

PHIL240 Syllabus, Reading List, and Class Schedule

Course Description

This course provides an introduction to feminist epistemology. Epistemology is the study of knowledge, and epistemologists explore questions like *what is knowledge?*, *under what conditions is knowledge acquired?*, and *what features of people enable them to acquire knowledge?* Feminist epistemology is the study of how social relations and in particular how gender relations affect the conception, production, and acquisition of knowledge. Feminist epistemologists ask questions like *is a person's gender an epistemically relevant feature?*, *how is knowledge used as a tool of oppression*, and *how can our ways of generating knowledge be improved?* In this course we will look at how feminist epistemologists have addressed and answered these questions, and how they have applied philosophical and epistemic tools to pressing social and political problems. We will also examine how feminist epistemologists have addressed the questions of 'traditional' epistemology, and how they have critiqued the 'traditional' answers they've been given. By studying epistemology from a feminist perspective we will be able to learn about the central philosophical concepts in epistemology while at the same time appreciating the social and political relevance of those concepts and their applicability to real world issues.

Learning Activities

Primary learning activities in this course will be:

- Reading course materials and attending lectures
- Participating in discussion sections
- Writing assignments
- Participating in peer review sessions for assignments

I also strongly encourage you to attend office hours.

Assessment

All assessments are essay based, and there is no final exam for the course.

All assignments are submitted on canvas

Assignment 1 (10%) 400 words max

DUE Jan 16th by 11.59pm

Assignment 2 (15%) 700 words max

DUE Feb 17th by 11.59pm

Assignment 3 (25%) 1000 words max

DUE Mar 24th by 11.59pm

Assignment 4 (35%) 1600 words max

DUE Apr 21st by 11.59pm

Participation (15%) Assessed through participation in discussion sections and peer review sessions

Content Warning and Classroom Policy

In this course we will cover a number of topics, issues, and real world events that may have affected the personal lives of students taking this course and the teachers teaching it. While it is important that we be able to freely pursue an academic inquiry into these issues it is equally important we be attentive and sensitive to the different ways people might be affected by these issues and by our study of them. As a student it is your right to bring your personal and lived experiences to your studies in this course. It is also your duty to be respectful of other people's experiences, no matter how different they are from your own. At its best the study of philosophy is collaborative, constructive, and respectful of individuality. I hope that throughout this course we will all do our best to embody these norms.

Course Aims and Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course students will

- Be familiar with traditional epistemic concepts and core concepts from feminist epistemology
- Be familiar with feminist (and trans, and anti-racist) critiques of traditional epistemic concepts and how to apply them
- Know how to analyze an author's writing and identify their argument
- Know how to construct and motivate their own arguments
- Be able to articulate their thoughts in a clear philosophical manner
- Be able to write a philosophical essay

Class Schedule and Reading List

Please have all readings completed by the Wednesday of that week

Module 1 - Knowledge and Knowers

Week 1

Jan 9th

Jan 11th

Readings, Rene Descartes, *Meditations 1 and 2*, and Heidi Grasswick, section on the *Social Models of Knowers*

Week 2

Jan 16th **FIRST ASSIGNMENT DUE**

Jan 18th

Readings, Naomi Scheman, *Feminist Epistemology*, and Patricia Hill Collins, *Toward an Afrocentric Feminist Epistemology*

Week 3

Jan 23rd *****Drop Date Jan 23rd*** (NOTE - first assignments will be returned by this date)**

Jan 25th

Readings, Alison Wylie, *Standpoint Matters*

Module 2 - Feminism, Science, and Objectivity

Week 4

Jan 30th

Feb 1st

Readings, Sally Haslanger, *On Being Objective and Being Objectified*

Week 5

Feb 6th

Feb 8th

Readings, Heather Douglas, *Rejecting the Ideal of Value-Free Science*

Week 6

Feb 13th

Feb 15th

Readings, Donna Haraway, *Situated Knowledges: the Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective*

SECOND ASSIGNMENT DUE FEB 17th

Week 7 *READING WEEK*****

Module 3 - Knowledge and Power

Week 8

Feb 27th

March 1st

Readings, Miranda Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice*, Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 section 2.3

Week 9

March 6th

March 8th

Readings, Miranda Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice*, Chapter 7 section 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, and Marilyn Frye, *To Be and Be Seen: the Politics of Reality*

Week 10

March 13th

March 15th

Readings, Charles Mills, *White Ignorance*, and Gaile Pohlhaus, *Relational Knowing and Epistemic Injustice: Towards a Theory of Willful Hermeneutical Ignorance*

Week 11

March 20th

March 22nd

Readings, Anna Cook, *Recognizing Settler Ignorance in the Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission*

THIRD ASSIGNMENT DUE MARCH 24th

Module 4 - Knowledge and Responsibility

Week 12

March 27th

March 29th

Readings, Miranda Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice*, Chapter 4 and Chapter 7 section 7.4

Week 13

April 3rd

April 5th

Readings, Nancy Daukas, *Altogether Now: A Virtue-Theoretic Approach to Pluralism in Feminist Epistemology*

Week 14

April 10th

April 12th

Readings, C. Thi Nguyen, *Echo Chambers and Epistemic Bubbles*

FINAL ESSAY, DUE Apr 21st

University Policies and Support

UBC provides resources to support student learning and to maintain healthy lifestyles but recognizes that sometimes crises arise and so there are additional resources to access including those for survivors of sexual violence. UBC values respect for the person and ideas of all members of the academic community. Harassment and discrimination are not tolerated nor is suppression of academic freedom. UBC provides appropriate accommodation for students with disabilities and for religious observances. UBC values academic honesty and students are expected to acknowledge the ideas generated by others and to uphold the highest academic standards in all of their actions. Details of the policies and how to access support are available on [the UBC Senate website](#).

Policy on Late Work

You are expected to submit your assignments by the due date. Failure to do so may result in late penalties.

If **for any reason** you are not able to submit your work on time **please contact either myself or your TA** (unless you have accommodations with the accessibility office) to request an extension.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism, which is intellectual theft, occurs where an individual submits or presents the oral or written work of another person as his or her own. Scholarship quite properly rests upon examining and referring to the thoughts and writings of others. However, when another person's words (i.e. phrases, sentences, or paragraphs), ideas, or entire works are used, the

author must be acknowledged in the text, in footnotes, in endnotes, or in another accepted form of academic citation. Where direct quotations are made, they must be clearly delineated (for example, within quotation marks or separately indented). Failure to provide proper attribution is plagiarism because it represents someone else's work as one's own. Plagiarism should not occur in submitted drafts or final works. A student who seeks assistance from a tutor or other scholastic aids must ensure that the work submitted is the student's own. Students are responsible for ensuring that any work submitted does not constitute plagiarism. Students who are in any doubt as to what constitutes plagiarism should consult their instructor before handing in any assignments.

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