

**PHIL/WGST 275**  
**Feminist Themes in Philosophy, Film, & Literature**  
Summer II 2021, Mon. – Fri. 9:45 – 11:15 am (EST)

**INSTRUCTOR: Philip Bold**

Office: Meeting ID: 989 4708 3112

Office Hours: Thursday's 10:15 – 11:15 am (& by appointment)

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** A discussion-based course on a selection of themes in feminist thought from the perspectives of philosophy, film, and literature. These themes include (but are not restricted to): systemic/structural gender oppression, psychological dimensions of oppression, race & intersectionality, trans philosophy, challenging the gender binary, presentation of trans and non-binary folks in media, and resistance to oppression. We will put philosophical contributions to these themes into conversation with their presentations in film and literature in order to contextualize, illustrate, and/or challenge the ideas of the former with the latter (and vice versa). Students will be encouraged, above all, to think through and articulate *their own* views on these topics. Further, the nature and direction of the course – aside from the readings, media, assignments, and general themes chosen by the instructor – will largely be directed by students' interests and curiosities. Students should thus anticipate a “flipped-classroom” format in which the “instructor” is as much a party to learning as are the students, and the students are as much a party to teaching as is the “instructor”. The aim of the instructor will primarily be to create a space in which the students' knowledge can be shared, cultivated, organized, contextualized, clarified, challenged, and effectively communicated.

**CONTENT WARNING:** Some of the readings, films, and topics discussed in this class may be heavy or emotionally difficult. Please bear this in mind as you read and prepare for class. If you suspect that reading, watching, or discussing specific material is likely to be emotionally harmful for you, please let me know. I am happy to make reasonable accommodations if necessary.

**GRADING AND MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS**

1. **Participation** (25%)
  - Class Performance
  - Quality of Forum Posts
  - Regular Attendance

**Deadlines**

2. **Forum Posts** (10%) See schedule below.
3. **Reading Quizzes** (10%) Saturday, each week no later than 11:55pm.
4. **First Paper (5 pages)** (15%) Sunday, July 11<sup>th</sup> no later than noon.
5. **Midterm Exam** (10%) Sunday, July 18<sup>th</sup> no later than noon.

6. **Final Exam** (10%) **Saturday, July 31<sup>st</sup> no later than midnight.**
7. **Final Paper (5 pages)** (20%) **Monday, August 2<sup>nd</sup> no later than 2:30pm.**

**PARTICIPATION:** Discussion is the core of this class. That is why participation counts for 25% of your course grade. You should come to *every class* prepared to talk about the assigned readings and the course topics. The participation component of your grade will also factor in your attendance record as well as the regular completion and quality of your forum posts. I will provide a mid-session participation estimate with comments and suggestions for improvement.

**FORUM POSTS:** Each student will be required to complete **9 out of 11** forum assignments throughout the session (i.e., you have the option to skip 2 forum assignments of your choosing). Students will be divided into two groups for the entire session: *Team Power* (“Team P”) and *Team Love* (“Team L”). Each team will receive one of two assignments: (1) you will either be required to write an original forum post, raising a specific question, comment, or objection that responds directly to the assigned reading, or (2) you will have to respond to the original forum posts written by members of the other team. Forum posts, on either assignment, should be roughly 100-150 words (*maximum!*) and convey knowledge of the assigned reading. The 10% of your grade allocated to forum posts is for *completion* (i.e., of meaningful, clearly stated responses to either the reading or someone else’s post, ones which convey knowledge of the reading assignment), while their general *quality* will be factored into the participation component of your grade (25%). **Deadlines for forum posts are listed in the schedule below – please note variations in days and times!**

**To be clear:** Forum post assignments must respond to the readings assigned *on the very same day*. So, for instance, your 1<sup>st</sup> Forum post that is due on Tues. June 29<sup>th</sup> must respond to Marilyn Frye’s, “Oppression” (i.e., the reading assignment for Tues. June 29<sup>th</sup>). The team who is assigned to write *original* posts will have to submit them the evening before the scheduled assignment (e.g., for the 1<sup>st</sup> Forum: Mon. June 28<sup>th</sup> by midnight). The team who is assigned to write *response* posts will have to submit them by 1pm on the day of the assignment (e.g., for the 1<sup>st</sup> Forum: Tues. June 29<sup>th</sup> by 1pm).

**READING QUIZZES:** At the end of every week, students will be required to complete a very brief reading quiz on Sakai. Questions on the reading quiz will largely be multiple choice and are designed to be easy for anyone who has completed the reading and media assignments. Students will be at liberty to complete these quizzes in a way that best fits their schedule, but the absolute deadline will be on **Saturdays no later than 11:55pm** (though, **Quiz 5** is an exception – see schedule below).

