Required Texts

Maria Lugones, Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes: Theorizing Coalition Against Multiple Oppressions.
Eva Feder Kittay, Love's Labor: Essays on Women, Equality, and Dependency
Joshua Cohen, Matthew Howard, and Martha Nussbaum, eds. Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?*
Barbara Ehrenreich and Arlie Russell Hochschild, eds., Global Woman: Nannies, Maids and Sex Workers in the New Economy.*

Additional Readings will be posted on Moodle.
* Note: these books aren’t yet available at the bookstore.

Course Description, Revised

The U.S. women’s movement is deeply indebted to the values of western liberalism. The Declaration of Independence’s assertion that “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal” provided feminists with the intellectual grounds to argue that women, too, should be equal, thereby allowing them to argue for and, after 70 years of struggle, to win the right to vote. In the 1960s and 70s, the concept of equal rights fueled feminist activism with regard to a range of diverse issues—from ending gender segregated job ads, eliminating quotas limiting the number of women who could go to college, ensuring that boys and girls sports received equal funding, activism to ensure that men and women would receive for equal pay for equal work, and working to end violence against women.

Despite these many ways in which the women’s movement has been predicated on the concepts of individual rights, impartiality, autonomy, freedom, and fairness embedded in the justice tradition of western liberalism, in the past 30 years the field of feminist ethics has increasingly challenged the basic premises of this tradition. Feminist ethicists have argued that the conceptual tools of this tradition are inadequate to bring about the fundamental conceptual and social changes necessary to eradicate the oppression of women.

In this course, we’ll first familiarize ourselves with the basic presuppositions of feminist thought and the premises of the liberal justice tradition. Then we’ll engage and critically examine a range of feminist ethical perspectives that fundamentally challenge and provide alternatives to this tradition. These feminist ethical approaches include: multiculturalism, care ethics and the dependency critique, global feminist concerns, and ecofeminism. As we’ll see, while there are a few common presuppositions to these
feminist ethical theories, they are also marked by conflict and disagreement, allowing us to develop a rich and complex understanding of the state of feminist thinking today.

Course Objectives

Skill Goals: Successful students in this course will enhance their ability to:

1. recognize ethical issues and examine them from multiple perspectives;
2. engage in charitable reading of texts and of each others’ arguments. Charitable reading entails
   - Developing one’s capacity for sympathetic understanding: suspending judgment on a view or idea in an effort to understanding it from the inside, like someone who believes it.
   - Developing one’s capacity for generous understanding: considering the view in its strongest, most convincing form.
3. articulate, orally and in writing, well-reasoned, clear, and precise arguments in support of their normative judgments.
4. work cooperatively, productively, and independently in small group settings;
5. participate in large group discussion;
6. carry out formal oral presentations in front of a group.

Content Goals: Successful students in this course will be able to articulate:

1. central evidence used by feminists to argue that women today experience gender based inequality;
2. the central tenets of liberalism/the justice tradition;
3. the dependency critique of the justice tradition;
4. how the societal devaluation of care differentially impacts first and third world women;
5. central points of disagreement in the debate surrounding whether multiculturalism and feminism are mutually supportive or antagonistic;
6. the concept “white privilege” and how this privilege limits the moral perceptions of culturally dominant women;
7. the conceptual and empirical interconnections between women and nature proposed by ecofeminists.

Requirements

Class Participation and Attendance. 60 points

Participation means several things, including: (a) being on time for every class, (b) reading carefully the required textbook and assigned articles (I recommend reading them twice and taking notes on important points), (c) participating in class (e.g., small and large group discussions) and respecting the questions and comments of your classroom peers, (d) making interesting and insightful comments, (e) building on the comments of
others, (f) listening and responding appropriately to others, and (g) being sensitive to your level of participation.

**Small group work:** Students will do much of the in-class work in collaborative small groups. Students will all be expected to be consistent, constructive, and informed participants in these groups, to keep their group focused on the task at hand, and to rotate roles within the group (e.g., note taker, reporter, and devil’s advocate). You may occasionally be required to bring some outside work to your small group. (See skill goal 4, on pg. 2; small groups also allow you to practice skill goals 1-3 and the content goals.)

