



## **Course Syllabus: Feminist Philosophy**

College of Humanities and Social Sciences

PHIL-2223/4223 Section 101

Fall 2024

### **Contact Information**

*Instructor:* Dr. Tyler M. Williams

*Office:* Bea Wood 236

*Office hours:* Mon/Wed 11:00-12:00; Tues/Thurs 8:30-9:30; Tues 1:00-2:00

*Office Phone:* (940) 397-4125

*E-mail:* [tyler.williams@msutexas.edu](mailto:tyler.williams@msutexas.edu)

### **Course Catalogue Description**

A historical and theoretical survey of feminist philosophy.

### **Unofficial Description for this Semester**

How does 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century feminist philosophy transform such seemingly hardened philosophical concepts as autonomy, freedom, subjectivity, identity, and so on? We will ask in particular how the “situatedness” of “woman” both calls into question and also revitalizes the very task of philosophy. Of particular importance this semester will be to study how feminist philosophers develop the urgent demand to think feminism intersectionally. In short, what are the historical shortcomings of past feminist ideas, and how have later feminists broadened feminist philosophy to include critiques of class, race, colonialism, and other forms of social power?

### **Textbook & Instructional Materials:**

Textbooks have all been ordered through the Follett Campus Bookstore. However, you are welcome to source your books wherever you choose. Please be sure to get these specific editions in hard copies (unless you need an e-text to accommodate a disability):

- Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books.
- Beauvoir, Simone. *The Second Sex*, trans. Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevalier. New York: Vintage Books, 2011.
- Lorde, Audre. *Selected Works*, ed. Roxanne Gay. New York: W.W. Norton, 2020.
- Manne, Kate. *Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018.
- Srinivasan, Amia. *The Right to Sex: Feminism in the Twenty-First Century*. New York: Picador, 2021.

## **Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes**

Course objectives for PHIL-2223/4333 are:

1. To help students learn, understand, and evaluate the basic issues of feminist philosophy from both a historical and theoretical perspective.
2. To help students gain familiarity with important thinkers, theories, and texts in feminist philosophy.
3. To help students develop their skills in interpreting and critically analyzing texts.
4. To help students develop their skills in identifying and evaluating arguments as well as in formulating arguments of their own.
5. To help students improve their ability to read and write clearly and critically.
6. To help students appreciate the relevance of philosophical discourse in public and private life and to gain a greater understanding of their personal ethical commitments.
7. To inculcate students with a love of wisdom and a desire to live a philosophical life.

## **Student Handbook**

Refer to: [Student Handbook](#)

## **Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures**

Students are expected to uphold the standards of “Academic Integrity” set forth by the [MSU Student Honor Creed](#). The instructor will notify the appropriate authority of any infringement of academic honesty.

“Cheating” includes the unauthorized use of certain information, materials, or devices in exams, papers, or assignments. “Plagiarism” includes but is not limited to using the published or unpublished works of another person without recognition. This includes attempts to portray AI-generated material as evidence of a student’s personal knowledge of course content and/or academic skill. A student who makes use of plagiarized material, or anyone that profits from (or abets) cheating, will be dismissed from the course and referred to the Dean of Students.

Academic Dishonesty: Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work, not the individual to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the [Office of Student Conduct](#).

## **Moffett Library**

Moffett Library provides resources and services to support student’s studies and assignments, including books, peer-reviewed journals, databases, and multimedia materials accessible both on campus and remotely. The library offers media equipment checkout, reservable study rooms, and research assistance from librarians to help students effectively find, evaluate, and use information. Get started on this [Moffett Library webpage](#) to explore these resources and learn how to best utilize the library.

