

**San José State University**  
**Department of Philosophy**  
**PHIL/WOMS 121: Philosophy and Feminism, Section: 01**  
**Fall 2018**

**Course and Contact Information**

<b>Instructor:</b>	Jordan Liz
<b>Office Location:</b>	234 Faculty Office Building (FO)
<b>Email:</b>	Jordan.Liz@sjsu.edu
<b>Office Hours:</b>	12:00 PM-1:00 PM, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 4:30PM – 5:30PM Thursdays, or by appointment
<b>Class Days/Time:</b>	6:00 PM – 8:45 PM, Thursdays
<b>Classroom:</b>	241 Sweeney Hall
<b>Prerequisites:</b>	Three units of philosophy, or upper division standing

*All information in this syllabus is subject to change based on the needs of the class. Any changes will be announced in class and/or communicated by email and/or on Canvas. Students are responsible for regularly checking their email and the Canvas site for this class.*

**Catalog Description**

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A philosophical examination of writings that deal with issues of special concern to women, with emphasis on feminist writings.

**Course Description**

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What is feminism? What is meant by the notion that ‘gender’ is a social construct? How do experiences of race, dis-ability or class compound, interact or intersect with the lived experiences of women? In this course, we investigate foundational and topical questions of feminist theory, focusing predominately on contemporary issues facing women both domestically and internationally. While feminism is one of the core social justice movements today, many of its keys concepts and themes remain ambiguous to many in the general public. As such, we will begin the course with a critical examination of major concepts within the feminist tradition, including gender, sex, sexism and sexuality. Afterwards, we turn to issues of intersectionality; and, more specifically, to how the experiences of race, dis-ability and class impact one’s experience of sexism. Finally, we will turn our attention to two primary issues facing women today: the struggle for reproductive freedom and the prevalence of sexual violence and harassment.

**Course Learning Outcomes**

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Upon successful completion of this course, students will have:

1. Developed critical and logical thinking skills
2. Improved reading comprehension and writing skills
3. Fostered communication skills through philosophical discussions in class
4. Gained familiarity with certain key concepts and debates within contemporary feminist philosophy

## **Required Texts/Readings**

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All texts are available on Canvas. These texts are considered required reading and you are expected to read the assigned texts before class and bring a printed or electronic copy to class.

## **Course Requirements and Assignments**

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All students are required to

- (A) attend class and participate in class discussions
- (B) complete all readings before class
- (C) complete eleven quizzes
- (D) complete applied philosophy presentation (group assignment)
- (E) complete three papers

### **Participation (10%)**

Students are allowed up to three unexcused absences; afterwards, however, students will lose three points from their overall grade for each absence. Students with perfect attendance will receive extra credit on their overall grade.

Do note, merely attending class does not mean you will get participation credit! That said, if you are uncomfortable participating in class, you may write questions and comments about the readings and send them to me via e-mail one or two days before we discuss the reading in class. I will then read your question anonymously to the class. Also, you are welcome to meet with me during my office hours (or by appointment) to ask questions about the readings. I consider this a form of participation.

Additionally, at the end of each class period, students will be required to response to three questions:

- 1) Explain one concept or idea you learned from today's class
- 2) Describe one concept or idea you are unclear or confused about
- 3) What would you like to discuss in a future class(es)?

Submitting thoughtful and complete responses to these questions will also count towards the participation grade.

### **Quizzes (30%)**

There will be regular online reading quizzes beginning August 30<sup>th</sup>. These quizzes may be accessed via Canvas – students will have from the end of class until the beginning of the next class to complete the quiz (e.g. Quiz #1 will open after class on Thursday, August 30<sup>th</sup> and will be due before the start of class on Thursday, September 6<sup>th</sup>, see Course Schedule for more information). There will be twelve quizzes total and will consist of multiple choice and true or false questions. They will cover material from that session's readings. The purpose of these quizzes is to assess how well students understand the basic ideas and concepts discussed in the readings and in class. I will drop each student's lowest quiz grade at the end of the semester. Additionally, I reserve the right to give pop-quizzes if, in my judgment, students are not doing the readings.

### **Applied Philosophy Presentation (15%)**

In a group of two to three students, find a newspaper article, position piece, blog post, etc. outside of class discussing a specific case pertinent for feminism (i.e. issues that revolve around issues of sex, gender or sexuality). These cases may either be historical, such as the Supreme Court's decision in *Roe v. Wade* or *Planned Parenthood*

v. *Casey*, or more recent, such as sexual allegations brought against several public figures (e.g. Kevin Spacey, Bill O'Reilly, President Donald Trump, among an unfortunate number of others).

