

London School of Economics & Political Science
Department of Government
2021-2022

GV4H3 Feminist Political Theory
Lent Term 2022

Course instructor: Dr Sarah Goff (s.goff@lse.ac.uk)

Office: 3.08 Centre Building, office hours for LT to be announced

Availability: This course is available on the MPhil/PhD in Gender, MSc in Gender, MSc in Gender (Research), MSc in Gender, Development and Globalisation, MSc in Gender, Policy and Inequalities and MSc in Political Theory. This course is available with permission as an outside option to students on other programmes where regulations permit. This course has a limited number of places (it is controlled access) and demand is typically high. Priority is given to students in the MSc Political Theory programme.

This course is capped at 2 groups. The deadline for applications is 10:00 on Wednesday 22 September 2021. You will be informed of the outcome by 10:00 on Friday 24 September 2021.

Course content

This course covers some of the central debates in contemporary feminist political theory, with a particular emphasis on the legacy and usefulness of liberalism. The course focuses on debates and differences within feminist political theory, rather than justifications for, or defences of, feminist political theory. Among the problems raised are conceptions of the individual and individual autonomy; the relative invisibility of gender issues in mainstream literature on justice and equality; the tendency to conceive of equality in sex-blind terms; the tendency to presume a universally applicable set of norms. We consider the theoretical debates in relation to a number of contemporary political issues. Topics likely to be addressed include: feminism and contract, individualism and autonomy, equality and the politics of difference, marriage, and feminist perspectives on trans issues.

Teaching

This course provides a combination of seminars and lectures totalling 20 hours in the LT. This year, some or all of this teaching will be delivered through a combination of online and on-campus lectures and seminars. There will be a reading week in LT Week 6.

Formative coursework

Students will submit a short formative essay (up to 1500 words) and will be given feedback on this before submitting their assessed coursework.

Assessment

Essay (100%, 4000 words). Question prompts will be provided by the instructor.

Course outline:

- Week 1. 'One is not born, but rather becomes a woman'
- Week 2. Susan Moller Okin: Public and Private
- Week 3. Carole Pateman: Contract and Freedom
- Week 4. Iris Marion Young: Myth of Impartiality
- Week 5. Individual Choice and Empowerment
- Week 6. Reading Week
- Week 7. Marriage
- Week 8. Feminism and Lesbian Oppression
- Week 9. Body Markets
- Week 10. Feminist Perspectives on Trans Issues
- Week 11. Feminism in a Global Context

Course Readings:

Week 1: Introduction

In her classic book *The Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir explored the process of 'becoming' a woman, arguing that woman is defined as 'other', always by reference to man, who is defined as the norm. We take this as the starting point for exploring some of the issues around how to think about the relationship between sex and gender, male and female, masculine and feminine. We will introduce some of the main themes of the course: love, marriage, and family; gender as social construction and embodiment; individual choice and women's empowerment.

Essential reading

Simone de Beauvoir, 'Introduction' and 'Conclusion' in *The Second Sex* (1949)

Denise Riley, 'Does Sex Have a History?' in *Am I That Name? Feminism and the Category of 'Women' in History* (1988)

Background reading

Toril Moi, *What is a Woman? And Other Essays* (1999) pp. 4-54

Judith Butler, 'Sex and Gender in Simone de Beauvoir's *Second Sex*' *Yale French Studies* (1986)

Judith Butler, Chapter 1 in *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1999), pp. 1-44

Lena Gunnarsson, 'A Defence of the Category "Women"' *Feminist Theory* (2011)

Week 2: Susan Moller Okin – Public and Private

In her influential *Justice, Gender and the Family* (1989) Susan Okin developed scorching critiques of leading political philosophers of the time, including John Rawls, Alasdair MacIntyre, Robert Nozick and Michael Walzer. A recurrent theme in her arguments was that political theorists typically excluded the family from their analyses of equality and justice. We focus here on one of Okin's later essays and on a commentary about Okin's liberal ideas of freedom and equality.