**Attendance:** Since even the most hardworking students sometimes become ill or have pressing outside commitments, students are allowed to miss up to 3 classes per semester without penalty. After your allotted number of absences, your participation grade will drop by 5 points per absence, even if you regularly contribute when you do attend. I am making this policy for three reasons: (a) because you cannot contribute to discussion if you are not in class, (b) because so much learning occurs in and through class discussion, that students who miss class never fully master the material covered in class, and (c) because excessive student absences are disruptive to the other students in this class that emphasizes active student discussion and small group work.

Students who miss 7 or more classes for any reason will be given a zero for the class participation portion of their grade. Students with 10 or more absences will be given the option of dropping the course or receiving an F.

Student tardiness is extremely disruptive to the class and should be avoided.

Note: students are required to evaluate and suggest a grade for their class participation. See Attachment A, “Self-Evaluation of Discussion Skills,” at the end of this syllabus for a detailed description of my expectations. (see skill goals 4 and 5, pg. 2.)

**Note well:** If you must miss class for any reason, you will be still be held responsible for the material covered and assignments distributed during your absence. I expect you to get any notes, handouts, etc., from a classmate before the next class meeting, and I will only answer students’ questions on missed class days if they first try to get that information from two other students.

**Weekly Homework. 5 points per homework; 50 points total.** In order to facilitate your comprehension of course material, prepare you for active and informed engagement in class discussion, give you practice at philosophical writing, and provide you with the opportunity to reflect on course readings in a more personal way, one-page homework assignments on course readings will be assigned 12 times during the semester; students must submit 10 out of 12 of these assignments to be eligible for an A on their homework. (See skill goals 1-3, on pg. 2, as well as the content goals.)
In most cases the homework will consist of agenda setting statements in which you answer: what interests you in the day’s readings/what aspects of them would you like us to talk about? On occasion, students may be asked, instead, to summarize the author’s main point and support provided for this point or to answer a particular question.

To get full credit for the homework, student responses must:

- be approximately 300-350 words in length;
- be grounded in the assigned readings for the day; as evidence of this, each homework must refer to a specific passage in the text with a direct quote or paraphrase and must include an in text citation, referencing the specific page you’re discussing (e.g., “ljljkl ljlk ljklklk,” Kittay, pg. 7);
- address the question/s for the day.
- Seriously engage the text; demonstrate a clear effort to take the author’s ideas seriously.
- be thoughtful, focused, and well written;
- be completed before 12 PM on the class day for which it is assigned.

If students wish, they may submit all 12 homework assignments via Moodle; I will only count the 10 highest scores when calculating final course grades.

- Note: these homework assignments are prospective, based on what you learned from course readings on your own. I cannot compare homework assignments that were written with and without the benefit of class discussion. For that reason, I do not want to see late homework assignments. To discourage late assignments, I will deduct one point from assignments submitted after 12 PM but before class; I will deduct 2 points from assignments submitted 24 hours after the due date; and I will not accept assignments submitted more than 24 hours late.

**Grading of Homework Assignments**:

Homework Assignments will be graded as follows:

- Typically, I will grade homework assignments within 48 hours of when they’re submitted. Grades are accessible on Moodle.
- I will always scan assignments to make sure they are on topic, have cited the text, and include a header.
- At random, and typically more often at the beginning of the semester than at the end of the semester, I will give student homework assignments a closer read, will write brief comments on them, and will include a closer examination of the quality of the writing in the grade calculation.
- When I post grades, I will let students know if I scanned or closely read their homework.
- If I notice that individual students’ writing is typically of less than satisfactory quality, I habitually give these essays a closer reading and will include a closer examination of the quality of the writing in the calculation of their homework grade. I do this for two reasons: 1) to make sure that students who need more feedback on
their writing get that additional help, and 2) to help motivate students who aren’t yet able to stay on task on their own.

♦ Individual students who desire more feedback on their homework assignments than the system above allows are invited to meet with me during my office hours and talk about their homework.

♦ Late assignments will be penalized, as noted above.

**Mark Your Calendars! Outside Event. 10 points total.**
CSB/SJU are sponsoring a conference on **Saturday March 13** entitled: Global Studies: What’s Gender Got to Do with It? You are required to attend; more details will be provided as they’re made available. Here’s the description of the conference:

The question for this year’s conference is this: Why is a thoughtful and rigorous examination of gender and gender issues important for Global Studies? We hope this year’s focus on gender will build upon last year’s question: What is Global Studies? By questioning our cultural assumptions about gender, we can also refine our understanding of what “global” means. We invite presentations on current research in feminist political movements, gender-focused peace-building initiatives, entrepreneurship and project management, comparative literature/culture, men’s/masculinity studies, the administration of study-abroad programs, preparing students for cross-cultural dialogues and partnerships, and any other topic that examines gender in the context of globalization.

