

# MORAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL ISSUES OF GENDER IN SOCIETY

PHIL/WGST 275.002

Spring 2026

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill



## COURSE INFORMATION

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**Credit Hours:** 3

**Target Audience:** undergraduates

**Prerequisites:** none

**Meeting Pattern:** MWF 9:05–9:55 a.m.

**Instructional Format:** in-person

**Classroom or Location:** Venable Hall Room G311

## INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

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**Name:** Myraeka d'Leeuwen (please call me Myraeka! pronounced Muh-rae-kuh)

**Email:** myraeka@unc.edu

**Office Location:** N/A 😞 office hours will be held in Epilogue at 109 E. Franklin St.<sup>1</sup>

**Office Hours:** Monday 10:15-12:15 a.m., or by appointment

## COURSE CONTENT

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### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This class will primarily focus on feminist philosophy, with a secondary focus on philosophy of gender and sexuality. We will discuss issues such as oppression, misogyny, objectification, abortion, adaptive preferences, pornography, and sex work. We will also discuss topics in the philosophy of gender, including the basis and the nature of distinctions between sex and gender. This course will include readings which represent a number of traditions and perspectives within this field.

## COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

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### SHORT WRITING ASSIGNMENTS (45%)

There will be three short writing assignments, each worth **15%** of your final grade.

Short writing assignments are roughly 600-800 words (roughly 3-4 pages double spaced, totaling 10 pages of writing over the course of the semester). There is a detailed rubric for these assignments as well as a model assignment posted on Canvas. You will be expected to identify a philosophical claim in one of our assigned readings and reconstruct, **in premise and conclusion format**, the argument the author has given for this claim. You then must describe how the author supports this argument, and finally provide your own objection to the claim. We will spend time in class discussing and practicing how to complete each element of this assignment.

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<sup>1</sup> I know that this is unusual and it is not my first choice of office hour locations! Unfortunately, the philosophy department building is undergoing renovations this semester so we do not have offices for the time being. If for any reason this poses a barrier to your attendance, I am always available to make office hour appointments on Zoom.

## **PARTICIPATION (20%)**

This is a discussion-based course. It is vital for your learning and the learning of everyone else that you come to class having done the readings and prepared to talk about them with your classmates. I count the *number* of classes in which each student participates and calculate a final participation grade on this basis. Participation grades are curved 40% and capped at 100%—e.g., a student who participates in 0% of classes receives a 40%, a student who participates in 50% of classes receives a 90%, a student who participates in 75% of classes receives a 100%. There will be a mid-semester check in for students to see their in-progress participation grade for the course.

I understand that some people might have legitimate barriers to participating in in-class discussions—if you are in this situation, please come talk to me as soon as possible about alternative methods for your participation grade.

## **APPLICATION PRESENTATION (10%)**

The first week of class, I will distribute a form for students to rank their preferences for presentation weeks. Students will, in groups of 3-5 students, give a 15-20 minute presentation about a real world, contemporary application of course content from roughly the preceding two weeks of the course. Some presentation days may have multiple presentations. On the same day as their presentation, at midnight, each member of the group must submit a Google Form (link on Canvas) detailing their and other students' contribution to the presentation.

There is a rubric for the presentation available on Canvas.

The presentation should:

- Give thorough context and background surrounding a real-world event, controversy, media piece, etc., which is in some way relevant to the course.
- Identify a philosophical argument or analysis which can be used to shed light on the real-world application you have chosen.
- Summarize this philosophical argument or analysis and show how the relevant philosophical theory relates to the real-world or sheds light on the real-world phenomenon.
  - You might do one of several things here (non-exhaustive list):
    - Perhaps the theory shows how public discussions around  $x$  topic are misguided.
    - Perhaps the real-world applications show that the theory itself is missing something, or that the theory doesn't work so well in the real world.
    - Perhaps the theory can be used to strengthen the argument of one side's opinion in a real-world debate.
- Provide the class with guiding discussion questions.

## FINAL EXAM (25%)

This course will have a final exam, worth **25%** of your grade. You will receive more information on the exact structure & content of the final closer to May, but you can expect it to consist of a combination of short answer and paragraph-style questions. You will be expected to summarize, analyze, and compare and contrast authors and concepts we have covered in class. The final will be cumulative.