Essential Reading

Susan Moller Okin, “‘Forty acres and a mule’ for women: Rawls and feminism” *Politics, Philosophy, Economics* (2005)

Nancy Rosenblum, ‘Okin’s Liberal Feminism as a Radical Political Theory’ in Debra Satz and Rob Reich (eds) *Towards a Humanist Justice: the Political Philosophy of Susan Moller Okin* (2010)

Background Reading

Susan Moller Okin, *Justice, Gender, and the Family* (1989)

bell hooks, Chapter 10: Revolutionary Parenting in *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* (1984)

Patricia Hill Collins, Chapter 3: Work, Family, and Women’s Oppression in *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (2000)

Ruth Abbey, ‘Back toward a Comprehensive Liberalism?’ *Political Theory* (2007)

Mary Lyndon Shanley, “No More relevance than One’s Eye Color”: Justice and a Society Without Gender in Debra Satz and Rob Reich (eds) *Towards a Humanist Justice: the Political Philosophy of Susan Moller Okin* (2010)

Martha Nussbaum, ‘Rawls and Feminism’ in S. Freeman (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Rawls* (2002) pp. 488-520

Alison Jaggar, ‘Okin and the Challenge of Essentialism’ in *Towards a Humanist Justice: the Political Philosophy of Susan Moller Okin* (2010), pp. 166-180

Elizabeth Brake, ‘Rawls and Feminism: What Should Feminists Make of Liberal Neutrality?’ *Journal of Moral Philosophy* (2004)

Ruth Abbey, ‘He Said She Said: the Okin-Rawls Debate’ *The Return of Feminist Liberalism* pp. 61-82

Week 3: Carole Pateman – Contract and Freedom

Contract has figured for centuries as a way of justifying or 'domesticating' hierarchical power. It was central to the development of liberalism in the 17th and 18th centuries, figuring strongly in the challenge to patriarchal conceptions of power; and became important again in the 20th century with the Rawlsian revival. For some feminists, being recognised as an equal partner in contract is a crucial way forward to gender equality; for others, it remains a trap. The issues reflect disagreement over whether the task of feminism is to extend to women freedoms already enjoyed by men, or more fundamentally to transform them. We focus here on Carole Pateman's critique of contract and on Kate Manne's argument about the kinds of entitlements that patriarchy bestows upon men.

Essential Reading

Carole Pateman, Chapter 1: ‘Contracting In’ in *The Sexual Contract* (1988)

Kate Manne, Chapter 4: ‘Taking His (Out)’ in *Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny* (2017)

Background Reading

Carole Pateman and Charles W. Mills, *Contract and Domination* (2007)

Nancy Fraser, ‘Beyond the Master/Subject Model: On Carole Pateman’s ‘The Sexual Contract’ in *Justice Interruptus: Critical Reflections on the ‘Postsocialist’ Condition* (1996)

Carole Pateman, ‘Self-Ownership and Property in the Person: Democratization and a Tale of Two Concepts’ (2002)

Anne Phillips, Chapter 1 in *Our Bodies, Whose Property?* (2013)

Janice Richardson, ‘The Social Contractarians and Contemporary Feminist Philosophy’ in *The Classic Social Contractarians: Critical Perspectives from Contemporary Feminist*

Philosophy and Law (2009)

Torrey Shanks, 'Affect, Critique, and the Social Contract' *Theory and Event* (2015)

Jean Hampton, 'Feminist Contractarianism' in *Varieties of Feminist Liberalism* (ed. Amy Baehr) (2004)

Anne Phillips, 'Free to Decide for Oneself' in *The Illusion of Consent* (eds. Daniel I. O'Neill, Mary Lyndon Shanley, Iris Marion Young) (2008)

Week 4: Iris Marion Young – Myth of Impartiality

In *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (1990) Iris Young challenges the ideal of impartiality, and argues for a conception of justice that starts from, rather than denying, difference. Her arguments have significantly shaped subsequent thinking about democracy and equality. Here we focus on Young's critique of impartiality, and on a commentary about engaging in identity politics as a response to oppression.

