

PHIL 265: PHILOSOPHICAL ISSUES OF GENDER AND SEX (SPRING 2019)
GAIGE 207, MONDAY/WEDNESDAY 10:00-11:50

Professor Amy Berg
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OFFICE HOURS: Mondays 12:00-2:00 (or by appointment)

COURSE OVERVIEW

All of us have individual identities shaped by our sex and gender. But what is sex? What is gender? How do they shape our lives, and how should they? In this class, we will look at the work of philosophers, social scientists, activists, and others who try to determine who we are and how we ought to treat one another. The questions we will explore include:

- **Why would we care about what sex and gender are?** We will define oppression and consider how sex and/or gender might be involved.
- **What are sex and gender?** We will attempt to define these concepts and look at varying views of how they affect our lives.
- **Are women and men essentially different?** We will discuss some ideas about what makes the sexes and genders different and what they have in common.
- **If there is sex- and/or gender-based oppression, how should we respond to it?** We will close by considering two issues in the philosophy of sex and gender: first, whether women make a distinctive contribution to morality; and second, whether women (and men) would benefit from changes to marriage law.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND POLICIES

You will need:

- The readings. You are responsible for completing assigned reading before coming to class and for bringing your copy of the reading with you to class. We will be using one book and a number of other readings:
 - The book, *An Introduction to Feminist Philosophy* (Alison Stone, Polity Press 2007, ISBN 978-0745638829), is available at the RIC Bookstore (and elsewhere).
 - The rest of the readings you will need are collected in a course reader, which is only available at the Bookstore.
- Access to Blackboard, where I will post the syllabus, assignments, and other information.

Assignments: There are six assignments due in this course:

- Two take-home assignments (3 pages and 4 pages), due by the beginning of class on February 27 and April 1.
- A final paper, due on May 6.
- Three short reading responses, due throughout the semester. In each of these assignments, you must reflect on some aspect of the reading for the next class—for guidelines, see the templates handed out in class. Each response should be no more than one double-spaced page in length. When you turn these reading responses in is largely up to you; however, the first **must** be turned in **by February 10**, and the second **must** be turned in **by March 5**. These assignments are due by 5:00 pm on the day **before** our course meets (that is, by 5:00 on Sundays and Tuesdays).

All assignments will be graded anonymously; you should put your student ID number, *not* your name, on them. Submit all assignments via Blackboard, where they will be checked using SafeAssign. **You must turn in all assignments in order to pass the course.**

Attendance and participation:

- Participation is part of your final grade in this course; to participate, you need to attend. You are allowed **two absences**, no explanation needed, over the course of the semester. I will deduct one percent from your participation grade for each additional absence, unless you receive prior permission or can provide documentation which I believe justifies excusing an additional absence. You count as absent if you are not present when I take attendance, even if you show up later in the class period; you also count as absent if you leave early without prior permission. If at any point in the semester, you believe you are in a situation for which I should make an exception to this policy, please talk with me outside of class.
- But participation is more than just attendance! In order to receive full participation points, come ready to make active, serious, charitable contributions to class discussion. **I reserve the right to call on students at random if you are not participating actively.** If you are not comfortable participating in class, I will count active, serious, charitable visits to my office hours toward your participation grade. You will receive a midsemester evaluation of your participation. When I grade participation, here's what I'm looking for:
 - A range: Attends all (or almost all) class sessions, does the reading, actively and positively participates in all group activities, asks questions or offers comments at least every other class session, comes to office hours at least a couple of times.
 - B range: Attends most class sessions, does the reading, participates in most group activities, asks questions or offers comments sporadically. Is never a distraction.
 - C range: Attends only occasionally, does not do the reading, does not participate very actively in class (or else is a distraction), never comes to office hours.
 - D or F range: Rarely if ever attends class, either does not participate or is an active distraction in class, never comes to office hours or communicates with me via email.

