

PHILOSOPHY 3WP3: Modern Women Philosophers

Term: Fall 2022

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Office hours: Wednesday and Friday 12:30-1:30pm, or by appointment.

Course Objectives

Course Description

What does it mean to be free or to be constrained? This course is an exploration of some of the ways that women philosophers working in Europe and North America in the 17th to 19th centuries asked and answered this question. We will work through the conceptions and implications of freedom and constraint across a host of topics, including marriage, sex, class, suffrage, and racial (in)justice. Though contemporary thinking on the nature and manifestation of freedom and constraint are importantly different from those operating hundreds of years ago, we will trace out how present debates are informed and illuminated by those in our history.

Course Learning Outcomes

Over the course of this semester, you will learn how to:

- Critically read, analyze, and assess philosophical arguments;
- Discuss philosophical topics in a respectful, engaging, and constructive way;
- Engage in substantial self-reflection;
- Construct clear and persuasive arguments about topics and figures in the history of social and political philosophy;
- Revise one's understanding of philosophical histories and canons; and
- Develop familiarity with philosophical views on several important philosophical themes.

Textbooks, Materials, & Fees

Required texts:

None; readings to be provided as pdfs on Avenue.

Method of Assessment

Your grade in this course will be determined by the following:

1. **Active participation: 15%**
Due: **Ongoing**

Participation is very important. Philosophy is something that we do; it is an activity. You need to attend class and be an active participant – this means listening carefully to the content of the lecture and to your classmates' questions and comments, as well as contributing your own thoughts or concerns to discussions and activities. While it can be intimidating to speak in class, remember that your peers probably feel the same way, and that we will be careful to maintain a friendly and open-minded attitude in order that all contributions will be welcome and treated with the principle of

charity – that is, we will all try our best to understand what others say in the spirit of how it is intended.

Active participation will be graded on a good faith basis; attendance is necessary but not sufficient. Students must engage with their peers in the discussion activities and group work which will occur during Friday classes.

2. Reflection mini assignment: 15%

Part 1: 5% **Due: Week 1 (in class)**

Part 2: 10% **Due: Week 13 (in class)**

This assignment is about critical self-reflection. In week 2, you will submit approx. 500 words describing your answers to two questions on physical paper in class. I will then return these to you in week 11, at which point you will answer those same questions again (approx. 500-750 words), albeit in light of the discussions and material from the course. How have your views changed, if at all? What have you learned? This assignment is graded on a good-faith effort basis (that is, a reasonable attempt = pass = 10%, while no attempt/not a genuine attempt = fail = 0%).

3. Exegesis paper: 15%

Due: Week 3 – 21 September 2022

In this short assignment (800 word hard limit), your task will be to provide exegesis on one of the recent readings (selected from a list to be provided on the rubric; writing on anything else will not be graded). An exegesis is akin to a critical summary; you show how some view/argument works – it is structural. Mere summary of content/claims/views will be insufficient. An exegesis focuses on how some view/argument works, how it fits – this is not just chronological but causal. It is not, however, evaluative – this assignment does not require that you say whether the argument is good, bad, right, or wrong. Instead, it provides a close reading and discussion of some part of an assigned reading (i.e., not the whole view). See assignment instructions/rubric on Avenue.

4. Unconventional philosophical writing assignment: 15%

Due: Week 7 – 26 October 2022

There are lots of ways to do philosophy, and not all of them are writing the (now) standard argumentative papers. For this assignment, you will choose from the (below) list of kind of “unconventional” writing assignments. The point of all of them is to engage with the views and concerns of the folks we’re reading in this course. You should always be aiming to persuade your reader (me), but not necessarily by formal arguments. We’ll discuss more in class; see also the instructions/rubric on Avenue.

“Unconventional” choices: pick **one** of the following (and indicate on the assignment which it is).

- OpEd/Letter to the Editor (*you must specify contemporary or historical newspaper*)
- Longform poem (must see Dr. Forbes to discuss in advance)
- Journal entry/entries from perspective of philosopher
- Letter from a philosopher

5. Final writing assignment*: 40%

DRAFT due: **Week 11 – 23 November 2022: 5%**

PEER REVIEW due: **Week 12 – 1 December 2022: 5%**

FINAL due: **During exam period: 30%**

The final writing assignment will be of the standard philosophical form – you will be tasked with developing a position/argument and setting it out with an aim to persuade your reader. This means you will provide an exegesis of that with which you are concerned, then offer an argument – a set of reasons and reasons for reasons for adopting some position about your subject matter. See Avenue for instructions and the rubric.