## Grading

*Table 1: Value of each assignment to overall course grade for PHIL-2223 only*

Assignments	Percent value
Protocol 1	10%
Protocol 2	10%
Engagement Report 1	5%
Engagement Report 2	5%
Essay (revisable)	50%
Engagement	20%
Total	100%

*Table 2: Value of each assignment to overall course grade for PHIL-4223 only*

Assignments	Percent value
Protocol 1	10%
Protocol 2	10%
Engagement Report 1	5%
Engagement Report 2	5%
Essay	20%
Final Research Project	30%
Engagement	20%
Total	100%

*Table 3: Value of final letter grades*

Letter grade	Percentage Range
A	90-100%
B	80-89%
C	70-79%
D	60-69%
F	0-59%

## Homework

Homework assignments comprise daily reading assignments, which should be completed by the time class session starts. Class activities will be based on the readings and will work under the assumption that students have come to class with the reading prepared. Students are encouraged to meet with the professor for help on reading strategies or on the reading's content. All other homework assignments are listed below.

### *Quizzes*

Currently, there are no quizzes required in this course. However, since quizzes are typically used to create external incentives for students to keep up with the required reading, the instructor reserves the right to augment the syllabus and add weekly quizzes if students are regularly attending class insufficiently prepared.

### *Essays*

Two essay deadlines are listed on the Course Schedule. Every student will pick **\*one** essay to write and submit by the appropriate deadline. Specific descriptions of topics per paper will be posted to D2L two weeks prior to each due date. Students are also welcomed to suggest their own essay ideas, which are subject to instructor approval *at least* a week in advance. Students registered for PHIL-2223 have the *option* to revise their paper *once* after it is graded. However, revisions to the essay must include (a) substantial revision that demonstrates serious consideration of feedback provided on the first draft and (b) a new second half of the essay, effectively doubling the length of the first draft, that extends the topic to include new material covered in the course since the first draft was submitted. The purpose of this revision policy is to demonstrate, first, the consistency and coherence across various ideas in our course and, second, the practical importance of thinking and writing about one idea from various perspectives over time. A specific assignment handout outlining essay requirements in more detail will be provided during the first week.

### *Protocols*

On Tuesday of (nearly) every week, class will start with a protocol presentation. Protocols will be no more than two pages long (single-spaced) and will provide a detailed, analytic summary of the course progress from the previous week. By the end of the semester, the collected protocols will give a full account of our entire course. The purpose of these protocols is twofold: (1) For the protocol writers, it is a writing assignment that tests student's ability to present concise yet detailed exegesis of course material beyond text summarization, and (2) for the rest of the class, it draws daily engagement away from a fixation on note taking and refocuses on discussion, creativity, and thinking. Each student will write two protocols. Typically, protocols will be written in pairs (i.e., in collaboration with another student in the course). A specific assignment handout outlining protocol requirements in more detail will be provided during the first week.

### *Engagement Reports*

Students will submit two self-assessment "engagement reports" throughout the semester. These reports are not individually graded; they are taken as a "completion" grade. Failure to write a report will reduce the overall engagement grade by a full letter grade. Given the self-reflective nature of our course material and the very strong emphasis our course places on engagement, these reports provide students the opportunity (a) to pause and reflect thoughtfully and creatively on their own accountability with the course objectives, (b) to provide "real time" feedback about the course, and (c) receive "real time" feedback from the instructor.

By the deadlines provided on the Course Schedule, students will submit to the appropriate D2L dropbox a 1-page, single-spaced reflection on the following prompt:

- Each philosophical tradition studied this semester recognizes that the small, mundane aspects of our lives—like going to class—contain wide-scale opportunities for reflection. In what ways has your participation in this course fostered a collaborative relation to the course material and contributed to the open, discussion-oriented nature of our classroom environment?
- What aspects of your engagement do you plan to retain, and what aspects will you improve (or, for the second Engagement Report, have since improved)?

- Are there ways that the course itself helps foster your engagement, or are there changes that can be made to the course to help you engage better?

