6AANB039 Gender and Philosophy
Syllabus – Academic year 2013/14

Basic information

Credits: 15
Module Tutor: Dr Sarah Fine (convenor), Dr Sacha Golob, Prof. MM McCabe, Dr Eleanor Knox, and Dr Raphael Woolf.
Office: Dr Fine: 902.
Consultation time: Dr Fine: Tuesdays, 4pm - 5pm; Wednesdays 11am - 12pm.
Semester: First
Lecture time and venue*: Tuesdays, 12pm - 1pm, room K2.31.

*Please note that tutorial times and venues will be organised independently with your teaching tutor

Module description (plus aims and objectives)

This module offers students the opportunity to think critically and analytically about gender. It is also an opportunity to consider the ways in which critical analysis of gender-related issues contribute to philosophy as a discipline.

It engages with a selection of the central philosophical debates relating to gender, which cut across a range of areas in the discipline.

Aims
- To offer the knowledge, skills and opportunity to think critically and analytically about gender
- To introduce key philosophical advances that have arisen from thinking about gender

Assessment methods and deadlines

- Formative assessment: two x 1,500-word essays
  Essay 1: Fri Nov 8 2013; Essay 2: Fri Dec 20 2013

- Summative assessment: two x 2,500-word essays (100%)

NB Please note that for semester I-only Study Abroad students, assessment requirements may vary.
Outline of lecture topics (plus suggested readings)

Week One: Dr Fine <1 Oct>: <<Gender, the family, and justice>>
The relationship between gender roles, the family, and justice.
Suggested reading:

Week Two: Dr Fine <8 Oct>: <<Abortion>>
Abortion: a feminist issue?
Suggested reading:

Week Three: Dr Fine <15 Oct>: <<Marriage>>
Marriage: for better or worse?
Suggested reading:

Week Four: Dr Fine <22 Oct>: <<Gender and culture>>
The politics of identity, difference, and recognition.
Suggested reading:

Week Five: Dr Knox <29 Oct>: << Feminist Epistemology and Philosophy of Science >>
Science is influenced by social factors, and has been a male dominated pursuit for much of its history. This week explores feminist contributions to epistemology and philosophy of science, including standpoint theory: the claim that people in particular positions have privileged access to knowledge.
Suggested reading:

READING WEEK – NB FIRST FORMATIVE ESSAY DUE - Fri Nov 8 2013
Outline of lecture topics (plus suggested readings) – continued if necessary

**Week Six: Dr Golob**<br>12 Nov: << Gender, Foucault, and Critical Theory >>

Examining two philosophical approaches which have provided the conceptual apparatus for many recent analyses of gender: Adorno’s Critical Theory, and Foucault’s genealogical method.

Suggested reading:
- Michel Foucault, ‘Nietzsche, Genealogy, History’, widely reprinted (e.g. in John Richardson and Brian Leiter (eds.) (2001) *Nietzsche* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

**Week Seven: Dr Golob**<br>19 Nov: << Gender and Pornography >>

Examining one of the central political issues within modern feminism: the status of pornography. The focus in particular will be on the relationship between pornography, agency, and identity.

Suggested reading:

**Week Eight: Dr Woolf**<br>26 Nov: << Women in Plato >>

Examining Plato’s characterisation of women.

Suggested reading:
- Primary text
- Plato, *Republic* V 449a-466d
- Secondary reading

**Week Nine: Prof McCabe**<br>3 Dec: << Virtue and Gender >>

Thinking about gender through the prism of debates regarding virtue in ethics and epistemology

Suggested reading:

**Week Ten: Prof McCabe**<br>10 Dec: << Identity and Pregnancy >>

Agency, personal identity, and pregnancy

Suggested reading:

NB SECOND FORMATIVE ESSAY DUE - Fri Dec 20 2013
Suggested essay questions

1. Is the family an obstacle to the pursuit of social justice?

2. What is the strongest argument in defence of abortion?

3. Should the state promote marriage?

4. Is feminism compatible with ‘respect for cultures’?

5. Has the project of scientific knowledge-acquisition suffered for being a male-dominated enterprise? In what ways has the project been affected?

6. Critically assess what, if anything, the concepts of ideology and/or genealogy can contribute to a philosophical understanding of gender.

7. “Pornography is gender hate speech.” Discuss.

8. Was Plato a feminist?

9. How does the appeal to ‘virtue’, either in ethics or in epistemology, offer a critique of traditional stereotypes?

10. How are we to account for the identity of both mother and child in pregnancy?
Suggested additional readings

**General interest**
- Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (various entries)

**Gender, the Family and Justice**

**Abortion**

**Marriage**

**Gender and Culture**

**Feminist Epistemology and Philosophy of Science**
Gender, Foucault and Critical Theory

- Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (various editions), part III, chapter 3: Panopticism
- Sandra Lee Bartky (1988) 'Foucault, Femininity and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power’ in Irene Diamond and Lee Quinby (eds.) *Feminism and Foucault: Reflections on Resistance* (Northeastern University Press).

Gender and Pornography


Plato and Gender

- Plato, *Laws* III, 780d-781d, *Laws* VII 804d-806c, 813d-814c

Virtue and Gender


Pregnancy and Identity