Essential Reading

Iris Marion Young, Chapter 4 in *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (1990)

Susan Bickford, 'Anti-Anti-Identity Politics: Feminism, Democracy, and the Complexities of Citizenship' *Hypatia* (2011)

Background Reading

Iris Marion Young, 'Polity and Group Difference' *Ethics*

Iris Marion Young, Chapter 1: Democracy and Justice in *Inclusion and Democracy* (2002)

Patricia Hill Collins, Chapter 11: Black Feminist Epistemology in *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (2000)

Judith Butler, 'Imitation and Gender Subordination' in *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader* (1993)

J. Squires, 'Representing groups, deconstructing identities' *Feminist Theory* (2001)

Wendy Brown, 'Wounded Attachments' *Political Theory* (1993)

Chris Armstrong, Chapter 5 in *Rethinking Equality: The Challenge of Equal Citizenship* (2006)

Adam Tebble, 'What is the Politics of Difference?' *Political Theory* (2002)

Anne Phillips, Chapter 2: Taking Difference Seriously in *Which Equalities Matter?* 1999

Audre Lorde, 'The Uses of Anger' *Feminist Studies Quarterly* (1997)

Kimberle Crenshaw, 'Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color,' *Stanford Law Review* 1991

Week 5: Individual Choice and Empowerment

Feminism is both deeply shaped by liberalism and in contestation with it, often regarding the liberal tradition as overly individualist, insufficiently sensitive to the material conditions for equality, and attached to a false gender neutrality. A further complaint is that liberalism's understanding of autonomy fails to recognise the 'connectedness' of people's lives, and/or operates with a 'masculinist' understanding of freedom. We will consider Martha Nussbaum's defense of liberal ideas of individual freedom to choose. In addition, we will consider a critique of autonomous choices ('autonomy fetishism') that offers the alternative idea of female empowerment.

Essential Reading

Martha Nussbaum, Chapter: The Feminist Critique of Liberalism in *Sex & Social Justice* (1999)

Serene Khader, 'Beyond Autonomy Fetishism: Affiliation with Autonomy in Women's Empowerment' *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities* (2016)

Background Reading

Serene Khader, *Adaptive Preferences and Women's Empowerment* (2011)

Clare Chambers, *Sex, Culture and Justice: The Limits of Choice* (2008)

Eléonore Lépinard, 'Autonomy and the Crisis of the Feminist Subject: Revisiting Okin's Dilemma' *Constellations* (2011)

Jennifer Nedelsky, 'Reconceiving Autonomy: Sources, Thoughts and Possibilities' *Yale Journal of Law and Feminism* (1989)

Beate Rossler, 'Problems with Autonomy' *Hypatia* (2002)

Nancy J. Hirschmann, 'Toward a Feminist Theory of Freedom' *Political Theory* (1996)

Catriona MacKenzie and Natalie Stoljar, 'Introduction: Autonomy Reconfigured' in *Relational autonomy: feminist perspectives on autonomy, agency, and the social self* (2000) pp 3-31.

Marilyn Friedman, *Autonomy, Gender, Politics* (2003) pp. 81-97; 193-204

Ruth Abbey, Chapters 9-11 in *The return of feminist liberalism* (2011)

Jennifer Nedelsky, *Law's Relations: A Relational Theory of Self, Autonomy, and Law* (2012)

Paul Benson, 'Feminist Second Thoughts About Agency' *Hypatia* (1990)

Week 6: Reading week (no class meetings, formative essays due)

Week 7: Marriage

Early feminists sometimes criticised marriage as a form of legalised prostitution, something women were effectively forced into as their only means of survival. In the 1980s, Carole Pateman still criticised the marriage contract as inherently unequal and subordinating women to men. Here we return to debates about marriage in the light of the recent revival of feminist literature on the institution of marriage. In particular, we will consider a proposal for 'minimal marriage' that allows a wide-range of contractual relationships and also a provocative rejection of the role of the state in regulating intimate relationships.

