**Philosophy 249 The Philosophy of Feminism**

**American University of Beirut**

**Fall 2018. MW 5:00 PM – 6:15 AM Fisk 313**

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| Instructor: Dr. Chris Johns  E-Mail: cj08@aub.edu.lb  Phone: Ext. 4259 | Office: 147 Fisk Hall  Office Hours: T 11:00—1:00 PM  W 4:00 – 5:00 and by appoint. |

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This course is an introduction to philosophical feminism, an interdisciplinary field of study, but to which we will primarily apply the tools of philosophical analysis. Wewill read classic and contemporary works focusing on topics such as sexism, oppression, the metaphysics of gender identity, feminist epistemology, feminist ethics, intersectionality, masculinity, and the relationship between Islam and feminism.

This course mainly emphasizes philosophical thinking, which I take to mean the slow, careful, reflective reading and analysis of texts and concepts. Classes will be discussion-driven, so be prepared by reading the assigned texts ahead of the date of discussion. My goal is not only to introduce this vital philosophical topic, but also to develop the habit of reading and thinking philosophically. This course satisfies a GE Humanities List I requirement.

**Program Learning Outcomes**

* The ability to precisely identify the conclusion for which a writer is arguing.
* The ability to accurately represent the argument(s) which someone is using to support his or

her conclusion.

* The ability to identify and assess objections to arguments in our readings.
* The ability to develop, explain, and defend your own views.
* To become familiar with *some* of the main themes in feminist philosophy and to gain an appreciation and philosophical understanding of them.

**Essential**: Read this syllabus carefully. By taking this class, you agree to understand and comply with this syllabus. By ‘syllabus’ I mean all of the documents found in the **Syllabus Section** on Moodle. If I make any changes to the syllabus, I will inform you. If you have a question about any policy, I am happy to talk about it.

**Required Texts**: A course packet will be available at the AUB Bookstore. Any other texts will be available on Moodle. See Course Schedule for assigned reading schedule.

**Graded Requirements**:

* Moodle Forum, bi-weekly posts (15% of total)
* Short Paper 1: 15%
* Short Paper 2: 30%
* Final paper: 35%
* Occasional drop quizzes (5%)

**Moodle Forum Posts:** You will post a brief reaction to anything regarding the readings or class discussions. Detailed instructions are on Moodle under the Syllabus Section.

**Short papers and Final paper:** Short papers run between 800 – 1000 words and will be based on a question about the assigned readings. The word limits will be strictly adhered to. The final paper will run between 1,500 – 2000 words, based on topics I will give you, but you can modify the topic to suit your interests. All papers will be uploaded onto Moodle. You must format them according to the “Papers--formatting, saving, submitting” instructions on Moodle (in Syllabus Section). I will type comments on your paper, grade it, and return it to you electronically. Be sure to read my comments!

These papers are of the “critical” type, meaning that you will take a position (a thesis) and defend it. The grading criteria for these papers are as follows: **You must be able clearly to state your thesis and its supporting reasons.** You must support your thesis with reasons and evidence. You must be able to critically evaluate the readings that you engage in your paper. You must be able to write in clear, grammatically correct, English. Your main ideas must be logically organized, and your thoughts clear and concise.

* Essays that fulfill all of the above in an excellent manner will receive at least 90 points.
* Essays that do so in a “good” manner, or fulfill the criteria partially, will receive at least 80 points.
* Essays that need work in at least two of the above criteria will receive at least 70 points.
* Essays that do not fulfill several of the criteria, or do so in a weak manner, will receive at least 60 points.
* Essays that fail to display much knowledge of the readings, *or* are incomprehensible or thoughtless in expression, will receive 59 points or less.
* Plagiarism will be severely punished. See below.

The best way to prepare for these essays is to read the assigned readings *carefully* and pay attention to how we talk about them in class. Additional instructions, criteria, and writing guides are found on Moodle under the syllabus section. Specific instructions for each assignment will be posted on Moodle along with the upload link for the assignment.

**Attendance:** Your performance on the papers and exams will depend heavily on your ability to understand the assigned readings and to think critically about these issues. So, it is in your best interest to attend every class, pay attention, and participate. It is also important to practice forming your thoughts verbally. I will take attendance, but I do not accept excuses for absences. However, if you miss **six** classes *for whatever reason*, you will either be dropped from the course and receive a “W”, or you will receive a failing grade of 50. Five absences result in a 10-point reduction on your final grade. Four absences result in a 5-point reduction. Two late entries will count as one absence. *If you think you may have problems meeting these restrictions then do not take this class.*

**Participation and class conduct**: Participation is strongly encouraged. To participate well, you must do the readings *before* class so we can go over them in class. Ask questions, make comments, and respond (respectfully) to other students. No question or comment is too silly or off base. Everyone has questions, and surely others have the same questions as you. Also be sure to give others a chance to speak. *Be respectful of me and others by listening to what is going on, rather than talking among yourselves.*

Electronic devices of any kind are not allowed. You may not talk while others are talking.