### *Final Research Project (PHIL-4223 only)*

Students registered for this course at the upper level are required to submit a final research project. Development of the final project works in stages. Students will consult with the instructor to brainstorm ideas. Once a topic idea is approved, students will outline the project and, if needed, make appointments with the instructor to discuss their outline as it develops. Roughly one-third to one-half of the final project must incorporate the earlier essay assignment (and the revisions mentioned in the grading comments) in a substantial way. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that students recognize the development and continuity of ideas across feminist philosophy, as well as to see their own philosophical work as developmental, changeable, and ongoing.

### **Grading Policy**

Major written assignments in this course will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

#### *Content Development (Critical Thinking Skills)*

- Does the examination formulate a clear critical position with respect to the philosophical issue(s), problem(s), or theor(ies) under analysis?
- Does the examination recognize, understand, and clearly explain differing perspectives and/or possible objections to its own position?
- Does the examination provide clear, compelling arguments on behalf of its position?
- Does the examination approach philosophical problems in a creative fashion?

#### *Genre and Disciplinary Conventions (Communication Skills)*

- Does the examination provide a clear and correct explanation of the philosophical issue(s), problem(s), or theor(ies) under analysis?
- Is the examination well organized?
- Does the examination build upon the main idea/thesis statement?
- Does the examination evince a logical argumentative structure?
- Do the main ideas and arguments of the examination relate to one another logically?
- Does the examination adequately explain main ideas and concepts?
- Does the examination avoid “going off on tangents” or including otherwise irrelevant information?
- Does the examination use a clear and consistent writing style?
- Does the examination avoid significant grammatical and mechanical errors?

#### *Sources and Evidence (Communication Skills)*

- Does the examination use textual evidence correctly, responsibly, and effectively (e.g., by correctly using MLA citation and providing a correctly formatted MLA ‘Works Cited’ page)?

#### *Context (Personal Responsibility)*

- Does the examination explain and evaluate how historical, political, social, economic, and/or cultural context(s) inform the ethical assumptions of ideas, theories, and texts under analysis?

#### *Context (Social Responsibility)*

- Does the examination recognize, understand, and clearly explain differing perspectives and/or possible objections to its own position?

### **Extra Credit**

There are no extra credit assignments in this course. Students are encouraged to meet with the professor to strategize study skills and to clarify course content before the need for extra credit would arise.

### **Late Work**

Late submissions of written work must be arranged ahead of time with the instructor and include reasonable justification. Instances that warrant such rescheduling include documented illness, medical emergency, or official university activity. Otherwise, late submissions will be penalized one-third of a letter grade per day late. Late protocols will be deducted a full letter grade and must be presented at the very next class meeting. Otherwise, protocols still late after the next class meeting will not be accepted.

### **Important Dates**

*Last day for term schedule changes:* August 29, 2024

*Last Day to drop with a grade of "W:"* November 25, 2024

Refer to: [Drops, Withdrawals & Void](#)

### **Desire-to-Learn (D2L)**

Extensive use of the MSU D2L program is a part of this course. Each student is expected to be familiar with this program as it provides a primary source of communication regarding assignments, examination materials, and general course information. You can log into [D2L](#) through the MSU Homepage. If you experience difficulties, please contact the technicians listed for the program or contact your instructor.

### **Attendance**

Students are expected to attend all meetings of the classes in which they are enrolled. Although in general students are graded on intellectual effort and performance rather than attendance, absences may lower the student's grade where class attendance and class participation are deemed essential by the faculty member. Instructor's records will stand as evidence of absences. A student with excessive absences may be dropped from a course by the instructor, following a written or verbal warning. Any individual faculty member or college has the authority to establish an attendance policy, providing the policy is in accordance with the General University Policies.

Students in this course are graded on "Engagement," which includes but is not limited to attendance. You must be in attendance to be engaged, but attendance alone does not constitute engagement. "Engagement" describes the *minimum expectations* for good standing in this course: participating in class discussion, active listening, bringing the text with you to class, having done the assigned reading before coming to class, and refraining from disruptive and/or disrespectful behavior.

