Science and Society (Feminist Epistemology)

Spring, 2017

Day: M (1-3pm) & W (2-3pm) Veritas Hall B 440

‘Scientific knowledge’ may be regarded as subjectless. It may be regarded as a system of theories on which we do work as do masons on a cathedral.

Karl Popper (1970, p. 57)

**Professor**: Bennett Holman (bholman@yonsei.ac.kr)

**Office hours**: Veritas Hall B 430: W 11-12; 1-2.

**General outline:**

This course will offer an interrogation of the assertion that not only is science unembodied (see quote above), but will challenge the idea that science’s embodiment is incidental and without consequence. Specifically, we will examine how gender, gender-specific interests, and gender-specific experiences have impacted science as a means of knowledge production, and whether they should.

It should go without saying—but it doesn’t so I am saying it—this is not a class “for women.” This is a class for humans who wish to understand how gender-based power relations impact what claims we accept as true. Bringing feminist concerns to bear upon the analysis of knowledge does not require being a woman. I expect that students come to class and section having read and given some thought to assigned material. Such preparation will facilitate both a deeper understanding and livelier discussion.

**Course Format**: This class is designed to be a discussion-based course. The goals is to create a dynamic class discussion in which students engage with each other and learn to engage in productive discussion. There will be NO EXAMS. Instead, students are expected to come to class each week prepared to engage in discussion.

In addition to discussion, grading will be based on a paper assignment that students will turn in multiple stages throughout the course. Students must keep pace with the weekly readings to do well in this course. Students who typically do not keep up with course readings or typically only read them as they “cram” for an exam, should understand that such strategies will likely lead to a low grade. In addition to the content focus, the goal of this course is to learn to write a sustained philosophical argument. To earn an A+ students must also submit their paper to an (undergraduate) philosophy journal.

The best papers will:

1. Make a single focused argument in which the paper clearly sets up the terrane of previous work and makes a small original contribution to the literature.
2. Present an explicit argumentative structure that is followed in the paper. Specific suggestions for writing a great paper can be found here: <http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>
3. Be accessible and interesting to your parents (for example). The best paper should be self-contained—an intelligent person unfamiliar with the course material could understand what you are saying in your paper and why it is important.

**Policies:**

**‡ Grading:** There are 100 available points. The class is based on a relative grading scale

according to Yonsei University grading policy. That means that classes with an enrollment of >20 can have at most 35% in the A-range and 35% in the B-range, and classes with an enrollment of ≤20 can have at most 40% in the A-range and 50% in the B-range. Since the Yonsei online grade-submission system will not accept (or even allow) submission of grades that violate these restrictions, I am required to follow these guidelines. Hence, I have refrained from giving letter grades on assignments and exams.

The default floor for the grading percentages will be:

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | + | 0 | - |
| A | 96 | 92.5 | 90 |
| B | 87.5 | 82.5 | 80 |
| C | 77.5 | 72.5 | 65 |
| F |  | Below 65 |  |

**‡ Attendance:**

Attendance will be taken in accordance with Yonsei Policy: missing 1/3 of all classes, regardless of having legitimate, official excuses, is to result in an F grade. Being more than twenty minutes late will be counted as an absence. You will be allowed six absences (excused/unexcused). Long days count as two classes. (Hence, you`re allowed two weeks of absences).

**‡ Extensions or alternative test times:** Students will have a ten minute grace period after

which point the assignment will be considered late. Generally, no changes will be made to the dates listed. Exceptions will be handled on a case by case basis and will not, in any circumstances, be altered without supporting documentation. The penalty for turning in an assignment late will be a one-third of a grade deduction per day (or any portion thereof). It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that the paper they submit is the correct paper and that it has uploaded correctly. If the wrong paper (or no paper) is uploaded to yscec it will be treated as if no paper had been turned in and late penalties will accrue accordingly.

**‡ Academic Integrity:** All students are expected to be familiar with and abide by the

universities policies on academic integrity. Any failure to abide by this policy will result in a “D0” grade for the course. For more information, please visit http://uic.yonsei.ac.kr/

and navigate to Home>Academics>Academic Regulations.

**‡ Disabilities and Special Needs:** I am happy to make any accommodations to facilitate

students learning. Please see me at the beginning of the semester to discuss such issues.

**‡ Preferred names and Gender Pronouns:** I would like to make every effort to create a safe

space. If you have a preferred name or gender pronoun that is not reflected in the roster, please let me know.