Also, as a courtesy to me, *please* *do not make preparations to leave class until I say class is over.* If I seem unaware that class time has expired, kindly alert me, thank you.

NOTE: Repeat offenders of the following behaviors will be ejected from class and will have **points removed from their final grade**: (1) Talking while someone else is talking. (2) Using cell phones or other electronic devices (computers) in class. (3) Playing games or reading non-class material during class. (4) Leaving the room for any reason. (5) Repeated lateness and early leaving.

**Grade Calculation:** I want you to understand how your grades are assigned and calculated, so that you can know better what I expect and so that you can exercise more control over your own progress. See “Calculating and Estimating Your Grades” on Moodle.” This will show you completely explicitly how all calculations are made, so that you can do them yourself. Here is a brief explanation: All grades are recorded on Moodle’s “Grades” (as well as on the assignments themselves), so you can view them as soon as I have put them up (Moodle🡪Administration🡪Grades).

To estimate your grade at any point in the semester, simply figure your average and multiply it by the “weighted” amount; then sum the weighted amounts (see “Calculating and Estimating . . .”). Moodle will also give you an accurate estimate.

Note: on the final grade, before entering on AUBsis, I round up the decimal from .60.

**NOTE**: I am happy to discuss my grading criteria and my reason for your grade. However, you may not bargain for grades. If you ask me to raise any grade for any reason, I will *lower* your course grade immediately. Also, while hard work is important is it not always sufficient for a good grade. I encourage you to talk to me about what makes a good paper.

**Plagiarism**: is the intentional or careless use of someone else’s writing or ideas as if they were your own. It includes, for example, paraphrasing without attribution, replacing a few words here and there using a thesaurus, copying the words from a spoken video, downloading papers from the net, using encyclopedia passages without attribution, copy/pasting from various blogs and anonymous sites, purchasing papers online, turning in papers from other students and friends, and having someone write your paper for you. I consider plagiarism equivalent to stealing, lying, and cheating, and no amount of it will be tolerated in my class. Plagiarism is wrong for additional reasons: The general objective of college is to become a better writer, thinker, learner, and person. Plagiarizing severely undermines that objective and harms, not only you, but all students, professors, the university, and society in general. If you plagiarize, you fail to learn how to write and think. You represent yourself as having skills and knowledge that you in fact do not have. Also, I take your work and my work seriously. If you plagiarize, then my work becomes a pointless waste of time. I hate wasting time, because I wish to fill my life with meaning and accomplishments. I also hate false relationships. When I read and respond to your work, I consider myself engaged in a mutual relationship of trust, respect, truth, care, and progress. If I am reading your plagiarized work, then I am having a false relationship with you. I despise false relationships because they destroy the substance of life. **If I *suspect* you have plagiarized any amount of work in this class, you will receive a grade of zero for the assignment. It is possible for you to fail the course based on one instance of plagiarism. I will also submit a report to the Academic Affair Committee for judgment. If they judge against you, your offense will go on your academic record and you could be dismissed from the university.** This applies to any submitted work whatsoever (including essay drafts,single sentences and ideas, dictionary definitions, encyclopedia entries, or any part thereof, paraphrasing, whether from books, internet, magazines, friends, wherever). You must also discourage plagiarism by not giving your paper to someone else to copy. Unfortunately, I catch plagiarizers *every semester*. I am an experienced reader and can usually tell, simply by reading, when a student has plagiarized. (This also applies to papers written online by ghostwriters or other students.) I can tell because the writing does not match the assignment, because the text has an “internet feel,” or because it uses awkward wording in an attempt to disguise the source. I also use Google, Turnitin, and other resources. You can, of course, easily avoid plagiarism simply by *citing your sources properly*. If you are unsure of how to cite sources properly, see “**Documenting Sources: Rules & Mechanics**” posted on Moodle. But *you are responsible for any plagiarism*. If you are struggling with an assignment, or with your English, please come and talk to me. I am here to help.

**Turnitin**. All writing assignments will be submitted to Turnitin automatically when you submit your paper on Moodle. No paper will be graded without a Turnitin report.

Here is how it works: As their website says, “Every paper submitted is returned in the form of a Originality Report. Results are based on searches of billions of pages from current and archived instances of the Internet, millions of student papers submitted to Turnitin, and commercial databases of journal articles and periodicals” (<http://www.plagiarism.org/plag_solutions.html>). NOTE that Turnitin only submits a “similarity” report, not a plagiarism report. The similarity report shows the percentage of your text that is similar or identical to another text, and therefore helps me determine whether you have plagiarized. Some similarity is fine and to be expected. But identical similarity or paraphrased similarity is plagiarism. NOTE: Writing a paper does *not* consist of using a source and changing a few words here and there. Nor does paraphrasing a source consist of changing a few words here and there. To paraphrase means to make a compact summary of the main point of a paragraph, for purposes of clarification for the reader. All paraphrasing must be documented.

To submit your paper to Turnitin, go to Moodle and click on “Upload” for the current assignment.

More information on Plagiarism is posted on Moodle.