**MIDTERM AND FINAL EXAMS:** There will be two required exams for the course, both accessed through Sakai. These exams serve as an opportunity to show your understanding of the assigned readings. *All possible* questions for each exam will be made available to students ahead of time. Each exam itself will consist of a random selection of 3 questions from the longer list given to you in advance. Students will be at liberty to complete these exams in a way that best fits their schedule (i.e., once they have been released), but the absolute deadlines are as follows. The absolute deadline for your *midterm* will be **Sunday, July 18<sup>th</sup> no later than noon**. The absolute deadline for your *final* will be **Saturday, July 31<sup>st</sup> no later than midnight**.

**PAPERS:** There are two major paper assignments. Each will require students to engage clearly, critically, and creatively with a central topic in the course. More detailed instructions will be provided in closer proximity to the deadlines. **Please note that the university requires each student to complete a minimum of 10 pages of writing *outside of class*.** This

requirement should be more than sufficiently covered between your forum posts and paper assignments. I have created standard prompts for each paper assignment, but students are more than welcome to request an alternative prompt depending on their own interests, that is, *as long as the proposed alternative is in some way directly related to the course material.*

**For the First Paper assignment,** I will ask you to explain how ideas from Frye, Orenstein, and/or Bartky can be applied to the film *Smooth Talk*. Does the film confirm any of their ideas? Does it challenge others? Does it raise questions or challenges about oppression, sexism, or sex that do not surface in their discussions? Explain as clearly as possible, in your own words. Due **Sunday, July 11<sup>th</sup> no later than noon.**

**For the Final Paper assignment,** you have three options to choose from. Due **Monday, August 2<sup>nd</sup> no later than 2:30pm.**

- (1) *Philosophy and Art:* Pick one of the films or works of literature (other than *Smooth Talk*) and explain how it connects with one (or two) of the philosophical essays we've read. Does the film/work confirm any of the ideas we've covered? Does it challenge any of those ideas? Does it raise feminist questions or challenges that do not surface in the texts we've read? Explain as clearly as possible, in your own words.
- (2) *Philosophy of Resistance:* How can one (most) effectively resist oppression? Explain – as clearly as possible and in your own words – the views of 1 or 2 authors in the final week, and make suggestions for how their views might be implemented, expanded, or modified. Students should illustrate their suggestions either with the films/literature from the course or examples of their own.
- (3) *Creative Writing:* Write a four-page (single-spaced) short story and a two-page (double-spaced) explanation, as clearly as possible and in your own words, of how your short story illustrates a crucial theme explored in weeks 2-5. This option can be completed with a partner – but any two people planning to do this must schedule a brief meeting with the instructor for approval.

**REQUIRED TECHNOLOGY:** All students must be capable of using the Zoom application for class meetings. This will require, at the very least, (1) a reliable device that is compatible with Zoom (such as a laptop or tablet device – smartphones are *not* sufficient), (2) a stable internet connection, and (3) a quiet space that will allow you to focus on class meetings. If you do not have access to (1) – (3), it is very unlikely that you will be able to pass this course.

**LATE WORK:** Extensions *on paper assignments* are granted liberally as long as you have received permission from the instructor. Late papers submitted without a granted extension will be penalized 10% for every day past the official deadline. Extensions on quizzes, exams, and forum posts will require a formal excuse with evidence, such as a medical note or a note from a parent in the case of a family emergency.

**ACCESSIBILITY AND ACCOMMODATIONS:** If you need to arrange for accommodations for a disability, please let me know. For Accessibility Resources & Services see the ARS website: <https://ars.unc.edu/>

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** Academic dishonesty is a serious offense at UNC. All students are expected to adhere to the UNC Honor Code. Please make yourself familiar with the university's policies on plagiarism. It may be helpful to take the UNC plagiarism tutorial: <http://www.lib.unc.edu/instruct/plagiarism>

**TITLE IX RESOURCES:** Any student who is impacted by discrimination, harassment, interpersonal (relationship) violence, sexual violence, sexual exploitation, or stalking is encouraged to seek resources on campus or in the community. Please contact the Director of Title IX Compliance (Adrienne Allison – [Adrienne.allison@unc.edu](mailto:Adrienne.allison@unc.edu)), Report and Response Coordinators in the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office ([reportandresponse@unc.edu](mailto:reportandresponse@unc.edu)), Counseling and Psychological Services (confidential), or the Gender Violence Services Coordinators ([gvsc@unc.edu](mailto:gvsc@unc.edu); confidential) to discuss your specific needs. Additional resources are available at [safe.unc.edu](http://safe.unc.edu).

