

AS PHIL 3510 (3.0)
FEMINIST APPROACHES TO ETHICS AND POLITICS
WINTER 2009

Course Director: A. MacLachlan

Office: S418 Ross

Office Hours: M 1.30-3.30pm, or by appointment

Email: amacla@yorku.ca

Phone: (416) 736 2100 x77587

Class Location: TBD

Class Time: W, 2.30-5.30pm

** Email is the best way to reach me. I check email daily, and will respond within 24 hours.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course examines recent feminist writing in ethics and political philosophy. Of particular interest will be the development of a distinctly *feminist* set of approaches to philosophical questions of value, justice, care, moral responsibility and character. We will trace the development of feminist ethics from primarily critical responses to mainstream ethical theory to a flourishing canon of distinct approaches to philosophical ethics. We will discuss the criteria for what qualifies as a “feminist” ethical theory, and will examine several candidates, including the ethic of care and its critics, feminist contractarianism, and lesbian ethics. The second half of the course will apply feminist moral theory to relevant ethical issues, including oppression, reproductive autonomy, sexual violence, the institutions of marriage and the family, and global justice.

COURSE READINGS:

Readings for this course are primarily drawn from a course-pack, available at the York University Bookstore. Besides the course-pack, you have one required text:

Held, Virginia, ed. *Justice and Care: Essential Readings in Feminist Ethics*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1995.

Both the Held text and the course-pack will be available on 2-hour reserve from the Scott Library. Any other readings will be available as pdfs on the Moodle course website.

York students are required to maintain high standards of academic integrity and are subject to the Senate Policy on Academic Honesty:

<http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/legislation/senate/acadhone.htm>

Students are also expected to review the materials on the Academic Integrity website.

(<http://www.yorku.ca/academicintegrity>).

Important information for students regarding the Ethics Review process, Access/Disability, Academic Honesty and Integrity, Student Conduct and Religious Observance Days:

www.yorku.ca/secretariat/senate_cte_main_pages/ccas.htm

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COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

There are six components to your course assessment in PHIL 3510:

a) Critical Response Paper: (15% of final grade)

A critical response to an assigned reading (given January 14). More details to follow in class.
2-3 pages double-spaced; due January 28 at the beginning of class.

b) Midterm Test: (20% of final grade)

Held in-class February 11; 60 minutes.

Format: definitions and short answers.

c) Final Paper, First Draft: (15% of final grade)

You will submit two electronic copies of your paper draft: one to me, and one to another student in the class, with whom you have been paired.

Paper topics and specific instructions will be given out in class on January 28.

5-8 pages double-spaced; due March 3 by the beginning of class.

d) Final Paper, Peer Criticism: (15% of final grade)

You will be asked to provide constructive, *respectful* feedback on your partner's paper draft.

Keep in mind, he or she will be offering the same service to you. Each of you will submit your comments to your partner and to me. You will be assessed on how careful, thorough and constructive your comments are. More details to follow in class.

Due March 18 at the beginning of class.

e) Final Paper, Final Draft: (25% of final grade)

You will be expected to edit and revise your draft in light of your partner's comments and mine. Your paper will be evaluated both on its quality, and its relative *improvement* from earlier drafts.

7-8 pages; due April 1 at the beginning of class.

f) Participation: (10% of final grade)

This includes your attendance, your respectful and engaged verbal contributions to class discussion and group work (this is a matter of quality, and *not* quantity, of contributions) and especially, your participation in our class's online discussion forums. If you feel uncomfortable speaking in a classroom setting, willingness to come to office hours and pertinent email inquiries (again, quality not quantity, please) will also count toward your participation grade.

Late work (or a missed test) will only be accepted without penalty if you have prior approval from me, or in the event of a documented emergency. All other work will be penalized at a rate of 3% per day. After 5 days it will not be accepted.

If you have particular circumstances you feel may prevent you from participating fully in the class, please come see me as soon as possible so that we can make all necessary arrangements.

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SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READINGS, WINTER 2009

Date:	Topic of Class Discussion:	Required Readings (to be completed <i>before</i> class that week)
7/1	<i>Prof. MacLachlan away</i> <i>In-Class Film: TBA</i>	<i>No Reading</i>
14/1	Feminism, Feminist theories Ethics, Ethical theories	SEP entry on Feminist Ethics (posted on Moodle) Baier, "What do women want in a moral theory?" (CP)
21/1	Care and its Critics	Carole Gilligan, "Moral Orientation and Moral Development" (Held) Nel Noddings, "Caring" (Held) Claudia Card, "Gender and Moral Luck" (Held)
28/1	Rights and Relations	Annette Baier, "The Need for More than Justice" (Held) Samantha Brennan, "Reconciling Feminist Ethics and Politics on the Issue of Rights" (posted on Moodle) Susan Dimock, "Why All Feminists Should be Contractarians" (posted on Moodle) <i>*Critical Response Paper Due*</i>
4/2	Character, Knowledge, Responsibility	Margaret Urban Walker, "Moral Understandings: Alternative 'Epistemology' for a Feminist Ethics" (Held) Cheshire Calhoun, "Emotional Work" (CP) Canadian Feminist Ethics Theory Group, "Some Issues in the Ethics of Collaborative Work" (CP)
11/2	Lesbian Ethics	Sarah Hoagland, "Separating from Heterosexuality" (CP) Claudia Card, "Lesbian Ethics" (CP) <i>*In-Class Midterm Test* (60 minutes)</i>
18/2	<i>Reading Week: No Class</i>	<i>No Reading</i> <i>Good luck with your paper drafts!</i>

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SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READINGS, CONTINUED

Date:	Topic of Class Discussion:	Required Readings (to be done <i>before</i> class that week)
25/2	The Politics of Oppression	Marilyn Frye, "Oppression" (CP) Sandra Bartky, "On Psychological Oppression" (CP) Maria Lugones, "Playfulness, 'World'-Travelling, and Loving Perception" (CP)
4/3	Sex and the Sex Industry	Christine Overall, "What's Wrong with Prostitution? Evaluating Sex Work" and Laurie Shrage's Response (posted on Moodle) Rae Langton, "Pornography, Speech Acts and Silence" (CP) Dorothy Allison, "Puritans, Peverts and Feminists" (CP) <i>*Final Paper, First Draft Due*</i>
11/3	Autonomy and Reproduction	Sue Sherwin, "Normalizing Reproductive Technologies and the Implications for Autonomy" (CP) Rosemarie Tong, "Feminist and Non-Feminist Perspectives on Abortion" (CP)
18/3	Global Justice, Global Feminisms	Serena Parekh, "Gender and Human Rights" (posted on Moodle) Ofelia Schutte, "Cross-Cultural Communications and Feminist Theory in North-South Contexts" (CP) Lorraine Code, "How to think Globally: Stretching the limits of Imagination" (CP) <i>*Final Paper, Peer Criticism Due*</i>
25/3	Violence	Pamela Foa, "What's Wrong with Rape?" (CP) Robin May Schott, "Philosophical Reflections on War Rape" (CP) Andrea Smith, "Sexual Violence as a Tool of Genocide" (CP)
1/4	Marriage and Motherhood	Claudia Card, "Against Marriage and Motherhood" (CP) Sara Ruddick, "Injustice in Families: Assault and Domination" (Held) Patricia Hill Collins, "Black Women and Motherhood" (Held) <i>*Final Paper, Final Draft Due*</i>