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Fall 9-1-2001

### PHIL 429E.01: Feminist Ethics

Deni Elliot

*University of Montana - Missoula*

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

Professor Deni Elliott  
Office Hours: M 10-12  
or by appointment at the PEC

ElliottD@mso.umt.edu  
243-6632

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:**

Callahan, Joan C. (1995). **Reproduction, Ethics and the Law.** Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Kourany, Janet, James Sterba and Rosemarie Tong, (1999) **Feminist Philosophies.** 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. (Saddle Hill, NJ: Prentice Hall)

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. Restructuring 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**