**COUNSELING & PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES:** Particularly during this time of pandemic, you may find yourself in need of support. CAPS is strongly committed to addressing the mental health needs of a diverse student body through timely access to consultation and connection to clinically appropriate services, whether for short- or long-term needs. Go to their website: [www.caps.unc.edu](http://www.caps.unc.edu) or visit their facilities on the third floor of the Campus Health Service building for a walk-in evaluation to learn more.

**GRADING SCALE:**

F	D-	D	D+	C-	C	C+	B-	B	B+	A-	A
0	62	65	68	72	75	78	82	85	88	92	95

**READING & FILM ASSIGNMENTS**

**REQUIRED TEXTS:** All readings for this course will be made available on Sakai.

**REQUIRED FILMS:** You will be required to access four films:

- (1) *Smooth Talk*, Directed by Joyce Chopra (via Dropbox)
- (2) *Persona*, Directed by Ingmar Bergman (via Dropbox)
- (3) *Moonlight*, Directed by Barry Jenkins (via UNC Library)
- (4) *Mala Mala*, Directed by Antonio Santini & Dan Sickles (via Dropbox)
- (5) *Disclosure*, Directed by Sam Feder (via Netflix)

(1), (2), and (4) will be made available to students for free via our course Dropbox folder. (3) is the only film that may require special purchase (unless one already has access to Netflix). **Please note** that these films should be treated no less seriously than the assigned readings and will require careful attention, note-taking, and (probably) multiple viewings. Note again that *Smooth Talk* will be the subject of your first paper assignment – the others will be relevant to your Midterm Exam, Final Exam, Reading Quizzes, and possibly your Final Paper (depending on the topic you choose).

**OPTIONAL TEXTS:** A number of the texts below are labelled “Optional”. These readings are recommended for those who are especially interested in the topics included. Although these readings are highly recommended, none is required.

## CLASS SCHEDULE

### Week 1

#### Oppression, Sexism, & Sex

##### **Mon. June 28<sup>th</sup>**

Introduction to Class

Carefully read the Syllabus before class and arrive with questions.

Also please read the LGBTQ+ Glossary (and have it handy throughout the session).

##### **Tues. June 29<sup>th</sup> – 1<sup>st</sup> Forum Post Due. Team P: Mon. by midnight.**

**Team L**: Tues. by 1pm.

Marilyn Frye, “Oppression”

*Optional*: Maya Angelou, “Caged Bird”

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/48989/caged-bird>

##### **Wed. June 30<sup>th</sup>**

Marilyn Frye, “Sexism”

##### **Thurs. July 1<sup>st</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup> Forum Post Due. Team L: Wed. by midnight.**

**Team P**: Thurs. by 1pm.

Peggy Orenstein, “What Young Women Believe About Their Own Sexual Pleasure”  
(TedTalk video)

[https://www.ted.com/talks/peggy\\_orenstein\\_what\\_young\\_women\\_believe\\_about\\_their\\_own\\_sexual\\_pleasure?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/peggy_orenstein_what_young_women_believe_about_their_own_sexual_pleasure?language=en)

*Optional*: Rebecca Kukla, “Sex Talks” (Aeon article)

<https://aeon.co/essays/consent-and-refusal-are-not-the-only-talking-points-in-sex>

##### **Fri. July 2<sup>nd</sup>**

*Smooth Talk* (Film), Directed by Joyce Chopra

*Optional*: Joyce Carol Oates, “Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?”  
(Short story on which *Smooth Talk* was partly based)

*Optional*: Recent interview with Joyce Chopra, Joyce Carol Oates, & Laura Dern

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jOrTW2dLYCo>

**\*Reading Quiz 1: Due no later than Saturday, July 3<sup>rd</sup> at 11:55pm.**

### Week 2

#### Psychological Dimensions of Oppression

**Mon. July 5<sup>th</sup>**: No class. Independence Day.

**Tues. July 6<sup>th</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> Forum Post Due.** **Team P:** Mon. midnight.  
**Team L:** Tues. 1pm.

Sandra Bartky, “Toward A Phenomenology of Feminist Consciousness”

**Wed. July 7<sup>th</sup>**

Sandra Bartky, “On Psychological Oppression”

**Thurs. July 8<sup>th</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> Forum Post Due.** **Team L:** Wed. by midnight.  
**Team P:** Thurs. by 1pm.

Charlotte Perkins Gilman, “The Yellow Wallpaper” (Short Story)

**Fri. July 9<sup>th</sup>**

*Persona* (Film), Directed by Ingmar Bergman

**\*Reading Quiz 2: Due Saturday July 10<sup>th</sup> by 11:55pm.**

**\*FIRST PAPER\*: Due Sunday, July 11<sup>th</sup> no later than noon.**

### **Week 3** **Race & Intersectionality**

**Mon. July 12<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> Forum Post Due.** **Team P:** Sun. by midnight.  
**Team L:** Mon. by 1pm.