We will discuss this conference in class on Mon. March 15; students will post on Moodle prior to Monday’s class a short overview of the presentation they attended, along with discussion questions for the class. In class students will present the event they attended to the class and facilitate discussion on their topic. (post + presentation=10 points; skill goals 5-6; content goals 5-6)

**Group Presentation. 50 points, total.**

♦ **Research Presentation.** 50 points. This presentation will take place during the first month of the semester. It will be based on research done with 1 or 2 partners on the status of women in the U.S. today. This presentation will require that you take a position on the question: is it accurate to describe women today as being oppressed in the area that you researched? (content goal 1, pg. 2)

**Three 5-6 page Formal Papers. 100 points each; 300 points total.** Three 5-6 page papers will be assigned during the course of the semester. These papers will require you to demonstrate skill goals 1-4, from page 2, and will rotate you through the content goals also listed on page 2. More specific information on my expectations for these papers will be made available when the first paper is assigned. (skill goals, 1-3; content goals, 1-7)

**Note well:** Grades will be lowered on any formal papers that are turned in late. For each day that an assignment is delayed, the grade will be dropped by 2 points. If there is a good reason why you will not be able to turn in an assignment on time, you
should *contact me at least 48 hours before the due date* to see if an extension can be arranged.

**Note well:** If you have any condition, such as a physical or mental disability, which will make it difficult for you to carry out the work as I have outlined it, or if English is your second language and this makes reading or writing especially difficult for you, please notify me in the first two weeks of the course so that we may make the appropriate arrangements.

**Grading Scale:**
The Grading Scale for this course is as follows:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Percentage Grade</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>445-470</td>
<td>95-100%</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>417-444</td>
<td>89-94%</td>
<td>AB</td>
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<tr>
<td>389-416</td>
<td>83-88%</td>
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<tr>
<td>365-388</td>
<td>77-82%</td>
<td>BC</td>
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<tr>
<td>332-364</td>
<td>71-76%</td>
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<td>305-331</td>
<td>65-70%</td>
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<td>276-304</td>
<td>59-64%</td>
<td>D</td>
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<tr>
<td>275 or below</td>
<td>0-58%</td>
<td>F</td>
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Attachment A: Self Evaluation of Discussion Skills

Students will evaluate themselves on their contributions to class discussion. I have several different reasons for taking this approach to evaluating your discussion skills:

1) Being able to discuss an idea with others—i.e. to follow a line of argument; contribute relevant information; formulate, express, and defend an opinion—are important skills not only for college classes but also for other areas of one’s life (the workplace, for example). I want you to think about what discussion skills you already possess and which you have not yet mastered so that you can intentionally choose further to develop your discussion skills this semester.

2) Presumably, you have already been asking yourself what you can get out of this class. I want you to take this opportunity to think, as well, about what you can contribute to it. The success of a discussion-based class doesn’t solely rely on the instructor; it also depends on the students. I want you to take this opportunity to think about what you will contribute to the class discussion that will help this be as instructive and constructive a class as it can be.

3) I may not be in the best position to evaluate your contribution to class discussion. Students have different discussion skills, in terms of not only frequency of contribution but also in terms of what form their contributions tend to take. For example, students may contribute to class discussion by asking clarifying questions, raising their own questions and concerns, trying to help focus discussion, intervening to make sure someone else is heard or that an important point isn’t lost, etc. By having you evaluate yourself you are given the opportunity to decide for yourself what your strengths are, what areas you want to improve, and what your active role in discussion should be.

By Fri. Jan. 15 you must do the following.
Write, in one to two paragraphs, an analysis of a) what makes for a good class discussion and b) what makes someone a good participant in discussion. Assess your own abilities in light of this analysis in an additional one to two paragraphs. Write a bulleted list of those aspects of class discussion that you do well. Then write a separate bulleted list identifying areas in which your class discussion skills need improvement. Both lists should be specific. Using these lists, set the specific, concrete, and measurable discussion goals you will try to achieve this semester; be sure to challenge yourself to stretch the boundaries of your current comfort zone. (e.g., I will ask a question or make a relevant comment in large group discussion at least once each class.) Post a copy on Moodle. I will review your goals and let you know if they need any revisions (sometimes student goals aren’t measurable or aren’t ambitious enough or are too ambitious). For those of you who are asked to revise your self-evaluation of discussion, you must post your final revisions by Fri. Jan. 29. Print a copy for yourself and put it in the front of your class notebook, for easy reference.