The grade breakdown is:

- **Take-home assignment 1:** 15%
- **Take-home assignment 2:** 25%
- **Reading responses:** 15%
- **Final paper:** 35%
- **Participation:** 10%

The grade scale is:

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|--------------|------------|------------|
| | A: 93-100% | A-: 90-92% |
| B+: 87-89% | B: 83-86% | B-: 80-82% |
| C+: 77-79% | C: 73-76% | C-: 70-72% |
| D+: 67-69% | D: 60-63% | D-: 60-62% |
| F: below 60% | | |

Lateness policy: Assignments must be turned in at the start of class on the day they are due. **There are no exceptions unless you make prior arrangements with me.** I will deduct three percent of your grade on an assignment if that assignment is turned in the day it's due any time after the start of class and three percent for each day after that that the assignment is late (so, for example, an assignment that would have gotten 100% if it were turned in on time on Monday would get 91% if turned in on Wednesday).

On writing: Your success in this class depends on the ability to express yourself clearly. Here are some writing resources I recommend:

- **The Writing Center** (Craig-Lee 225; <http://www.ric.edu/writingcenter/>) will talk through ideas, work through a draft with you, and generally give advice at all stages of the writing process.
- **Style**, by Joseph M. Williams (University of Chicago Press, 1990) is an excellent guide to clear and forceful writing. It's widely and cheaply available at bookstores and through Amazon.

Other policies

- **Electronic devices (laptops, tablets, phones, etc.) are not allowed in class**, except by permission. That means that you must put these devices in your bag at the beginning of class and leave them there until the end of class. I am happy to give permission if you need to use an electronic device in order to be successful in this course; please speak with me during the first two weeks of the course. If I give you permission to use technology, please minimize your distractions to other students (by sitting in the back or to the side of the classroom). If you need to use a RIC computer to print, view documents, or upload your assignments to Blackboard, there are computers available at Adams Library.
- **I use email** to send announcements about this course. It is your responsibility to check your RIC email (including your spam folder) every day. (Please note: I use Blackboard when I need to send announcements to the entire class. Replies to emails I send through Blackboard do not go to me, and I have no way to see them. **If you need to contact me over email, please make sure you're emailing my email address, aberg@ric.edu.**) Our emails to each other in this course are professional documents, and it is your responsibility (and mine) to write them professionally. For tips on how to write a professional email, check the email rubric posted to Blackboard. I will respond to your email no later than 5 pm on the next business day; in the rare case I do not, please feel free to follow up with me.
- **Academic honesty is critical to your success in this course.** RIC has policies regarding academic dishonesty such as cheating, plagiarism, and other behaviors. **Cheating** includes receiving unauthorized assistance on an exam or assignment. **Plagiarism** involves the theft of "intellectual property." The college policy against plagiarism bans word-for-word plagiarism, patchwork plagiarism, unacknowledged paraphrasing, and unacknowledged facts. I also ban self-plagiarism (that is, you may not turn in work you have written for a previous class). **Other dishonest behaviors** include anything else that provides an unfair advantage over other students or that sabotages another student's efforts. I am happy to talk to you if you have any questions about academic integrity, or you can consult the Academic Standards section of the RIC Student Handbook (<http://www.ric.edu/studentlife/documents/RICStudentHandbook.pdf>). If I find that you have violated academic integrity standards, the minimal consequences will be a zero for the assignment, and you will not be allowed to redo it. Additional consequences may occur, including your failing the class and/or being brought before the Academic Integrity Board. I will also report you to the Vice President of Academic Affairs.
- Rhode Island College, and I, are committed to making reasonable efforts to assist individuals with documented disabilities. If you are seeking reasonable classroom accommodations under the ADA and/or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, you must register with RIC's Disability Services Center (Fogarty 137, 456-2776). To receive accommodations for this class, please obtain the proper Disability Services forms and meet with me during the first two weeks of the course to discuss how we can implement them.
- There are lots of resources at RIC to support you during your time here. OASIS (Adams Library, lower level; <http://www.ric.edu/oasis/>) is here to help you succeed academically. Learning For Life (Adams Library, level 1; <http://www.ric.edu/learningforlife/>) can connect you to resources on- and off-campus to support you with non-academic needs you may have

while you're at RIC. Project ExCEL (Roberts 303; <http://www.ric.edu/esl/>) has a variety of programs and classes for multilingual students. If you'd like information on how to access and use these resources, please don't hesitate to talk with me.