There is no distinction in this course between "excused" and "unexcused" absences (with the exception of absences for official university business, like, but not limited to, athletics). This means that students can miss class for any reason without penalty to their grade (i.e. they do not need to

provide an “excuse”), but any student whose cumulative absences amount to three weeks of missed class will be dropped from the course.

### **Online Computer Requirements**

Portions of this course make use of online materials. It is your responsibility to have (or have access to) a working computer in this class. **\*Assignments and tests are due by the due date, and personal computer technical difficulties will not be considered a reason for the instructor to allow students extra time to submit assignments, tests, or discussion postings.** Computers are available on campus in various areas of the buildings as well as the Academic Success Center. **\*Your computer being down is not an excuse for missing a deadline!!** There are many places to access your class! Our online classes can be accessed from any computer in the world that is connected to the internet. Contact your instructor immediately upon having computer trouble. If you have technical difficulties in the course, there is also a student helpdesk available to you. The college cannot work directly on student computers due to both liability and resource limitations however they are able to help you get connected to our online services. For help, log into [D2L](#).

### **Instructor Class Policies**

#### *Help*

Students should discuss any concerns with the instructor as soon as possible. Office hours are available throughout the week and appointments can also be made on a case-by-case basis.

#### *Recordings*

Lectures, lecture notes, assignments, etc. remain the intellectual property of the instructor. Students are not permitted to record class or disseminate the content of our class without the prior permission of the instructor. This policy does not apply to a student’s own hand-written notes.

#### *Conduct*

Actions that diminish the quality of other students’ learning will not be tolerated. Insults, slurs, or attacks of any kind will be grounds for permanent removal from the course. Every student is expected to engage with the course material in a responsible and respectful manner. This course requires discussion of a diverse array of philosophical ideas. Students are likely to find some ideas popular and others unpopular. That’s normal. Neither the course nor the instructor will defend any one philosophical viewpoint except insofar as it advances the teaching outcomes of the course. Therefore, disagreement is normal in classes of this nature; disagreement is conducive to positive learning outcomes, regardless of whether this disagreement pertains between texts themselves, between texts and readers, or between students. Disagreement that turns negative, derogatory, hostile, or otherwise demeaning *in any way* will not be tolerated in class.

#### *Course Texts*

Please bring readings to class on the day due, and please bring the hard copy (no e-text, unless it is needed to accommodate a disability registered with the Office of Disability Support Services).

#### *Personal Technology*

All personal electronic devices must remain stowed for the duration of the class session. Unless permitted to accommodate a disability officially recognized by and registered with the Office of

Disability Support Services, all notes must be taken by pen/pencil on paper rather than a laptop. This policy exists to enhance engagement by mitigating distraction.

### *Email*

Check emails regularly. This is the only way students will be informed about class cancellations or any changes to the course. Your instructor will email you via D2L. Therefore, either make sure you check your D2L email regularly, or change the settings of your D2L inbox to reroute your D2L emails to a preferred email address. Please allow 24 hours for a reply to all emails.

### *Use of AI-generated Content in Writing Assignments*

Unless explicitly permitted in the individual assignment description, students are not allowed to produce written work that includes content and/or revisions that rely on AI-generated content. Please refer to the Academic Misconduct policy outlined above. Students suspected of using AI-generated content in their writing assignments will be notified by the professor and will be required to meet with the professor within five business days of notification. Failure to meet with the professor after notification will be treated as an admission of guilt.

### **Course Content Warning and Student Acknowledgement**

This syllabus has been distributed to all enrolled students and discussed in class on the first day of the semester. All students who remain enrolled in this course after the first session acknowledge the terms, requirements, content, and expectations outlined in this syllabus.