Kimberle Crenshaw, “The Urgency of Intersectionality” (TedTalk video)  
[https://www.ted.com/talks/kimberle\\_crenshaw\\_the\\_urgency\\_of\\_intersectionality?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/kimberle_crenshaw_the_urgency_of_intersectionality?language=en)

Kimberle Crenshaw, “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex”  
(**Read only: pp. 139 – 140 & pp. 152-167**, i.e., skip Section I)

*Optional:* bell hooks, “Black Women: Shaping Feminist Theory”  
& “Feminism: A Movement to End Sexist Oppression”

**Tues. July 13<sup>th</sup>**

Angela Davis, “The Approaching Obsolescence of Housework”

**Wed. July 14<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> Forum Post Due.** **Team L:** Tues. by midnight.  
**Team P:** Wed. by 1pm.

Audre Lorde, “Age, Race, Class and Sex: Women Redefining Difference”  
Audre Lorde, “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House”

**Thurs. July 15<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> Forum Post Due.** **Team P:** Wed. by midnight.  
**Team L:** Thurs. by 1pm.

Toni Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* (Selections from Dropbox folder)

**Fri. July 16<sup>th</sup>**

*Moonlight* (Film), Directed by Barry Jenkins

*Optional:* “Moonlight Musings & Motherhood: On Paula, Teresa and the Complicated Role of (Bad) Black Mamas in Film”

<https://www.crunkfeministcollective.com/2016/10/28/moonlight-musings-motherhood-on-paula-teresa-and-the-complicated-role-of-bad-black-mamas-in-film/>

*Optional:* Sikivu Hutchinson, “Moonlight, Black Boy and Teachable Moments”

<https://thefeministwire.com/2017/03/moonlight-black-boy-teachable-moments/>

**\*Reading Quiz 3: Due Saturday July 17<sup>th</sup> by 11:55pm.**

**\*MIDTERM EXAM\*: Due Sunday, July 18<sup>th</sup> no later than noon.**

**Week 4**

**Trans Philosophy, Challenging the Binary, and Trans Media**

**Mon. July 19<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> Forum Post Due. Team L: Sun. by midnight.**

**Team P: Mon. by 1pm.**

Talia Mae Bettcher, “What is Trans Philosophy?”

**(Only required to read:** pp. 644-654)

**Tues. July 20<sup>th</sup>**

Talia Mae Bettcher, “Trapped in the Wrong Theory”

**(Only required to read:** pp. 383-397)

**Wed. July 21<sup>st</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> Forum Post Due. Team P: Tues. by midnight.**

**Team L: Wed. by 1pm.**

Robin Dembroff, “Why Be Non-Binary?” (Aeon article)

**Thurs. July 22<sup>nd</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> Forum Post Due. Team L: Wed. by midnight.**

**Team P: Thurs. by 1pm.**

*Mala Mala* (Film), Directed by Antonio Santini & Dan Sickles

**Fri. July 23<sup>rd</sup>**

*Disclosure* (Netflix Film), Directed by Sam Feder

**\*Reading Quiz 4: Due no later than Saturday July 24<sup>th</sup> at 11:55pm.**

**Week 5**  
**Resistance!**

**Mon. July 26<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> Forum Post Due.** **Team P:** Sun. by midnight.  
**Team L:** Mon. by 1pm.

Marilyn Frye, “Some Reflections on Separatism and Power”

*Optional:* Marilyn Frye, “History and Responsibility”

Maya Angelou, “Still I Rise”

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/46446/still-i-rise>

**Tues. July 27<sup>th</sup>**

Mikki Kendall, *Hood Feminism*, Introduction  
& Ch. 1: “Solidarity is Still for White Women”

**Wed. July 28<sup>th</sup>**

Tamara Fakhoury, “Quiet Resistance: The Value of Personal Defiance”

*Special assignment before class:* Write down at least **one** question about Tamara’s paper. Tamara will give a brief summary of the major themes in her paper and then she will spend the rest of our class answering your questions. Please come prepared!

*Optional:* Tamara Fakhoury, “Eight Dimensions of Resistance”

**Thurs. July 29<sup>th</sup>**

Final Review & Reflections

**\*Reading Quiz 5: Due no later than Friday July 30<sup>th</sup> at 11:55pm.**

**\*FINAL EXAM\*: Due Saturday July 31<sup>st</sup> no later than midnight.**

**\*FINAL PAPER\*: Due Monday, August 2<sup>nd</sup> no later than 2:30 pm.**