

# Phil 239: Philosophy and Feminism

## Syllabus

Instructor: Dr. Audrey Yap (ayap@uvic.ca)

Office/Phone: CLE B307 (721-7510)

Office Hours: , and by appointment

Class Information: TWF 1:30-2:20 in COR A129

Course Website: Through CourseSpaces. <http://coursespaces.uvic.ca>

Textbook: Jennifer Mather Saul, *Feminism: Issues and Arguments*. Additional readings will be available online. If you notice any accessibility issues with respect to the readings or course website, please let me know.

**Course Outline:** This course is an introduction to feminist philosophy. Though there is no single position that characterizes all of feminism, nor a single way in which feminists contribute to philosophy, there are many areas in philosophy in which gender and other social factors are significant. As such, we will read and engage with work that shows how attentiveness to social factors can be philosophically illuminating. Even on individual issues, we will get a sense of the wide variety of feminist voices and perspectives.

**Communication:** Office hours are held on a drop-in basis. You do not need to make an appointment to see me during those times, although the amount of time I can spend talking to any one person during office hours can depend on how many people are waiting. If you do want to schedule an appointment outside my office hours, try emailing me with a few suggestions for times that would work for you. I'm also happy to try and answer short questions either before or after class, time permitting. In general, email is my preferred method of communication, especially for any official requests. If you ask me a question over email, you can expect a reply within about 1 working day. If you don't hear back from me after that time frame, feel free to try again in case your message went astray. When you do address me (over email or otherwise), please do so as either Professor (Prof.) Yap, Dr. Yap, or Audrey. Please don't use any of Mrs/Miss/Ms/Mr, for a variety of reasons. If you are ever nervous about sending me an email, or asking a question, feel free to include a picture of a puppy with your request. This will not affect whether or not I will be able to help you with your request, but will give you an excuse to look for pictures of puppies.

**Coursework:** The issues and discussions will involve considerable self-reflection and consideration of ways in which our identities affect our lives. Careful writing will be emphasized. This means that we will do our best to be careful of the ways in which we talk about potentially difficult issues, as well as being philosophically careful in doing justice to the arguments and ideas with which we are engaging.

You will have three short writing assignments (3-4 pages) throughout the semester, each of which will be worth 20% of your grade. At least five paper topics will be distributed in differ-

ent weeks, and it will be up to you to decide which three topics you would like to complete for your assignments. These will be graded anonymously, and the main criteria that I will use to evaluate the writing assignments is philosophical clarity. Each assignment will ask you to reconstruct and outline one of the main arguments that we cover during the course, making sure that you are careful to identify how the premises of the argument lead to its conclusion. I will do my best to give you a clear idea in class of my expectations for each of these assignments, but you might find some information in the following short guide on writing philosophy essays useful. <http://www.sfu.ca/philosophy/resources/writing.html>.

There will also be a take-home final exam (30%) that will be distributed after the end of classes, which you will have two days to complete. The final 10% will be a participation grade. Every week, you will have the opportunity to complete a journal assignment of up to 1 page, that will be graded on a pass/fail basis. All you have to do to pass each assignment is to display sincere engagement with the course material and discussions. In order to receive full credit for participation, you must complete journal assignments in 10 out of 12 weeks.. Work on assignments or tests that has been copied, or has been provided or someone else to copy, will not be given credit. For more information on academic integrity, and unauthorized editing, see the University Calendar.

Percentage grades correspond to letter grades according to the following scale:

90-100 = A+; 85-89 = A; 80-84 = A-; 77-79 = B+; 73-76 = B; 70-72 = B-; 65-69 = C+; 60-64 = C; 50-59 = D; 0-49 = F.

The A range means exceptional, outstanding and excellent performance. A grade in the B range means a very good, good and solid performance. A grade in the C+ or C range means satisfactory, or minimally satisfactory, performance. A grade of D or D- indicates merely passable or marginal performance. An F indicates unsatisfactory performance.

## Schedule:

- Week One: Jan 3, 5  
Topic: Privilege and Oppression  
Reading: Peggy McIntosh, "Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack"  
Harsha Walia, "Decolonizing Together"
- Week Two: Jan 9, 10, 12  
Topic: Privilege and Oppression  
Reading: Nancy Tuana, "Reading Philosophy as a Woman"  
Marilyn Frye, "Oppression"
- Week Three: Jan 16, 17, 19  
Topic: What Are Sex and Gender?  
Reading: Mari Mikkola, "Feminist Perspectives on Sex and Gender"  
Talia Mae Bettcher, "Trans Women and the Meaning of 'Woman'"
- Week Four: Jan 23, 24, 26  
Topic: Pornography and Sex Work  
Reading: Jennifer Saul, Chapter 3
- Week Five: Jan 30, 31, Feb 2  
Topic: Pornography and Sex Work  
Reading: 'Debra Satz, "Markets in Women's Sexual Labor"  
Lori Watson, "Why Sex Work Isn't Work"
- Week Six: Feb 6, 7, 9  
Topic: Values and Science  
Reading: Jennifer Saul, Chapter 8  
Lorna Williams and Gloria Snively, "Coming to Know"
- Week Seven: Feb 20, 21, 23  
Topic: Feminism and Multiculturalism.  
Reading: Jennifer Saul, Chapter 9  
Susan Okin, "Feminism, Women's Human Rights, and Cultural Differences"
- Week Eight: Feb 27, 28, Mar 2  
Topic: Feminism and Multiculturalism  
Reading: Uma Narayan, "Through the Looking-Glass Darkly"  
Bonita Lawrence, "Gender, Race, and the Regulation of Native Identity in Canada and the United States: An Overview"

- Week Nine: Mar 6, 7, 9  
 Topic: Bodies and Appearance  
 Reading: Jennifer Saul, Chapter 5  
 Susan Bordo, “The Body and the Reproduction of Femininity”
- Week Ten: Mar 13, 14, 16  
 Topic: Bodies and Appearance  
 Desiree Abu-Odeh, “Fat Stigma and Public Health” Reading: Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, “The Case for Conserving Disability”
- Week Eleven: Mar 20, 21, 23  
 Topic: Sexual Harassment and Believing Women  
 Reading: Jennifer Saul, Chapter 2
- Week Twelve: Mar 27, 28  
 Topic: Sexual Harassment and Believing Women  
 Reading: Miranda Fricker, “Powerlessness and Social Interpretation”  
 Kristie Dotson, “Tracking Epistemic Violence, Tracking Practices of Silencing”
- Week Thirteen: Apr 2, 4, 6  
 Topic: Work and Family  
 Reading: Jennifer Saul, Chapter 1  
 Take Home Final Distributed April 9  
 Take Home Final Due April 11

Note: This syllabus is tentative, and should only be used to give a rough guide to the course schedule. Additional readings may be assigned, and dates may be changed if necessary.