Please also note, however, that this has three deadlines. The **DRAFT** and **PEER REVIEW** will be graded on a good-faith effort, pass-fail. For the former, did the student provide an actual draft of their paper? If yes, 5%. Did the student make a good-faith effort to provide meaningful support to their assigned peer using the provided form by the deadline? If yes, 5%. Please **also** note that students may opt out of the peer review process, in which case they will have the 10% for the draft and peer review allocated to the final, making the one version they submit at the deadline worth 40% of their grade. However, **this must be done in writing at least 48hrs in advance of the deadline**; opt-outs can only be accepted by the instructor (via forbeas@mcmaster.ca).

*Should you wish to do a completely different kind of assignment (and one which is also substantially different from your “Unconventional” assignment), please make an appointment to discuss with Dr. Forbes. Students may wish, for example, to create a “podcast” episode, a physical work of art with philosophical analysis/import, a performance piece, a short story – all kinds of creative assignments I’ve received in the past. Students may pursue this approach **only after** confirming their project/approach with Dr. Forbes.

Policy on Missed Work, Extensions, and Late Penalties

Extensions can be granted only by the instructor, not the TAs, and will be granted at the instructor’s discretion. To request one, email the instructor more than 24 hours in advance of the deadline. SAS accommodations operate independently of extensions.

If you want to use an MSAF, recall that they apply only to work under 25% and must be filed within three days of the deadline. An MSAF will not excuse you from the work.

Late penalties:

When uploading assignments to Avenue, make sure to allow a couple of minutes before the deadline in case of internet/Avenue issues. **Everyone receives a five-minute grace period after the deadline**, i.e., if the deadline is 11:59pm, no late penalty will be applied up to 12:04am, though 12:05am and after will be subject to the late penalty. If it looks like there’s going to be a technical issue, email it to me before the deadline to ensure that your submission isn’t late.

Otherwise, every 24 hrs after the deadline you will lose 10% off the top of the final grade of the paper. So, if you turn in a paper that scores an 83% two days late, it becomes a 63% paper. There is no upper limit on this penalty.

Missed work:

Any work which does not have an extension obtained in writing (via email)/SAS-approved accommodation, and which remains unsubmitted more than 96 hrs after the deadline, will receive a zero.

Other Course Information

Behaviour

It is deeply important that we maintain an attitude of respect for one another and for the subjects we cover in this class, especially because many of them are quite personal/sensitive/important. Philosophy is, at its core, a practice of critical thinking. This often consists in making arguments and responding to one's interlocutors in ways that interrogate their positions and claims; we will consider reasons for and against views in a way that incorporates an underlying commitment to trust, empathy, and cooperative inquiry. Throughout our discussions of some sensitive issues and concerns, we will maintain an attitude of respect even – especially – when we disagree with the views at hand. We will discuss specific practices of class conduct in the first class.

Electronic Devices

I would usually include a section here on the evidence that suggests that distractions via one's devices undermine academic success through interference with attention, learning, participation, etc. Since we are meeting online, such reminders are moot.

Email

I will communicate with you via email and Avenue Announcement, particularly if something changes in the course. Please ensure that you are receiving these notifications. My general policy is to respond to emails within 48 hours of receiving them, not including weekends; however, I will not discuss grades over email, and would prefer that longer questions about assignments are addressed in virtual office hours. Please check the syllabus and the (forthcoming) detailed instructions on assignments, etc. before emailing me about them.

Grades

I am committed to a fair and unbiased grading process. As such, all assignments must be submitted with no identifying information other than your student number. This allows the teaching team to grade anonymously. If you have concerns about this process, please contact me and we will discuss possible solutions. If you are unsatisfied with your grade and would like to appeal it, the process is as follows. Between 24 and 72 hours after the grades are posted, explain in writing – in a way that responds to every single comment – how you think the grade/comments are inappropriate for your assignment. I promise to consider these appeals and, if the appeal is accepted, to re-examine your assignment. Please note, however, that a successful request for regrading can result in your mark going up or down.

Accessibility and Support Services

I want all of you to succeed and flourish philosophically. There are, of course, many ways to learn; I will strive to adapt to your needs, but this means that you must tell me how you learn best. Please feel free to contact me via email or in office hours to let me know what works for you.

Students with disabilities or relevant diagnoses are strongly encouraged to make use of services here at the University. If you require any accommodations in light of any diagnoses or disabilities, please

contact Student Accessibility Services. You do not need to disclose any details of any of these matters with me; once you've been in contact with SAS, we will only discuss how to accommodate your needs given practical details of the class.