Essential Reading

Elizabeth Brake, Chapters 5 and 7 in *Minimizing marriage: marriage, morality, and the law* (2012)

Claudia Card, 'Against Marriage and Motherhood' *Hypatia* (1996)

Background Reading

Clare Chambers, Chapter in *Against Marriage: An Egalitarian Defense of the Marriage-Free State* (2017) pages 142-169

Clare Chambers, 'The Marriage-Free State' *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* (2013)

Elizabeth Brake, Chapter: 'Equality and Non-Hierarchy in Marriage' in Brake (ed) *After Marriage: Rethinking Marital Relationships* (2016)

Clare Chambers, Chapter: 'The Limitations of Contract' in Brake (ed) *After Marriage: Rethinking Marital Relationships* (2016)

Alasia Nuti, 'How Should Marriage be Theorised?' *Feminist Theory* (2016)

Tamara Metz, *Untying the Knot: Marriage, the State, and the Case for their Divorce* (2010)
Martha Minow and Mary Lyndon Shanley, 'Relational Rights and Responsibilities: Revisioning the Family in Liberal Political Theory and Law,' *Hypatia* (1996)
Ann Ferguson, 'Gay Marriage: An American and Feminist Dilemma' *Hypatia* (2007)
Patricia Hill Collins, Chapter 8: Black Women and Motherhood in *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (2000)

Week 8: Feminism and lesbian oppression

Simone de Beauvoir argued that women are defined as the 'other' in reference to man, but she thought lesbian women are more likely to escape this secondary status. This week considers lesbian communities and lesbian identities as possible sites of resistance to oppression. It also considers the possibility of difference and conflict between the claims of lesbians on the one hand and the claims of heterosexual women on the other. Whereas heterosexual women can be oppressed by social norms of family life, lesbians can experience exclusion from these norms and from society's support for family life.

Essential Reading

Cheshire Calhoun, Chapter 2: 'Separating Lesbian Theory from Feminist Theory' in *Feminism, the Family, and the Politics of the Closet: Lesbian and Gay Displacement* (2002)
Sarah Lucia Hoagland, 'Why Lesbian Ethics?' *Hypatia* (1992)

Background Reading

Cheshire Calhoun, Chapter 6: 'Constructing Lesbians and Gay Men as Family's Outlaws' in *Feminism, the Family, and the Politics of the Closet: Lesbian and Gay Displacement* (2002)
Marilyn Frye, 'Some Reflections on Separatism and Power' in *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader* (1993)
Christine Overall, 'Heterosexuality and Feminist Theory' *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* (1990)
Claudia Card, 'Radicalesbianfeminist Theory' *Hypatia* (1998)
The Combahee River Collective, 'A Black Feminist Statement' *Women's Studies Quarterly* (2014)
Radicalesbians, Chapter 46: 'The Woman-Identified Woman' in *Feminist Manifesto: A Global Documentary Reader* (ed. Penny Weiss) (2018)
Adrienne Rich, 'Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence' *Signs* 1980)
Matthew Andler, 'The Sexual Orientation/Identity Distinction' *Hypatia* (2021)
Kathleen Stock, 'Sexual Orientation: What is it?' *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* (2019)
Audre Lorde, 'The Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power' in *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader* (1993)
Monique Wittig, 'One is Not Born a Woman' in *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader* (1993)

Week 9: Body Markets

Some of the most contested issues within feminism relate to the commodification of the body, and whether the commercialisation of sex or of surrogacy should be viewed as inherently exploitative of women. The debates return us to questions of contract, self-ownership and autonomy, and the special significance, if any, that should be attached to the body.