There are, however, two caveats: first, all cases must pertain to issues being discussed during the class session wherein the presentation occurs. For example, if you present on October 18<sup>th</sup>, then the selected case must deal with issues regarding sex and race (e.g. police violence against women of color (e.g. Rekia Boyd, Mya Hall; or recent debates within Delaware's Department of Education concerning whether children should be allowed to choose their own race and gender).

Second, all cases must be approved by me to ensure that they relate to issues being discussed that class session as well as make sure that each group is presenting different cases. If more than one group proposes the same case, then the group that notified me first will have it; the other(s) will need to choose a different case.

The presentation must summarize the important details, analyze the problem, relate it to concepts discussed in class and offer an alternative way of thinking about the issues or framing the issues at stake in the piece you have chosen. Each presentation should take 30 minutes: 20 minutes for presenting and 10 minutes for Q&A.

### Three Papers (45%)

For each paper, students will be able to choose from a number of prompts, which will be distributed in class. Students will also have the option to choose your own paper topic; however, these must be approved by me at least one week prior to due date.

The deadlines for these papers are as follows:

Paper #1	Oct 4 <sup>th</sup>
Paper #2	Nov 8 <sup>th</sup>
Paper #3	Dec 12 <sup>th</sup>

Each paper must be 3-5 typed pages, at least 1.5 spaced, and use 12-point font. I am willing to read drafts provided I receive them at least three days before the due date. **Plagiarized papers will be penalized.** Electronic copies of papers must be turned in via Canvas by 11:59 PM on the due date. You will receive electronic feedback on all papers. **Late papers will be penalized.**

If you need help writing a paper, please contact the University's writing resource center, the San José State Writing Center. The Writing Center has two locations: drop-in tutoring sessions in 126 Clark Hall, and regularly schedule tutoring sessions on the second floor in the MLK Library. Summer 2018 hours are 10:00AM – 3:00PM, Mondays to Fridays. Writing Center may be reached at (408) 954-2308, or [writingcenter@sjsu.edu](mailto:writingcenter@sjsu.edu).

**San José State University Policy:** “Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally 3 hours per unit per week with 1 of the hours used for lecture) for instruction or preparation/studying or course related activities including but not limited to internships, labs, clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.”

### **Grading scale**

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A+	100
A	94-99
A-	90-93

B+	87-89
B	84-86
B-	80-83
C+	77-79
C	74-76
C-	70-73
D+	65-70
D	60-64
F	< 60

## Communication

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Any important announcements, advice, changes to the class schedule, etc. will be communicated by email or on the course homepage on Canvas. You are responsible to regularly check your San José State email account as well as the Canvas page for the class.

When you use email to contact me, you should compose your message professionally. Include a greeting and sign your name. I reserve the right to ignore you otherwise.

## Use of Technology

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The use of laptops and tablets, not cell phones, is acceptable if and only if the goal is meaningful participation in class. That is, you can use these devices to take notes or access electronic copies of reading assignments – which are not to be found on Facebook, Twitter, or similar sites. If you choose to use electronic copies of assigned text, make sure you have them ready on your class at the beginning of the class.

Please store your cell phones, mp3 players, iPods, etc. out of sight (i.e. in your bag). **If you are caught checking your phone, texting, or if your phone goes off during class, you will lose three points on your final exam grade each time.**

## Student Technology Resources

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Computer labs for student use are available in the Academic Success Center at <http://www.sjsu.edu/at/asc/> located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall and in the Associated Students Lab on the 2nd floor of the Student Union. Additional computer labs may be available in your department/college. Computers are also available in the Martin Luther King Library. A wide variety of audio-visual equipment is available for student checkout from Media Services located in IRC 112. These items include DV and HD digital camcorders; digital still cameras; video, slide and overhead projectors; DVD, CD, and audiotape players; sound systems, wireless microphones, projection screens and monitors.

## Academic Integrity and Student Conduct

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Expectations for academic integrity and student conduct are described in detail on the website of the Office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development (<http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/>). Additionally, please take a look at the University's policy regarding Academic Integrity (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F15-7.pdf>).

Plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct can result in an automatic failing grade for this course, or a report to the appropriate Academic Judiciary, or both. If you are feeling pressured for time or confused, do not cheat or plagiarize! Instead, come get help.

