



PHI 347:
Gender & Philosophy
with Dr. Sarah Vincent



Course Description

The advertised course description is as follows: “How has gender discrimination impacted the academic discipline of philosophy? In what ways are women challenging the philosophical canon? What can philosophy tell us about the causes of and solutions to the oppression of women? In what ways does that oppression intersect with race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, nationality, and socioeconomic status? In what ways does socialization shape concepts like ‘masculinity’? Does patriarchy hurt men too? This course will engage questions like these. All are welcome. Let’s work together to explore how academic philosophy has improved on this front, how it can continue to improve, and how it may be able to provide avenues of resistance to gender prejudice beyond the academy.”

To elaborate on the general description above, we will begin with discussions about how gendering practices and norms have impacted all of us as social beings, as well as philosophy as a discipline. From there, with some sense of the importance of both the personal and academic dimensions of gender in mind, we will shift to consider influential accounts of ‘gender,’ including those on offer from Irigaray and Butler. This will complete the first section of the course, motivating and introducing this area of philosophy. With this important stage setting completed, we can then move to the second section of the course, focusing specifically on how feminist philosophers are meaningfully reshaping historical philosophy, ethical philosophy, and political philosophy. The final section of the course will focus on intersectionality, with readings that will simultaneously highlight both shortcomings of some feminist philosophies as well as crucially important avenues for improvement.

Structure-wise, for most readings, there will be a class session dedicated to lecture/exposition, another to discussion/evaluation, and a third to in-class question/response activities. I find that most students truly benefit from this ‘I do, we do, you do’ approach to our time together; I hope you too will find the structure helpful.