Essential Reading

Elizabeth S. Anderson, 'Is Women's Labor a Commodity?' *Philosophy and Public Affairs* (2015)

Debra Satz, 'Markets in Women's Sexual Labor' *Ethics* (1995)

Background Reading

Martha Nussbaum, 'Whether From Reason or Prejudice: Taking Money for Bodily Services' in *Sex and Social Justice* (1999) pp. 276-298

Debra Satz, *Why Some Things Should Not be For Sale: the Moral Limits of Markets* (2010)

Anne Phillips, 'It's My Body and I'll Do What I Like With It: Bodies as Objects and Property' *Political Theory* (2011)

Jessica Flanigan, 'Inequality and Markets in Bodily Services' *Political Theory* (2013)

Anne Phillips, 'Inequality and markets: a response to Jessica Flanigan' *Political Theory* (2013)

Vida Panitch, 'Global surrogacy: exploitation to empowerment' *Journal of Global Ethics* (2013)

Amrita Pande, *Wombs in labor: transnational commercial surrogacy in India* (2014)

Julia O'Connell Davidson, 'The Rights and Wrongs of Prostitution' *Hypatia* (2002)

Anne Phillips, *Our Bodies, Whose Property?* (2013)

Kathy Miriam, 'Stopping the Traffic in Women: Power, Agency and Abolition in Feminist Debates over Sex Trafficking' *Journal of Political Philosophy* (2005)

Rutvica Andrijasevic, Chapter 1 in *Migration, Agency and Citizenship in Sex Trafficking* (2010)

Peter De Marneffe, Chapter 1 in *Liberalism and Prostitution* (2009)

Peter De Marneffe, 'Avoiding Paternalism' *Philosophy and Public Affairs* (2006)

Cecile Fabre, Chapter 7: Prostitution in *Whose Body is It Anyway? Justice and the Integrity of the Person* (2006)

Heather Widdows, 'Border Disputes Across Bodies: Exploitation in Trafficking for Prostitution and Egg Sale for Stem Cell Research' *International Journal of Feminist Approaches to Bioethics* (2009)

Anne Phillips, 'Exploitation, Commodification, and Equality' in *Exploitation: From Practice to Theory* (eds. Monique Deveaux and Vida Panitch) (2017)

Emily Jackson, 'Compensating Egg Donors' in *Gender, Agency, and Coercion* (eds. Sumi Madhok, Anne Phillips, Kalpana Wilson) (2013)

Patricia Hill Collins, Chapter 6: The Sexual Politics of Black Womanhood in *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (2000)

Serene Khader, 'Intersectionality and the Ethics of Transnational Commercial Surrogacy' *International Journal of Feminist Approaches to Bioethics* (2013)

Week 10: Feminist perspectives on trans issues

Feminists often emphasize that gender is socially constructed, particularly in ways that result in disadvantage. For instance, Iris Marion Young argues that women use their bodies in restricted ways, in response to their oppressive socialization. Some believe that the best feminist response to these gender constructions is to challenge them and resist the category of 'woman.' However, trans people are often subject to the 'reality enforcement' of a particular gender assignment, due to others' perceptions of their embodied identities. This week's topic of feminist perspectives on trans issues is deliberately put into conversation with other weeks in the course, particularly on lesbian oppression and on body markets. Can there be a reconciliation of gender as identity and gender as oppressive social construction? What does

it mean to resist social constructions of gender and sexuality, particularly through the body and its presentation? Are there ethical constraints on a person's 'passing' as a member of a group, and ethical prohibitions on a person questioning another's declared membership in a group?

Essential Reading

Talie Mae Bettcher, 'Evil Deceivers and Make Believers: On Transphobic Violence and the Politics of Illusion' *Hypatia* (2007)

Iris Marion Young, 'Throwing Like a Girl:— Phenomenology of Feminine Body Comportment, Motility, and Spatiality' in *On Female Body Experience: Throwing Like a Girl and Other Essays* (1980)

Background Reading

Iris Marion Young, 'Gender as Seriality: Thinking About Women as a Social Collective' *Signs* (1994)

Sally Haslanger, 'Gender and Race: (What) are they? (What) Do We Want Them to Be?' *Nous* (2000)

Lori Watson, 'The Woman Question' *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* (2016)

Sara Ahmed, 'An Affinity of Hammers' *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* (2016)

Katharine Jenkins, 'Amelioration and Inclusion: Gender Identity and The Concept of Woman' *Ethics* (2016)