## **Disability Statement**

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I feel very passionately about the right of individuals with disabilities to participate fully in all social realms, including education. To that end, I am willing to work with students with disabilities to find ways to accommodate any special needs that arise in taking this course. First, however, you will need to register with Accessible Education Center (AEC). In addition to providing documentation of your disability and needs arising from it, AEC will also be able to provide you with services that I cannot and that may also be beneficial beyond the context of my class.

Any student who anticipates physical or academic barriers based on the impact of a disability is encouraged to speak with me privately. Students with disabilities should also contact the Accessible Education Center (AEC) at 110 Administration Building, (408) 924-6000. AEC coordinates access and accommodations for students with disabilities.

## **SJSU Peer Connections**

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Peer Connections, a campus-wide resource for mentoring and tutoring, strives to inspire students to develop their potential as independent learners while they learn to successfully navigate through their university experience. Students are encouraged to take advantage of their services which include course-content based tutoring, enhanced study and time management skills, more effective critical thinking strategies, decision making and problem-solving abilities, and campus resource referrals.

In addition to offering small group, individual, and drop-in tutoring for a number of undergraduate courses, consultation with mentors is available on a drop-in or by appointment basis. Workshops are offered on a wide variety of topics including preparing for the Writing Skills Test (WST), improving your learning and memory, alleviating procrastination, surviving your first semester at SJSU, and other related topics. A computer lab and a study space are also available for student use in Room 600 of Student Services Center (SSC). Peer Connections is located in three locations: SSC, Room 600 (10th Street Garage on the corner of 10th and San Fernando Street), at the 1st floor entrance of Clark Hall, and in the Living Learning Center (LLC) in Campus Village Housing Building B. Visit Peer Connections website at <http://peerconnections.sjsu.edu> for more information.

## Reading schedule

The following dates indicate reading assignments for the semester. Please be prepared to discuss the material each day. Changes, additions, substitutions, or cancellations may be expected during the semester. They will be announced in class and on the Canvas page for this class.

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	Aug 23 <sup>d</sup>	Introduction to the Course
2	Aug 30 <sup>th</sup>	<p><b>Topic:</b> Gender</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> Simone de Beauvoir, "Introduction" to <i>The Second Sex</i>, pp. 3-17</p> <p>Judith Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory," pp. 519-531.</p>
3	Sept 6 <sup>th</sup>	<p><b>Topic:</b> Feminist Epistemology</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> Sandra Harding, "'Strong Objectivity' and Socially Situated Knowledge" in <i>Whose Science? Whose Knowledge? Thinking from Women's Lives</i>, pp. 138-163</p> <p>Nancy Tuana, "The Speculum of Ignorance: The Women's Health Movement and Epistemologies of Ignorance" in <i>Hypatia</i>, pp. 1-19</p> <p><b>Assignment:</b> Quiz #1</p>
4	Sept 13 <sup>th</sup>	<b>No Class</b>
5	Sept 20 <sup>th</sup>	<p><b>Topic:</b> Sex</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> Sarah Richardson, "Sexing the X: How the X Became the 'Female Chromosome,'" pp. 909-933.</p> <p>Anne Fausto-Sterling, "Should There Only Be Two Sexes?" in <i>Sexing the Body: Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality</i>, pp. 78-114</p> <p><b>Assignment:</b> Quiz #2</p>
6	Sept 27 <sup>th</sup>	<p><b>Topic:</b> Sexism</p> <p><b>Readings:</b> Marilyn Frye, "Oppression" from <i>The Politics of Reality</i>, pp. 10-16</p> <p>Ann Cudd and Leslie Jones, "Sexism" in <i>Blackwell Companion to Applied Ethics</i>, pp. 102-117</p> <p><b>Assignment:</b> Quiz #3</p>
7	Oct 4 <sup>th</sup>	<p><b>Topic:</b> Sexuality</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> Robin Dembroff, "What is Sexual Orientation?" from <i>Philosophers' Imprint</i>, pp. 1-27</p> <p>John Corvino, "Homosexuality and the PIB Argument" from <i>Ethics</i>, pp. 501-534</p> <p><b>Assignment:</b> Quiz #4, Paper #1</p>