You will be required to do a formal evaluation of your discussion skills at midterm and the end of the semester, and to propose a discussion grade for yourself. If you convince me that you deserve the grade you propose, that will be the grade you will be assigned for class discussion at the end of the semester. Note: in assessing your discussion grades, I consider BOTH your own assessment of your discussion skills AND how you compare to other students in the class.
Guidelines for Student Research Presentations on
“Women: an Oppressed Class?”

Post on Moodle by 12 PM Fri. Jan. 15, your first, second, and third choices for a research topic.

Due: in class on Feb. 8-12 OR March 11-19: 20 minute group presentation.

Background:
Feminist ethics has been developed against a set of background assumptions regarding women’s position in society. Namely, feminist ethicists believe that despite decades of feminist struggle to improve women’s lives, and despite the very real gains women have made in this time, U.S. society is still, by and large, sexist and oppressive to women.

For the most part, the articles we will be reading this semester assume and do not try to prove these claims about sexism. Our task for the beginning of the semester is to determine the extent to which we agree with this feminist diagnosis of our society. We’ve started the semester by reading some feminist analysis of what “oppression” means. I also want you to take a look at some of the empirical data about women’s situation in today’s society to determine whether we think women are (still) oppressed, using the analysis provided by a) Marilyn Frye, b) Iris Young, or c) any of the justice theory we covered in class. As you do this research and put together your presentation, consider: do you think Frye’s image of the cage, or Young’s five faces of oppression, or the justice tradition’s account of liberty, rights, or the original position, help us understand women’s situation in US society today? I expect you to take a position on this question in your presentation and explicitly to use a, b, or c to analyze the information you gathered.

Possible Topics. Note: The questions listed below are suggestions for how you might want to focus your research; you should feel free to choose different foci and/or to address only some of the questions asked. Just make it clear in your presentation what your primary focus will be. And be sure that you address the key issues necessary to answer your question: are women oppressed in the area you researched or is this an exaggerated claim? Be sure to explain why you answer as you do. Feel free to talk to me about whether your chosen focus is appropriately ambitious for this project.

These Research Presentations will be due Feb. 8-12.

1. Women and Work.
Option 1) How do women’s earnings compare to men’s? What fields of work are men concentrated in? women? Are there significant differences in pay and status for “men’s” and “women’s” fields? If so, what are they? How much have things changed over the past twenty years? Note: if you choose this topic, I want you also to consider how race/ethnicity shapes pay and career choices.

Option 2) What is the glass ceiling? To what extent is this still a problem working women have to contend with? What is the number of female vs. male CEO’s of fortune 500 companies? Male and female managers in various fields? How does race/ethnicity factor into who experiences the glass ceiling?
2. Domestic Violence
What percentage of women is affected? Are women from all social groups equally affected, or do domestic violence rates vary with race, class, educational background, etc.? Who are the most frequent perpetrators? How severe is the abuse? Why don’t women leave? Are men subject to domestic violence, too? If so, who is abusing the men—women or other men—and how do the rates of violence/severity of violence towards men compare with the type of violence towards women?

3. Rape
Option 1: Rape in the U.S. What percentage of women is affected? When and where are women most at risk? What kind of men rape? How does rape, or the fear of rape, affect women’s lives and the choices they make? You might also want to consider: how often are men subjected to rape? Do men or women rape men? Under what circumstances are men most at risk?

Option 2: Rape internationally. What does rape look like internationally (you’ll probably need to chose a couple of countries or a region to focus on), as compared to in the U.S.? For example, who is most at risk, and why? is there any sense of whether rape is more, less, or as prevalent in the regions you examine, as compared to the U.S.? What are the punishments for the perpetrators and how often are they carried out? What are the social implications for victims? For example, are they viewed as partially responsible or completely innocent? Are victims still considered marriageable? Are they supported by their families or rejected? Are they able to go public with their stories?

4. Women and Political Office
What percentage of our elected political officials in the U.S. are women? men? (think about state and local office, as well as national). How have these numbers changed over the past 20 years? Of these women, how many are white women vs. women of color? Compare the numbers of women in national elected office in the U.S. vs. in other countries. Are we worldwide leaders of gender equality in this area?