- You are welcome and encouraged to come to my office hours or make an appointment with me whenever you want to talk about the course material, your assignments, or any other philosophy-related concerns you have.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS [READINGS LABELED "STONE" ARE FROM STONE, AN INTRODUCTION TO FEMINIST PHILOSOPHY; ALL OTHER READINGS ARE IN THE READER]

Wednesday, January 23: Course introduction

Reading: None

Monday, January 28: CLASS CANCELED

Wednesday, January 30: What is oppression?

Reading: hooks, "Feminist Politics: Where We Stand" AND Hofstadter, "A Person Paper on Purity in Language"

Monday, February 4: What is oppression?

Reading: Johnson, "What Is This Thing Called Patriarchy?"

Wednesday, February 6: What is oppression?

Reading: Frye, "Oppression"

Sunday, February 10 is the last day to turn in your first reading response on time

Monday, February 11: What is oppression?

Reading: Boxill, "The Responsibility of the Oppressed to Resist Their Own Oppression"

Wednesday, February 13: What are gender and sex?

Reading: None

Take-home assignment 1 handed out Wednesday

Monday, February 18: Sex

Reading: Stone, ch. 1 (through p. 41)

Wednesday, February 20: Sex

Reading: Fausto-Sterling, "The Five Sexes"

Monday, February 25: Sex

Reading: Stone, ch. 1 (p. 41-end)

Wednesday, February 27: Sex

Reading: Bergman, *The Nearest Exit May Be behind You*

Take-home assignment 1 due Wednesday

Monday, March 4: Sex

Reading: Chappell, "Transwomen and Adoptive Parents: An Analogy"

Tuesday, March 5 is the last day to turn in your second reading response on time

Wednesday, March 6: Sex

Reading: Padawer, "When Women Become Men at Wellesley"

Monday, March 11: SPRING BREAK

Wednesday, March 13: SPRING BREAK

Monday, March 18: Gender

Reading: Stone, ch. 2 (through p. 67)

Take-home assignment 2 handed out Monday

Wednesday, March 20: Gender

Reading: Stone, ch. 2 (p. 67-72)

Monday, March 25: Gender

Reading: Beauvoir, "From Maturity to Old Age"

Wednesday, March 27: Gender

Reading: Spelman, "Simone de Beauvoir and Women"

Monday, April 1: Essentialism

Reading: Haslanger, "Gender and Race: (What) Are They? (What) Do We Want Them to Be?"

Take-home assignment 2 due Monday

Wednesday, April 3: Essentialism

Reading: Stone, ch. 5 (p. 158-end)

Monday, April 8: Ethics of care

Reading: Gilligan, "Images of Relationship"

Wednesday, April 10: Ethics of care

Reading: Held, "The Ethics of Care as Moral Theory"

Monday, April 15: Ethics of care

Reading: Moody-Adams, "Gender and the Complexity of Moral Voices"

Final paper assigned Monday

Wednesday, April 17: Marriage

Reading: Okin, *Justice, Gender, and the Family*

Monday, April 22: Marriage

Reading: Brake, "Is Divorce Promise-Breaking?"

Tuesday, April 23 is the last day to turn in your third reading response on time

Wednesday, April 24: Marriage

Reading: Brake, *Minimizing Marriage*

Monday, April 29: Peer-review sessions for final papers

Reading: None

Finals week

Final paper due Monday, May 6