

**Philosophy and Feminism**  
**Philosophy V2110, Spring 05**  
[cm50@columbia.edu](mailto:cm50@columbia.edu)

**Christia Mercer**  
**Philosophy Hall 707**  
**854-3190/3106**

### **I. Course Description:**

Is there an essential difference between women and men? If so, what is the source of this difference (e.g., the body or the soul?) and what does the difference imply in moral, social, and political terms? If not, how are the apparent differences produced? If the “facts” about gender are social and cultural products, then what does this imply about other (apparent) facts about the world? How do questions about race and ethnicity conflict or overlap with those about gender? Is there a “normal” way of being “queer”? This course introduces students to philosophy and feminism through a critical discussion of these and other questions. Assigned materials include historical and contemporary texts, art in the Metropolitan Museum, and public lectures on campus.

### **II. Required Texts:** (available at Labyrinth Bookstore; and on reserve in Butler):

Miriam Schneir, ed., *Feminism: The Essential Historical Writings*  
Plato, *The Last Days of Socrates* (Penguin)  
Elaine Pagels, *Adam, Eve, and the Serpent* (Vintage)  
Plotinus, *The Essential Plotinus*, trans. by E. O'Brien (Hackett)  
Augustine, *The Confessions* (Oxford or Penguin)  
Laqueur, Thomas, *Making Sex: Body, Gender,...* (Harvard)  
Foucault, Michael, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. I  
Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*  
Morrison, Toni, *Race-ing Justice, En-gendering Power* (Pantheon)  
Warner, Michael, *The Trouble with Normal* (Free Press)  
Fricker, M. and Hornsby, J., *Cambridge Companion to Feminism in Philosophy*

### **III. Course Packet**

There will also a small **packet** of material available at Village Copier (Brdwy b/w 112 and 111). Readings in course packet are marked with \*\*.

### **IV. Course Goals, Assignments, and Grades:**

Your primary goal is to read and think about the assigned materials, and to discuss them in class. This means coming to class prepared! You will also be asked to write concisely about some problem that arises in our readings or discussions. There will be two short papers: one of 2 pages; the other 3 pages. As a pair, these will count for 30% of the final grade. There will be a longer paper (1500 words or roughly 6 pages) which will count for 35%. Recommended paper topics will be distributed at least a week before each paper is due. You may write on a topic of your own choosing, but each topic must be very specific, must treat the texts and topics of the course, and *must be accepted by me*. Late papers will be counted off unless you have a written doctor's excuse. You will also be asked to attend two lectures on campus that treat gender/feminist issues. Students should write up a short description and brief critique/analysis of the lecture. There are a lot of interesting events planned this semester and I will give you a list of some of them. Credit will also be given for *constructive* contributions to classroom discussions. I also welcome students to talk to me in my office. A combination of your lecture analyses and your in class participation will count for 15% of your final grade. You also will be asked to complete an assignment in the Metropolitan Museum. This will be due by the final exam. That will also be a very brief final exam, which will count for 20% of your grade and which will ask you to make connections between the “big” ideas of the course and the museum assignment.

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**V. Lecture Topics and Readings**

**Philosophy V2110**

### **A. Essentialism: A Philosophical and Historical Perspective**

**Week 1** Introduction to Course // The Origins of Essentialism.

January 18: Course description // The Uses and Abuses of Essentialism.

January 20: Mind-Body Dualism.

Reading: Plato's *Phaedo* in *The Last Days of Socrates*

**Week 2:** Mind, Body, and The Ascent to the Truth. January 25: Reading: *The Essential Plotinus*, "Beauty" (pp. 33-43); "Descent of Soul" (pp. 64-5); "The Soul" (pp. 130-45); "Contemplation" (pp. 169-175)..

January 27: Women and Truth. Reading: Pagels' *Adam, Eve, and the Serpent*, ch. 1 (all), ch. 2 (pp. 32-43), ch. 3( 64-77), ch. 4 (all), ch. 6 (all).

**Week 3** Judeo-Christian Women, Men, and Nature.

February 1/3: Reading: New Testament, Paul *Romans*, 1-8; Augustine's *Confessions* (Bk VI, sects. i-ii, xi-xv; Bk VII; Bk VIII, sects. v, vii-xi; Bk IX, sects. viii-xiii).

**First Paper Assignment Distributed.**

**Week 4** Women's Souls and Virtue. February 8: Reading in Schneir: Wollstonecraft (pp. 5-16); Grimke in Schneir (pp. 35-48); Sojourner Truth, pp. 92-98.

Women's Bodies and Property. February 10: Reading: in Schneir, Goldman (308-24); Engels (pp. 189-204). **FIRST PAPER DUE by 5:00, Friday, February 11.**

### **B. Essentialism: Construction and Critique**

**Week 5** Foucault, the Discourse of the Normal and the Perverse.

February 15/17: Reading: Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, vol. I, Intro, Parts 1, 2, 3.

**Week 6** Constructing Sexual Difference. February 22 : Reading: Laqueur's *Making Sex*, ch. 1-2, 3 (quick read though focus a bit on pp. 69, 82, 88, 98-99), ch.5 (pp. 149-63), ch.6 (pp. 193-207; 243).

NO CLASS THURS., FEB. 24.

First Lecture Analysis Due in My Box by Monday, Feb. 28.

**Week 7** Constructing Sex/Constructing Gender. March 1: Finish discussion of Laqueur

March 3: Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*, preface, ch. 1, and either (in 1990 ed.) pp. 106-49, or (in 1999 ed.) pp. 135-90. **Second Paper Assignment Distributed.**

**Week 8** Gender Trouble. March 8/10: Complete Butler/Summary/Review

**Week 9 Spring Break: March 14-20**

**Week 10** The Normal.

March 22/24: Reading: Michael Warner, *The Trouble with Normal*, chs. 1, 2, 3, and pp. 142-54, 192-3.

**Second PAPER DUE in class, March 24.**

### **C. Ethnicity, Gender, and Truth**

**Week 11** Race, Gender, and Power.

March 29: Reading: Sumi Cho, "Converging Stereotypes." \*\*

March 31: There will be a screening of "Clarence Thomas, Anita Hill: Public Hearing, Private Pain". Place and time to be announced. Must be seen by Thurs. class.

**Week 12** "Race-ing" Objectivity

April 5/7: Reading: Morrison, *Race-ing Justice*, articles by Higginbotham, Marable, Painter, Stansell, Lubiano, Crenshaw. Second Lecture Analysis Due in Class.

### **C. Feminism, Objectivity, and Science**

**Week 13** Feminism, Objectivity, and Knowledge. April 12/14: Reading: Langton (ch. 7), Fricker (ch.8), and Wylie (ch. 9) in *Cambridge Companion to Feminism*

**Week 14** Feminism and Nature. April 19/21: Reading: Haslanger (ch.6) in *Cambridge Companion*; Lloyd, "Objectivity and the Double Standard."\*\*

**Week 15** April 26/28 The Abuses of Essentialism Reconsidered // Conclusions.

Reading: Thornhill, Palmer, "Why Men Rape:\*\* Buss, "the Evolution of Desire."\*\*

**Final PAPER DUE at 3:00, Tuesday, May 3**