: Little Brown (1930).

### **Unit 4: Economic Issues**

Some of the most severe human rights abuses around the world are related to poverty. Statistics indicate that, throughout the world, women are underrepresented at the top of the economic pile, and overrepresented at the bottom. What accounts for that, and what should we do about it?

We begin this Unit with women at the top, looking at pay gap statistics and descriptions of the glass ceiling.

We then shift to poverty in the U.S., looking at dynamics surrounding low wage work.

We try to absorb the enormity of global poverty, and consider strategies for reducing it.

We finish with a look at human trafficking, a widespread and extremely dangerous human rights violation.

A philosophical account of responsibility will be used to provide a context for questions surrounding our personal obligations to the billion or so people in the world suffering severe economic deprivation. In what ways does 'being a feminist' require responding to that need?

#### Readings

AAUW. *Graduating to a Pay Gap*.

Anne-Marie Slaughter. *Why Women Still Can't Have It All*, *The Atlantic Monthly* (July, 2012).

Haslanger, Alcoff, O'Connor, Antony, Langton. *Women in Philosophy*. NYT Opinionator. 9/2-6/13.

US poverty: University of Michigan's National Poverty Center; U.S. Dept of Labor; Economic Policy Institute;

Forbes list of highest paid CEOs; MIT's living wage calculator.

Thomas Pogge. *Poverty and Human Rights*.

Global Poverty: World Bank; UNICEF; ILO; WHO; Fair Labor Association; Worker's Rights Consortium.

Special Representative of the UN Secretary General. Comments on the Issue of Human Rights and Transnational Corporations.

U.S. State Dept. *Trafficking in Persons Report*, 2012. Also UN and Minnesota sources.