Fall 9-1-2001

PHIL 429E.01: Feminist Ethics

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PHIL 429, Section 1  
Feminist Ethics  
Fall, 2001  
Monday, 4:10-6:40  
3 cr.

Professor Deni Elliott  
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243-6632  
or by appointment at the PEC

This class is designed to introduce students to classical philosophical beliefs regarding women, to contemporary feminist theories, to contemporary women's issues, and to ways to conceptualize those issues using feminist theory. Knowledge of the basic moral philosophy of Aristotle, Kant and Mill is assumed; your ability to prepare and critique analytic and descriptive writings is assumed. Philosophy 200 or equivalent is a prerequisite for this course.

Learning Goals. Through this course, successful students will
1) Describe how some major classical philosophers situated women;
2) Describe how some women through the ages viewed women's roles;
3) Review The Subjection of Women as the first major integrationist response;
4) Distinguish different types of feminist response to classical philosophies;
5) Compare and contrast integrationist and separatist responses;
6) Illustrate ways that biological and sociological gender differences play out in contemporary society;
7) Critique philosophical arguments regarding women's roles;
8) Develop philosophical arguments regarding women's roles.

Assessment. Assessment is the process by which the student demonstrates to herself/himself and others how well s/he has achieved specific learning goals. My goal is to use assessment techniques that encourage you to challenge yourself and to celebrate your mistakes as a necessary part of the learning process.

Here are the four assessment techniques that I suggest that we use in this class.

1) Individual/Collaborative Course Preparation Assignments. As a method for helping you to take responsibility for your own learning, I will ask you to prepare material for our use in class. You will usually have a choice of working alone, or with other students. Regardless of how many people you have on your team, you will receive one 'product' grade for each piece. Over the term, you can expect to have five such assignments.
2) **Mid-term Exam.** The mid-term exam gives you the opportunity to demonstrate that you know and can use certain concepts, terms and historical facts regarding the development of feminist ethics. You will receive a set of study questions no later than four weeks prior to the mid-term and are encouraged to work in study groups to further your understanding. You are also encouraged to raise questions relating to the study questions in class for full group discussion. On the day of the mid-term, you are asked to individually select and write essays in response to four of the questions.

3) **Final Product/Project.** You will be asked, early in the term, to identify a learning goal or two for yourself. This goal should reflect something related to Feminist Ethics about which you are curious. You may work alone or with up to two other students in completing this work. You will be asked to submit an abstract and plan for your product/project early in the term, with the formal writing/presentation due at the end of the term.

4) **Meta-Analysis.** Early in the term, you will be asked to respond to a contemporary opinion piece that has a feminist theme. At the end of the term, you will be asked to evaluate your initial analysis based on the learning you did over the term.

Each of the four assessment techniques will be counted as 1/4 of your final grade if you are taking the course for traditional (A-F) grading. If you are taking the course P/F or Audit, please see me regarding modified expectations.

All students are expected to attend all classes and to participate in the learning community.

**Texts:**
Mill, John Stuart. *The Subjection of Women.* (available in class first day)

Other readings to be assigned during the term.

**A Final Note:** I am concerned about meeting the special needs of individuals. If you require some accommodation or if you are simply not comfortable with the teaching/learning style, I encourage you to discuss that with me.
FEMINIST ETHICS
Weekly Topics

Please note that assignments and readings will be used on the day noted. They should be prepared prior to that class day.

Week I. Monday, 0910 Developing Context and Community
Feminist Theory in the Classroom
Collaborative Learning
Situated Feminism
If Alice Stotle had been Aristotle

Week II. Monday, 0917 HiStory of Women
Philosophy of Oppression
Mill as an Early Feminist

Assignment: Philosophers' Research and Writing
Assignment: Feminist Sensitivity Exercise
Assignment: Learning Goals

Week III. Monday, 0924 Independent Work
Please use this time to get up to date on all reading and assignments.

Week IV. Monday, 1001 HERstory of Women
Philosophy of the Oppressed
Mill's and Taylor's Modest Proposal

Assignment: Feminists Through the Ages Research and Writing
Reading: The Subjection of Women I, II, III, IV
Assignment: John Stuart Mill Study Questions

Week V. Monday, 1008 Contemporary Responses
Liberal Feminism
Radical Feminism
Cultural Feminism
Marxist Feminism

Reading: Kourney, Liberal Feminism, Radical Feminism, Cultural Feminism, Marxist Feminism
Week VI.  Monday, 1015  More Contemporary Responses
Postmodern Feminism
Ecological Feminism
Toward Multicultural Feminism
Toward Gender-Inclusive Feminism

Reading: Kourney, Postmodern Feminism, Ecological Feminism, Toward Multicultural Feminism, Toward Gender-Inclusive Feminism

Week VII.  Monday, 1022  Midterm Exam

Week VIII.  Monday, 1029  Gender as Disability
How the Mediated View of Women Plays Into One's Self-Image

Reading: Kourney, Socialization, Self-Images

Week IX.  Monday, 1105  Gender as Biology
Implications of Essential Differences Between Male and Female

Reading: Kourney, Sexuality and Violence; The Domestic Scene
Callahan, Reconsidering Parenthood

Week X.  Monday, 1112  NO SCHOOL

Week XI.  Monday, 1119  The Intrinsic Power of the Woman
Reproductive Ability as Power and Responsibility

Reading: Kourney, Reproduction; Callahan, Prenatal and Postnatal Authority; Prenatal and Preconceptive Harm, Electing and Preventing Birth
Assignment: Abstract and Plan for Final Project

Week XII.  Monday, 1126  Economic and Employment Equality
Superwomen vs. Restructing Society

Reading: Kourney, The World of Work, Cultural Invisibility

Week XIII.  Monday, 1203  Class Products
Week XIV.  Monday 1210  Class Products
Week XV.  Wednesday, 1219  FINAL: Products and Celebration