**‡ This syllabus may be updated as the semester proceeds. Any such changes will be announced in class as well as by email.**

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| **Week** | **Assignment** | **Purpose** | **% of Grade** |
| 2 | Academic Honesty | The assignment presents students with 6 samples of student writing and the original source material. Students are ask to identify which examples display the ideals of academic honesty. If the student gets any wrong they must submit a correct answer and explanation by the next class to demonstrate they understand academic integrity (required to write the paper). | N/A  |
| 3/5 | Paper prospectus | Students must meet with me to propose a possible topic for their argumentative paper. Students should come to their meeting with having identified both a topic and possible source material. The prospectus should outline the general arc of the argument and identify which sources they plan on drawing from AND generally how the sources contribute to the argument. In week 5, students are to turn in an abstract (300-500 words) that sketches their idea for the paper. | 5% |
| 7 | Draft Due (Case study) | Student should post their paper to yscec. The mid-term paper will be the “first half” of the longer paper they will write over the course. The paper will be 1700- 2200 words (but will incorporate some of the abstract). Unless the student obtains permission, **the paper must be an elaborated version of the paper in the prospectus to receive credit.** | 20% |
| 11 | Draft Due(Literature review) |  The student will turn in a full draft of the second half of their paper (Literature review). The paper will be 1700- 2200 words (but will incorporate some of the abstract). This paper will survey a major position in feminist epistemology. Unless the student obtains permission, **the paper must be an elaborated version of the paper in the prospectus to receive credit.**  | 20% |
| 14 | Finalize Argument | The student will put together both “halves” of the paper together in make an original argument on a topic. They will use their case study to argue for or against one of the views identified in the literature review and add an introduction and a conclusion. Total paper length should be (4000-5000 words). Students should make sure that they address feedback from previous drafts. | 30% |
|  | Class Participation | Students are expected to come to class prepared and ready to engage in an informed discussion of the material. Students are expected to actively participate in classroom discussions. Participation includes asking questions, raising objections, offering defenses, commenting on the significance of a point, clarifying an argument or a claim, and drawing out the connections between an issue from our current discussion and issues raised in our other readings. | 25% |

Unit 1: *What is Feminism? What is Epistemology?*

Week 1 (Sept 3/5) – “From the Woman Question in Science to the Science Question in

Feminism” by Sandra Harding (1986, p. 15-29 of *The Science Question in Feminism*)

Week 2 (Sept 10/12) – Traditional epistemology & the feminist critique

(Tanesini: p. 3-65)

WEDNESDAY Sept. 12TH



SUNDAY Sept 16TH (REVISIONS IF NECESSARY)



Week 3 (Sep 17/19) – What does feminism have to do with science?

(Tanesini: p. 66-94)

 &

Feminist Social Epistemology (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)

**Student meetings to discuss paper topics**

Unit 2: Why does it matter*?* Reports from the field

Week 4: **(September 24/26): Chuseok no class**

Week 5: October 1/3: Primatology

Hrdy (1986) “Empathy, Polyandry, and the Myth of the Coy female” (27 pages)

Week 6: October 8/10: Sexuality

Tuana (2004) “Coming to Understand: Orgasm and the Epistemology of

Ignorance” (36 pages)

Holman and Geislar (2018) “Sex Drugs and Corporate Ventriloquism”

(12 pages)

Week 7: October 15/17 No reading

**Prospectus due Oct 1st (submit on YSCEC)**

Draft of case study due Oct 15th

Unit 3: Feminist Empiricism & Standpoint epistemology

Week 8 (October 22/24):Feminist Empiricism

“The Virtues of Feminist Empiricism” by Richmond Campbell (1994)

**Week 9 (October 29/31):** **Mid-term week**

**No class, no exam**

**Week 10 (November 5**/7): Standpoint and objectivity

November 5th there will be no class. There will be a make-up class TBD

Tanesini: “The importance of Standpoint in Feminism” (22 pages)

Tanesini: “Objectivity and Feminism” (26 pages)

Week 11 (November, 12/14)

 “25 Years of Feminist Empiricism and Standpoint Theory: Where are we now?” by Kristin Intemann (2010)

Student meeting to discuss paper feedback

Draft of Literature Review Due Nov. 12

Unit 4: Post-modernism and Intersectionality

Week 12 (November, 19/21): Postmodernism and feminist theory

 “Post-modernism and Gender relations in Feminist Theory” by Jane Flax (1990)

 

Week 13 (November 26/28): Queering Feminism

###  “Towards a feminist–queer alliance: a paradigmatic shift in the research process”

 By Corie Hammers & Alan D. Brown III (2004)

“Why Suzie Wong is not a lesbian: Asian and Asian American lesbian and bisexual women and femme/butch/gender identities” by Jee Yeun Lee (1996)

Week 14 (December 3/5): Performing race and gender at the intersections

“Asian American Women and Racialized Femininities: ‘Doing’ Gender across Cultural Worlds” by Karen D. Pyke and Denise L. Johnson (2003)

Final Paper due Dec 8th