5. Female Genital Mutilation
What is it? Where is it practiced? What types of FGM exist and which are most common? Why is FGM practiced? Is it a cultural or a religious practice? Who carries it out? What are the health implications for women? Do women in the countries where FGM is practiced support this practice or work for its abolition?

6. Marriage and Divorce law, internationally.
Article 16 of the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights, states that “Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.” Do men and women around the globe enjoy a) equal marriage rights, that is, each is able to freely and willingly enter into marriage and the law supports each equitably within the marriage? b) Do they experience equal divorce rights, e.g., either party can initiate divorce and property and custody are decided equitably upon dissolution of marriage? Again, you’ll want to look at a few countries or regions.

The following topics will be due between March 11 and 19. These topics will be related to the readings on Kittay. Kittay’s book draws our attention to the social supports in place for families within the United States. These two topics are meant to provide us with the background knowledge necessary to assess her central claims.
7. **Welfare reform and the current economic crisis.** Chart the change in #s of families receiving welfare, from the implementation of TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families) law to today. What were unemployment #s at the time welfare was changed? Today? how much money did a family receive from welfare prior to reforms. Now? What percentage of the families being supported through TANF are headed by women? by men? by a married couple? What are experts’ thoughts today, in the current economic crisis, is welfare providing an adequate safety net for poor families?

8. **Family supports in Scandinavian countries.** Note: this topic is significantly different from the other research topics. Rather than address the oppression of women, this one asks—how are families supported internationally? Thus, the adequate point of comparison for this topic isn’t are women oppressed in this area but rather, how does this model of family supports compare to Kittay’s—in what ways is it better or worse?

Students often find Kittay’s proposals for family supports as overly idealistic, unable to be implemented due to their high cost. For this reason, it’s interesting to look at the types of family supports currently in place in Scandinavian countries. If you choose this topic, I want you to research the types of family supports in place in Scandinavian countries, such as Sweden and Norway. Look at, for example, paid parental leave—who is eligible, for how long, how much $ do caregivers receive?, what, if any, encouragements are built in to encourage fathers to be involved in childcare?, what does daycare look like—who pays for it, how does its quality compare to that of daycare in the U.S., how well used is it, etc.

**Expectations:**
**Students will:**
1. present their research findings in a short (15-20 minute) oral presentation;
2. submit a detailed approximately 3 page outline of their presentation to all members of the class on the day of their presentation. You may bring a hard copy to class or e-mail a copy to students 24 hours before your presentation. Alternatively, you can e-mail the class a copy of your power point presentation. This outline or power point must include:
   a. a list of the group members and how each contributed to the presentation,
   b. a brief statement of the question/s that were researched,
   c. a position statement in which you explicitly state: yes or no, women are oppressed in this area you researched (and be sure to indicate, by which definition of oppression),
   d. an outline of the major findings, be sure to show how your findings lead to and support your conclusion,
   e. a bibliography or works cited page as well as in text citations, as needed,
   f. a (tentative) conclusion: does it seem accurate to describe women as oppressed in the area you researched? Be sure explicitly to incorporate course readings into your justification of your conclusion. For example, take a position on whether women are trapped in the cage (Frye); are affected by some of Young’s faces of oppression (if so, which ones and why?); or whether women’s liberty/positive or negative rights have unjustly been abridged?
3. e-mail me a copy of their outline or power point at least one hour before their class presentation;
4. Note: Your data, both in the outline or in your power-point must be properly referenced, using in text citation, footnotes or endnotes, and there must be a bibliography of sources used. I recommend students use MLA format.
5. When at all possible, get information on women of different racial and class backgrounds—remember—not all women experience the “cage” the same way.

*** Note: if you use power point, please be sure your presentation is as well structured as it would be in an outline, with each slide clearly building on the previous one and leading your audience to a final conclusion on the question you’re researching.

- **Research Expectations**
  - Students will consult at least three sources in doing their research and at least two of these must be peer reviewed journals or government sources.
  - Sources should be recent (published in the last 5-10 years, if possible) and should be from sources that can reasonably be expected to be objective and reliable. Students may want to compare different kinds of sources to see whether they agree. Comparison of sources becomes especially important when students are addressing contentious issues, such as how often men vs. women are battered or raped.
  - In evaluating student research sources, I will be concerned more with quality than quantity. After all, 12 poor sources are no substitute for 2 well-chosen and reliable sources.