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
8	Oct 11 <sup>th</sup>	<p><b>Topic:</b> Trans* Issues</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> Sandy Stone, “The <i>Empire</i> Strikes Back: A Posttranssexual Manifesto” in <i>The Transgender Reader</i>, pp. 221-235</p> <p>Talia Mae Bettcher, “Trans Identities and First-Person Authority” in <i>You’ve Changed: Sex Reassignment and Personal Identity</i>, pp. 98-120</p> <p>Jeannie Suk, “The Transgender Bathroom Debate and the Looming Title IX Crisis” from <i>The New Yorker</i>, pp. 1-5</p> <p><b>Assignments:</b> Quiz #5</p>
9	Oct 18 <sup>th</sup>	<p><b>Topic:</b> Sex and Race</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> Kimberle Williams Crenshaw, “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color” from <i>The Feminist Philosophy Reader</i>, pp. 279-308</p> <p>Maria Lugones, “Playfulness, ‘World’-Travelling, and Love Perception” in <i>Hypatia</i>, pp. 3-19</p> <p><b>Assignment:</b> Quiz #6, Presentations</p>
10	Oct 25 <sup>th</sup>	<p><b>Topic:</b> Sex and Dis-ability</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> Susan Wendell, “Toward a Feminist Theory of Disability” in <i>Hypatia</i>, pp. 104-124</p> <p>Fiona Campbell, “Pathological Femaleness” in <i>Contours of Ableism</i>, pp. 130-145</p> <p><b>Assignment:</b> Quiz #7, Presentations</p>
11	Nov 1 <sup>st</sup>	<p><b>Topic:</b> Sex and Class</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> Nancy Fraser, “After the Family Wage: Gender Equity and the Welfare State” from <i>The Feminist Philosophy Reader</i>, pp. 622-638</p> <p>Chandra Mohanty, “Women Workers and Capitalist Scripts: Ideologies of Domination, Common Interests, and the Politics of Solidarity” in <i>Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies and Democratic Futures</i>, pp. 3-29</p> <p>Jessica Cussins, “Dear Facebook: Please Don’t Tell Women to Lean in to Egg Freezing” from <i>The Huffington Post</i></p> <p><b>Assignment:</b> Quiz #8, Presentations</p>
12	Nov 8 <sup>th</sup>	<p><b>Topic:</b> Reproductive Rights I</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> Susan Bordo, “Are Mothers Persons? Reproductive Rights and the Politics of Subjectivity” in <i>Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body</i>, pp. 71-98</p> <p>Judith Roof, “The Ideology of Fair Use: Xeroxing and Reproductive Rights” in <i>Hypatia</i> 7(2), pp. 63-73</p> <p><b>Assignment:</b> Quiz #9, Paper #2</p>

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
13	Nov 15 <sup>th</sup>	<p><b>Topic:</b> Reproductive Rights II</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> Douglas Pet, “Make Me A Baby as Fast as You Can” from <i>Beyond Bioethics: Toward a New Biopolitics</i>, pp. 350-354</p> <p>Lisa C. Ikemoto, “Reproductive Tourism: Equality Concerns in the Global Market for Fertility Services” in <i>Law and Equality: A Journal of Theory and Practice</i>, pp. 277-309</p> <p><b>Assignment:</b> Quiz #10, Presentations</p>
14	Nov 22 <sup>nd</sup>	<p><b>Thanksgiving Break – No Class</b></p>
15	Nov 29 <sup>th</sup>	<p><b>Topic:</b> Sexual Violence and Harassment I</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> Stephanie Zacharek, Eliana Dockterman, and Haley Sweetland Edwards, “Time 2017 Person of the Year: The Silence Breakers”</p> <p>Kristie Dotson, “Tracking Epistemic Violence, Tracking Practices of Silencing” in <i>Hypatia</i>, pp. 236-257</p> <p><b>Assignment:</b> Quiz #11, Presentations</p>
16	Dec 6 <sup>th</sup>	<p><b>Topic:</b> Sexual Violence and Harassment II</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> Ann J. Cahill, “A Phenomenology of Fear: The Threat of Rape and Feminine Bodily Comportment” from <i>The Feminist Philosophy Reader</i>, pp. 810-826</p> <p>Sarah Conly, “Seduction, Rape and Coercion” from <i>Ethics</i>, pp. 96-121</p> <p><b>Assignment:</b> Quiz #12, Presentations</p>
17	Dec 12 <sup>th</sup>	<p><b>Topic:</b> Final Exam Week</p> <p><b>Assignment:</b> Paper #3</p>