Course content will include discussions of human sexuality and will use terminology that, while always respectful, might not be common in other classes. At times, course content will also address various structures of sexual violence, misogyny, and gender oppression. At other times, the course will evaluate criticisms of various forms of complicity in sexist or racist structures. It is inevitable that students will be exposed to challenging ideas. At all times, these ideas will be treated with respect because the ability to engage thoughtfully with challenging ideas is a hallmark of intellectual maturity. Students who already know themselves to be unwilling to handle these topics with the intellectual seriousness that this course requires should consider dropping the class.

Some course content might be “triggering” for some students due to their personal circumstances and backgrounds. Students with concerns about possible course content should bring these concerns to the attention of the instructor during the first week of the semester to determine whether this course is a good fit. Additionally, any student struggling (for any reason) with the course content later in the semester is encouraged to consult with the instructor.

### **Change of Schedule**

A student dropping a course (but not withdrawing from the University) within the first 12 class days of a regular semester or the first four class days of a summer semester is eligible for a 100% refund of applicable tuition and fees. Dates are published in the Schedule of Classes each semester.

### **Refund and Repayment Policy**

A student who withdraws or is administratively withdrawn from Midwestern State University (MSU) may be eligible to receive a refund for all or a portion of the tuition, fees, and room/board charges



that were paid to MSU for the semester. However, if the student received financial aid (federal/state/institutional grants, loans, and/or scholarships), all or a portion of the refund may be returned to the financial aid programs. As described below, two formulas (federal and state) exist in determining the amount of the refund. (Examples of each refund calculation will be made available upon request).

### **Services for Students with Disabilities**

In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make an application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Clark Student Center, Room 168, (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to [Disability Support Services](#).

### **College Policies**

*Campus Carry Rules/Policies*

Refer to: [Campus Carry Rules and Policies](#)

*Smoking/Tobacco Policy*

College policy strictly prohibits the use of tobacco products in any building owned or operated by WATC. Adult students may smoke only in the outside designated smoking areas at each location.

*Alcohol and Drug Policy*

To comply with the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989 and subsequent amendments, students and employees of Midwestern State are informed that strictly enforced policies are in place which prohibit the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of any illicit drugs, including alcohol, on university property or as part of any university-sponsored activity. Students and employees are also subject to all applicable legal sanctions under local, state, and federal law for any offenses involving illicit drugs on University property or at University-sponsored activities.

*Campus Carry*

Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes as prohibited. The new Constitutional Carry law does not change this process. Concealed carry still requires a License-to-carry permit, and openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit [Campus Carry](#).

*Active Shooter*

The safety and security of our campus is the responsibility of everyone in our community. Each of us has an obligation to be prepared to appropriately respond to threats to our campus, such as an active aggressor. Please review the information provided by the MSU Police Department regarding the options and strategies we can all use to stay safe during difficult situations. For more information, visit [MSUReady – Active Shooter](#). Students are encouraged to watch the video entitled

"Run. Hide. Fight." which may be electronically accessed via the University police department's webpage: ["Run. Hide. Fight."](#)

### **Mandatory Reporting**

Under Title IX, all MSU faculty are "mandatory reporters" of any disclosure from a student of sexual assault, abuse, harassment, dating violence, stalking, or other forms of sexual misconduct. It is the legal responsibility of a "mandatory reporter" to notify the Title IX coordinator if a student reports being the victim of any of the aforementioned abuses. For more information, please visit the [Sexual Misconduct Resource](#).

### **Grade Appeal Process**

Update as needed. Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University [MSU Catalog](#)

**\*Notice:** Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor.

### **Course Schedule**

Readings are listed according to their due date. Unless indicated otherwise, all readings come from the required course textbook. Texts marked "(PDF)" can be for free on our D2L course page.

