

PHIL 3380-001

Feminist Philosophy of Science

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CTIHB 459
MWF / 12:55-1:45

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Course Description

How has feminist theory changed how we understand science?

How can science contribute to oppression and marginalization, and what should be done about this?

Why does science work better when people of all identities are represented as scientists?

In this course we explore questions like these, showing how intersectional feminism and other -isms of non-domination are important to how we think about science.

Objectives

Our goals in this course are to

-leave with an understanding of the topics and methods important in feminist philosophy of science

-work together to apply the tools of feminist philosophy of science to contemporary issues like public health and anti-racism

-become equipped bring the lessons of feminist philosophy of science to bear on the sciences that each of us find relevant to our academic careers and individual experience

Texts

There is no required textbook for this course. All readings will be posted to Canvas.

Evaluation:

Grade breakdown will run as follows:

Assignment 1—20%

Assignment 2—20%

Assignment 3—30%

Quizzes—15%

Participation—15%

The final grades will be curved with most grades lying between A- and B-. Any unexcused late or missing assignments will receive no credit, so please reach out if you have an emergency or need accommodations.

Participation:

Active, frequent participation in online course components is crucial to making online learning successful, and so comprises a significant part of the grade.

Please get in touch with me if you are having difficulty engaging with the course material.

Assignments:

Full details on each assignment will be given well in advance.

There are short Canvas quizzes on each reading, to be taken prior to the beginning of class. The purpose of these quizzes is to ensure that everyone is prepared to contribute to intellectually-stimulating discussion of the readings. Missed quizzes cannot be made up, but I will drop the two lowest quizzes from your final grade calculations.

Assignment 1—Wiki of female and non-binary scientists

Working as a class, over the first few weeks of the course we'll create a wiki of important figures in the history of science whose contributions are undersung because of their gender identity

Assignment 2—Critique of science journalism

Using the theories and methods we cover in class, you'll write a critical response to a problematic piece of science reporting of your choice

Assignment 3—Feminist philosophy of _____ science

We'll each pick a scientific discipline that matters to us, perform original research on an issue in that discipline, and present that research in class.

Flexibility: The schedule and assignment structure might change.

Honesty:

You are encouraged to use any available resources, including your peers, to understand readings and prepare for assignments, but submitted work must be your own, and follow appropriate citation practices.

It is your responsibility to be familiar with university policy on academic honesty: <http://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.php>

Environment:

I aim to make our classroom a safe, welcoming environment for you, and require that you do the same for your peers. While disagreement and debate is encouraged, hostility and aggression will not be tolerated.

Student life can be challenging and stressful, and for some of you that will include participating in this course. I encourage you to chat with me if you begin to feel overwhelmed by this course.

Support:

The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services, and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in this class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, (801) 581-5020. CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All written information in this course can be made available in an alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender (which includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) is a civil rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, color, religion, age, status as a person with a disability, veteran's status or genetic information. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, 135 Park Building, 801-581-8365, or the Office of the Dean of Students, 270 Union Building, 801-581-7066. For support and confidential consultation, contact the Center for Student Wellness, 426 SSB, 801-581-7776. To report to the police, contact the Department of Public Safety, 801-585-2677(COPS)

I. University response to the pandemic is dynamic, responding rapidly to local conditions. The details of this course must be correspondingly flexible and dynamic. All material on this syllabus is subject to change in response to changing policy and local pandemic conditions.

II. Assignment due dates will not be any sooner than listed above, though I will consider due date extensions if necessary.

III. We will attempt to cover all the course topics listed below, in roughly the order listed below, but **the most up-to-date course schedule is on the Course Canvas website.**

IV. All of us are facing unusual stressors. If anything about your situation is impeding your ability to get your academic work done well, please reach out to us, in advance if possible. We'll do anything reasonable to find fair accommodations to allow you to flourish in this class despite the challenges you face, no questions asked.

Tentative Schedule of Course Units

Feminist responses to the scientific revolution

Classic thinkers from 1650-2000

Bias and objectivity

Objectivity

Case studies (biased science): psychology, neurobiology

Values in science

Facts vs. values?

Case studies (value-driven science): psychiatry, conservation

Representation matters

The epistemic value of diversity

Case studies (representation): archaeology, public health

Presentations

Here's where we all share our research for Assignment 3