## LATE WORK & MAKEUPS

Papers will incur a 5% late penalty per 24 hours they are late. Please reach out to me ASAP if you expect to miss a paper deadline so we can work something out.

If you are absent on the day of your scheduled presentation, you will receive a 50% penalty unless you can provide proof of extenuating emergency circumstances. If your group indicates in addition that you did not adequately participate in planning the presentation, you will receive a 0%.

Due to the nature of the grading scheme for this course, though attendance is not required nor technically graded, you will need to be in class regularly in order to receive participation credit. If you have a documented absence, I will remove that day from the calculation of your participation grade altogether. Suppose, for instance, that there have been 10 days of class and you have participated in 5. If you send me documentation for missing the 10th day of class, I will calculate your percentage participation grade as 5/9 instead of 5/10.

In order to document your absence, you will need to show me some *verification* of the reason why you missed class. This could be something along the lines of a doctor's note, letter from your coach, screenshot of an appointment you cannot miss, etc.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

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Week	Monday	Wednesday	Friday	Assignments
<b>Introduction</b>				
January 5	N/A	Syllabus Day <i>No Readings</i>	<b>No Class</b> Traveling	N/A

<b>Gender</b>				
January 12	Skills Day <i>No Readings</i>	Haslanger, <i>What are we talking about?</i>	Mon. + Wed. Continued	N/A
January 19	<b><u>No Class</u></b> Wellbeing Day	Bettcher, <i>The Meaning of 'Woman'</i>	<b>Presentation 1</b>	N/A
January 26	<b><u>Class Cancelled</u></b> Weather	Haslanger, <i>Gender and Race: What are they?</i>	Skills Day <i>No Readings</i>	N/A
February 2	<b><u>Class Cancelled</u></b> Weather	Jenkins, <i>Amelioration and Inclusion</i>	Byrne, <i>Are women adult human females?</i>	First SWA Due Wed, Feb. 4
<b>Feminism, Misogyny, and Oppression</b>				
February 9	<b><u>No Class</u></b> Wellbeing Day	<b>Presentation 2</b>	Manne, <i>Threatening Women</i>	N/A
February 16	Hay, <i>Oppression: Four Metaphors</i>	Hirji, <i>Oppressive Double Binds</i>	<b>Presentation 3</b>	N/A
February 23	Langton, <i>Projection &amp; Objectification</i>	Collins, <i>Mammies, Matriarchs, &amp; Controlling Images</i>	Mon. + Wed. Continued	N/A
March 2	Srinivasan, <i>Right to Sex</i>	Knowles, <i>Beyond Adaptive Preferences</i>	<b>Presentation 4</b>	N/A
March 9	Fricker, <i>Testimonial Injustice</i>	Fricker, <i>Hermeneutical Injustice</i>	Mon. + Wed. Continued	Second SWA Due Wed, Mar. 11
March 16	<b>Spring Break !! ☀️</b>			
<b>Applications</b>				

March 23	Srinivasan, <i>Talking to my Students About Porn</i>	Langton, <i>Speech Acts and Unspeakable Acts</i>	<b>Presentation 5</b>	N/A
March 30	Nussbaum, <i>Taking Money for Bodily Services</i>	Anderson, <i>Prostitution and Sexual Autonomy</i>	<b>No Class</b> Spring Holiday	N/A
April 6	Dougherty, <i>Affirmative Consent</i>	Kukla, <i>A Nonideal Theory of Sexual Consent</i>	<b>Presentation 6</b>	N/A
April 13	Okin, <i>Vulnerability by Marriage</i>	Brake, <i>The Exploitation of Caring Attitudes</i>	<b>No Class</b> Traveling	Third SWA Due Wed, Apr. 15
April 20	Thomson, <i>A Defense of Abortion</i>	Davis, <i>Racism and Reproductive Rights</i>	<b>Presentation 7</b>	N/A
April 27	<b>Last Class!</b> Final Exam Review	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	
April 29	<b>Final Exam: 12 - 3 pm</b>			