C. Riley Snorton, "'A New Hope': The Psychic Life of Passing' *Hypatia* (2009)

Daniel Silvermint, 'Passing as Privileged' *Ergo* (2018)

Talia Mae Bettcher, 'Intersexuality, Transgender, and Transsexuality' in *The Oxford Handbook of Feminist Theory* (2015)

Iris Marion Young, 'Lived Body vs. Gender: Reflections on Social Structure and Subjectivity' in *On Female Body Experience: Throwing Like a Girl and Other Essays* (1980)

Robin Dembroff, 'Beyond Binary: Genderqueer as Critical Gender Kind' *Philosophers' Imprint* (2020)

Cressida Heyes, 'Feminist Solidarity after Queer Theory: The Case of Transgender' *Signs* (2003)

Cressida Heyes and J.R. Latham, 'Trans Surgeries and Cosmetic Surgeries: The Politics of Analogy,' *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* (2018)

Week 11: Feminism in a Global Context

Feminism can be understood as offering resistance to gender oppression, rather than offering a universal ideal of a just, equal, and free society. If feminists refrain from offering universal ideals, will their theoretical arguments have a better chance of empowering women and respecting their choices? This week considers Serene Khader's proposal for a non-ideal theory of feminism that is context-sensitive, specifically, taking account of culture, social norms, economic conditions, and political conditions. We also consider commentary on whether Khader's proposal must be inter-sectional in order to successfully address women's oppression.

Essential Reading

Serene Khader, Chapters 1 and 4 in *Decolonizing Universalism: Toward a Transnational Feminist Ethic* (2018)

Margaret McLaren, 'Decolonizing Feminism through Intersectional Praxis: On Serene Khader's Decolonizing Universalism,' *Metaphilosophy* (2021)

Background Reading

Martha C Nussbaum, 'In Defence of Universal Values' in *Women and Human Development: The Capabilities Approach* (2000)

Martha Nussbaum, 'Judging Other Cultures: The Case of Genital Mutilation' *Sex and Social Justice* (1999)

Lila Abu-Lughod, *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?* (2013)

Carolyn Pedwell, Chapters 1 and 3 in *Feminism, Culture and Embodied Practice: The Rhetorics of Comparison* (2010)

Anne Phillips, Chapter on 'Multiculturalism, Universalism and the Claims of Democracy' in *Gender Justice, Development and Rights* (eds. Maxine Molyneux and Shahra Razavi) (2002)

Moirra Gatens, 'Can Human Rights Accommodate Women's Rights? Towards an Embodied Account of Social Norms, Social Meaning, and Cultural Change' *Contemporary Political Theory* (2004)

Martha C Nussbaum, 'Human Capabilities, Female Human Beings' in *Women, Culture and Development* (eds. Martha C. Nussbaum, Jonathan Glover) (1995)

Susan Moller Okin, 'Is Multiculturalism Bad For Women?' in *Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?* (eds. Okin et. al.) (1999)

Uma Narayan, 'Essence of Culture and a Sense of History: A Feminist Critique of Cultural Essentialism' *Hypatia* (2015)

Saba Mahmood, Chapter 1 in *Politics of Piety: The Islamic revival and the feminist subject* (2005)

Wendy Brown, 'Civilizational Delusions: Secularism, Tolerance, Equality' *Theory and Event* (2012)

Sara R. Farris, *In the Name of Women's Rights: the Rise of Femonationalism* (2017)

Leti Volpp, 'Feminism versus Multiculturalism' *Columbia Law Review* (2001)

Joan Wallach Scott, *The Politics of the Veil* (2007)

Ayelet Shachar, 'What We Owe Women: the View from Multicultural Feminism' in *Toward a Humanist Justice: The Political Philosophy of Susan Moller Okin* (2010)

Diana Tietjens Meyers, 'Feminism and Women's Autonomy: the Challenge of Female Genital Cutting' *Metaphilosophy* (2000)

Nancy J. Hirschmann, 'Western Feminism, Eastern Veiling, and the Question of Free Agency,' *Constellations* (1998)