Turnitin

In this course we will be using a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal plagiarism. Students will be expected to submit their work electronically to Turnitin.com so that it can be checked for academic dishonesty. Students who do not wish to submit their work to Turnitin.com must still submit a copy to the instructor. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to Turnitin.com. All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, etc.). To see the Turnitin.com Policy, please go to www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity

Academic Integrity

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, located at <https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

- plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
- improper collaboration in group work.
- copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

Authenticity / Plagiarism Detection

Some courses may use a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. For courses using such software, students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via Avenue to Learn (A2L) plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish to submit their work through A2L and/or Turnitin.com must still submit an electronic and/or hardcopy to the instructor. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to Turnitin.com or A2L. All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). To see the Turnitin.com Policy, please go to www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

Courses with an On-Line Element

Some courses use on-line elements (e.g. e-mail, Avenue to Learn (A2L), LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in a course that uses on-line elements will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

Online Proctoring

Some courses may use online proctoring software for tests and exams. This software may require students to turn on their video camera, present identification, monitor and record their computer activities, and/or lockdown their browser during tests or exams. This software may be required to be installed before the exam begins.

Conduct Expectations

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities (the "Code"). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, whether in person or online.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students' access to these platforms.

Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or sas@mcmaster.ca e-mail to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University's Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities policy.

Email correspondence policy

It is the policy of the Faculty of Humanities that all email communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from each student's own McMaster University email account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. Instructors will delete emails that do not originate from a McMaster email account.

Modification of course outlines

The University reserves the right to change dates and/or deadlines etc. for any or all courses in the case of an emergency situation or labour disruption or civil unrest/disobedience, etc. If a modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with an explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. Any significant changes should be made in consultation with the Department Chair.

Request for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF)

In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar "Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work".

Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous and Spiritual Observances (RISO)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the RISO policy. Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office normally within 10 working days of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

Copyright and Recording

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, including lectures by University instructors.

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

Extreme Circumstances

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.

Schedule and Readings

Week 1 – Sept. 7 & 9: Introduction

- Marie de Gournay, *The Ladies' Complaint*

IN CLASS: Reflection mini assignment – Part 1

Week 2 – Sept. 14 & 16: Education

- Margaret Fell Fox, “Women’s Speaking Justified”
- Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, “Reply to Sor Filotea”

Week 3 – Sept. 21 & 23: Freedom & Civic Participation

- Gabrielle Suchon, *On The Celibate Life, Freely Chosen* (excerpt)
- Sojourner Truth, “Ain’t I a Woman?”

EXEGESIS PAPER DUE 21 September 11:59pm

Week 4 – Sept. 28: Freedom & Civic Participation

- Olympe de Gouges, “Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen”
- *September 30th is the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation – no class*

Week 5 – Oct. 5 & 7: Freedom & Civic Participation

- Victoria C. Woodhull, “Constitutional Equality”
- Emma Goldman, “Anarchism” & “Woman Suffrage”

READING WEEK OCTOBER 10-14

Week 6 – Oct. 19 & 21: Freedom & Civic Participation

- Maria W. Stewart “African Rights and Liberty” (African Masonic Hall Address)
- Mary Church Terrell, “The Progress of Colored Women”

Week 7 – Oct. 26 & 28: Racism, Slavery, & Abolition

- Phillis Wheatley, “On Being Brought from Africa to America”
- Anna Julia Cooper, *A Voice from the South: By a Black Woman of the South* (excerpt)

UNCONVENTIONAL...ASSIGNMENT DUE 26 October 11:59pm

Week 8 – Nov. 2 & 4: Racism, Slavery, & Abolition

- Lydia Marie Child, *An Appeal in Favor of that Class of Americans Called Africans* (excerpt)
- Maria. W. Stewart, “Franklin Hall Lecture”

Week 9 – Nov. 9 & 11: Racism, Slavery, & Abolition

- Ida B. Wells-Barnett, *Southern Horrors*
- Mary Church Terrell, “Lynching from a Negro’s Point of View”

Week 10 – Nov. 16 & 18: Marriage, Love, & Sex

- Mary Astell, *Some Reflections upon Marriage* (excerpt)
- Sarah Chapone, *The Hardships of the English Laws in Relation to Wives* (excerpt)
- Margaret Cavendish, *The Convent of Pleasure*

Week 11 – Nov. 23 & 25: Marriage, Love, & Sex

- Victoria Woodhull “And the Truth Shall Make You Free: A Speech on the Principles of Social Freedom” & “The Scare-Crows of Sexual Slavery”
- Emma Goldman, “Marriage and Love”

DRAFT of final paper due 23 November 11:59pm

Week 12 – Nov. 30 & Dec. 2: Marriage, Love, & Sex

- Hedwig Dohm, “Nietzsche on Women” & “On the Sexual Morality of Women”

PEER REVIEW due 1 December 11:59pm

Week 13 – Dec. 7: Wrap Up

- No reading!

IN CLASS: Reflection mini assignment – Part 2