**The Writing Center:** If you have writing issues that need extra attention, please take advantage of the Writing Center. Their instructors help all students, from first-year to doctoral. Keep in mind that they will *not* proofread or copy-edit your work. Walk in or make an appointment: 9 am - 5 pm, Monday – Friday. West Hall 336; Ext. 3157; E-mail: [writing@aub.edu.lb](mailto:writing@aub.edu.lb)

**Accessible Education services:** AUB strives to make learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers due to a disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please inform me as soon as possible.  In order to receive reasonable and efficient accommodations, you must register with the Accessible Education Office: [accessibility@aub.edu.lb](mailto:accessibility@aub.edu.lb); +961-1-350000x3246; West Hall, 314.

**Non-Discrimination/harassment**: AUB is committed to facilitating a campus free of all forms of discrimination including sex/gender-based harassment prohibited by Title IX. The University’s non- discrimination policy applies to, and protects, all students, faculty, and staff. If you think you have experienced discrimination or harassment, including sexual misconduct, we encourage you to tell someone promptly. If you speak to a faculty or staff member about an issue such as harassment, sexual violence, or discrimination, the information will be kept as private as possible, however, faculty and designated staff are required to bring it to the attention of the University’s Title IX Coordinator. Faculty can refer you to fully confidential resources, and you can find information and contacts at www.aub.edu.lb/titleix https://www.aub.edu.lb/titleix . To report an incident, contact the University's Title IX Coordinator Trudi Hodges at 01-350000 ext. 2514, or titleix@aub.edu.lb <mailto:titleix@aub.edu.lb> . An anonymous report may be submitted online via EthicsPoint at www.aub.ethicspoint.com https://www.aub.ethicspoint.com/ .

**Moodle**: Here you will find course material such as the syllabus, some course readings, citation mechanics, tips on writing papers, and such. Class notices and announcements will be sent to you by e-mail (via the “News Forum”) so, **check your AUB e-mail** regularly. You may also post your own thoughts on the News Forum for everyone to see.

**E-mail**: **So that we may better communicate, you must use your AUB e-mail and “authenticate” it so that I can see your name and know who you are.**

**Course Schedule**: This schedule is subject to change, although any changes will be announced well in advance. All reading materials will be available on Moodle. To be prepared for class discussions, read the assigned material (estimated 20 – 40 pages per week) *prior* to class time. *Always* bring the assigned material to class. *If you do not bring the material to class, I may ask you to leave until you return with it!*

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| **Week/Date** | **Monday** | **Wednesday** |
| 1 **Sept** 3&5 | **Founding texts and themes**  *Intro to course* | Mill, *Subjection of Women*, Ch. 1.  https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The\_Subjection\_of\_Women/Chapter\_1 |
| 2 10 & 12 | Beauvoir, Introduction to *The Second Sex* | Discussion |
| 3 17 & 19 | Friedan, “The Problem that Has No Name”  and supplements | Frye, “The Problem that has No Name”  (from *Politics of Reality)* |
| 4 24 & 26 | Frye, “Oppression” from *Politics of Reality)* | “Sexism.” (From *Politics of Reality)* |
| 5 **Oct** 1&3 | Bailey: “Privilege: Expanding on Marilyn Frye’s ‘Oppression’” | Session on writing a philosophy paper |
| 6 8 & 10 | **Masculinity**  Seidler, “Masculinity and Violence.” | Strickwerda & May. “Male Friendship & Intimacy.”  **Draft of Paper 1 due Thursday 5 pm** |
| 7 15 & 17 | **Metaphysics**  Frye, “Categories in Distress.” | Grillo, “Anti-essentialism and Intersectionality: Tools to Dismantle the Master’s House.”  **Paper 1 due Thursday 5 pm** |
| 8 22 & 24 | **Epistemology**  Harding, “Rethinking Standpoint Epistemology: What is “Strong Objectivity”? (35 pp.) | Discussion |
| 9 29 & 31 | **Ethics**  Gilligan, “Moral Orientation and Development.” | Discussion |
| 10 **Nov** 5&7 | **Islam & Feminism**  Ahmed, “Women and the Rise of Islam.” | Ahmed, “The First Feminists” |
| 11 12 & 14 | Eltahawy, “Black Veil, White Flag.” | Nawaz, “The Great Hypocritical Muslim Cover-up.”  Nomani & Arafa, “As Muslim Women…”  **Paper 2 Draft 15th** |
| 12 19 & 21 | Manne, *Down Girl*, “Threatening Women.” | *Down Girl,* discussion |
| 13 26 & 28 | **What to do?**  Superson: “Right- Wing Women: Causes, Choices and Blaming the Victim.”  **Paper 2 due** | Discussion |
| 14 **Dec** 3&5 | Boxill, “The Responsibility of the Oppressed to Resist Their Own Oppression.” | Discussion  **Last Day of Classes** |
| 15 10 & 12 |  |  |
| 16 17 & 19 | F**inal paper due** **Dec 14,6:00 pm** | Dec 20—end of semester |
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