#### *Week 1*

- Tuesday 8/27: Course introductions.
- Thursday 8/29: Catherine Malabou, *Changing Difference* pp. 100-112 (PDF)

#### *Week 2*

- Tuesday 9/3: Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* pp. 3-17
- Thursday 9/5: Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* pp. 3-17 continued

#### *Week 3*

- Tuesday 9/10: Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* pp. 21, 44-48, 68, 148-156. Protocol 1 due.
- Thursday 9/12: Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, pp. 176-178, 183-194, 198-201, 268-274

#### *Week 4*

- Tuesday 9/17: Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* pp. 279, 283, 376-377, 661-664. Protocol 2 due.
- Thursday 9/19: Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* pp. 721-766 (selections TBD)

#### *Week 5*

- Tuesday 9/24: Judith Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution" (PDF). Protocol 3 due.
- Thursday 9/26: Judith Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution" continued

#### *Week 6*

- Tuesday 10/1: Discussion of the *Barbie* movie with Dr. Melissa Nivens (guest lecture). Protocol 4 due.
- Thursday 10/3: Combahee River Collective statement (PDF)

#### *Week 7*

- Tuesday 10/8: Audre Lorde, "Poetry is not a Luxury," "The Transformation of Silence into Action," and "Uses of the Erotic" (pp. 3-14, 29-37). Protocol 5 due.
- Thursday 10/10: Audre Lorde, "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House" (pp. 39-43)
- Paper #1 due to the D2L assignments folder by 11:59 p.m. on 10/14

#### Week 8

- Tuesday 10/15: Audre Lorde, "Sexism," "The Uses of Anger," and "I Am Your Sister" (pp. 45-65, 73-80). Protocol 6 due.
- Thursday 10/17: Luce Irigaray, "Any Theory of the 'Subject' Has Always Been Appropriated by the 'Masculine'" (PDF)
- Recommended reading: Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color" (PDF)
- Engagement Report #1 due to the D2L assignments folder by 11:59 p.m. on 10/21

#### Week 9

- Tuesday 10/22: Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera* chs. 1-4. Protocol 7 due.
- Thursday 10/24: Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera* ch. 5-6

#### Week 10

- Tuesday 10/29: Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera* ch. 7. Protocol 8 due.
- Thursday 10/31: Guest lecture on Anzaldúa's poetry by Dr. Claudia Montoya
- Paper #2 due to the D2L assignments folder by 11:59 p.m. on 11/4

#### Week 11

- Tuesday 11/5: Amia Srinivasan, *The Right to Sex* pp. 33-71. Protocol 9 due.
- Thursday 11/7: Amia Srinivasan, *The Right to Sex* pp.73-91

#### Week 12

- Tuesday 11/12: Amia Srinivasan, *The Right to Sex* pp. 123-148. Protocol 10 due.
- Thursday 11/14: Amia Srinivasan, *The Right to Sex* pp.149-179
- Recommended reading: Angela Davis, "Feminism and Abolition" (PDF)
- Engagement Report #2 due to D2L assignments folder by 11:59 p.m. on 11/18

#### Week 13

- Tuesday 11/19: Kate Manne, *Down Girl* ch. 1. Protocol 11 due.
- Thursday 11/21: Kate Manne, *Down Girl* ch. 2

#### Week 14

- Tuesday 11/26: Kate Manne, *Down Girl* chs. 3-5 (pp. 78-86, 128-158, 173-176). Protocol 12 due.
- Thursday 11/28: No class. Thanksgiving.

#### Week 15

- Tuesday 12/3: Kate Manne, *Down Girl* Conclusion (pp. 279-307)
- Thursday 12/5: Sarah Ahmed, "Killjoy Manifesto" (PDF)

#### Final Project

- Due: Thursday, December 12 by 11:59 p.m.
- Location: D2L assignments folder
- **\*Important:** There is no “final exam” for this course. However, the exam slot allocated by the university to our specific class time is 1:00-3:00 p.m. on Thursday, December 12. Students who wish to use this time slot for last-minute help on their final project are welcome to use this period as an extended office hours session.