

Women in 20th Century Moral Philosophy Syllabus (200/300 Level Course)

Fall/Spring: Year

Instructor Information

Instructor

Prof. Kelly Cunningham

Email

kelly.cunningham.1
@vanderbilt.edu

Office Location & Hours

Furman Hall: 108
Monday: 12:30-1:30pm
Thursday (via Zoom): 3:30-
4:30pm or by appointment

General Information

Description

The 20th century was the first century when women were permitted to formally participate in the discipline of philosophy. As they earned PhDs and tenure, wrote books and essays, and taught students of their own, they also made numerous contributions to philosophy, particularly to moral thought. As we survey the contributions of women from the turn of the 19th century into the new millennia, we'll encounter multiple perspectives on the relation between morality to education, narrative, labor, politics and art. We'll consider how their perspectives were shaped by major events in the 20th century, first and second wave feminism, and other social movements of the century.

Expectations and Goals

Attendance and participation in class discussions are expected. Students are also expected to conduct independent research for their final paper assignment. Disrespectful and disruptive behavior in class discussions will not be tolerated.

In addition to developing a familiarity with women's contributions to moral philosophy in this era literature, goals for this course include the refinement of argumentative and expository writing abilities, practice approaching philosophy from a historical perspective, and critical thinking skills. By the end of the course students will complete independent research for a paper on a figure or text covered in the course.

Course Materials

Required Materials

Since most of our readings are contemporary essays from philosophy journals, they are available through the university library or are posted as PDFs on Brightspace. We will read most of *Metaphysical Animals* during weeks 5-8, so this would be worth purchasing. Given the nature of the

final assignment, you may also consider purchasing a book by the figure that your final essay focuses on.

Course Assignments

Timeline Entries

Since this course is history-focused, one assignment you will work on over the course of the semester is a timeline. You must complete 10 timeline entries over the course of the semester. These timeline entries require reading a secondary source on the figure we are covering that week. Options for this reading will be available on Brightspace, but you are welcome to find your own source. Over the course of the semester you **must complete 8 timeline entries**, which will be graded on ✓-/✓/✓+ scale via Brightspace. For full points, all 8 entries must receive a ✓ or higher. You are welcome to complete more than 10, but only the highest 8 scores will count toward your final grade. Timeline entries are due **by Friday before class** on the week we are discussing that philosopher. Entries posted after the start of class will not be graded. There are **17 opportunities** for journal entries throughout the semester.

Short Papers

During the first half of the semester, students will complete two short papers on prompts related to the course readings. Prompts for short papers will be available two weeks before they are due. You should answer **only one** of the prompts. Papers should be no more than 1,000 words. Anything more than 10% over will be marked down by 2 points per 10% over. See final assignment for instructions on citations and formatting. A rubric is available on Brightspace.

Short Paper #1 Due Week 4, upload to Brightspace.

Short Paper #2 Due Week 5, upload to Brightspace.

Annotated Bibliography

Your final paper will be on a question about trust of your choosing. To help guide your research for this paper, you are required to complete an annotated bibliography. Your bibliography should include 5-7 sources, properly cited and accompanied by a one-paragraph description of the source's main ideas and how it might be useful for your final paper. We will go over an example in class two weeks before this assignment is due.

Due Week 12, upload to Brightspace.

Final Paper

Your final paper will be on a figure or concept of your choice. A rubric and assignment description will be made available four weeks before the final paper.

One- paragraph description of question and idea, due Week 13.

Draft due Week 14, upload to Brightspace

Final Paper due by midnight on scheduled day for final exams, upload to Brightspace.

Course Schedule

Week	Topic	Reading	Assignments
0	Introduction to Course	“What Does a Philosopher Look Like?” Women in the History of Philosophy - Hannah Marije Altorf	Welcome Survey
1	Entering the 20 th Century- Parsons	“The Principles of Anarchism” “An Open Letter to Tramps”	Opportunity for Timeline Entry
2	Entering the 20 th Century- Emmett	<i>The Moral Prism</i> Chapter 1 <i>The Moral Prism</i> Chapter 4 and 12	Opportunity for Timeline Entry Short Paper #1 Prompts posted
3	Women & American Pragmatism- Addams	<i>Democracy and Social Ethics</i> , Chapter II and VI <i>The Long Road of Woman’s Memory</i>	Opportunity for Timeline Entry
4	Women & American Pragmatism- Lyman Cabot	<i>Everyday Ethics</i> Chapter I- III <i>Everyday Ethics</i> Chapter XIV, XV, XVIII	Opportunity for Timeline Entry Short Paper #1 Due on Brightspace
5	Morality after WWII- Arendt	<i>The Human Condition</i> - Chapter I <i>The Human Condition</i> - Chapter V	Opportunity for Timeline Entry Short Paper #2 Prompts posted on Brightspace

Week	Topic	Reading	Assignments
6	The Quartet- Anscombe	“Modern Moral Philosophy” <i>Metaphysical Animals</i> Chapter	Opportunity for Timeline Entry
7	The Quartet- Foot	“Morality as a System of Hypothetical Imperatives” <i>Metaphysical Animals</i> Chapter	Opportunity for Timeline Entry
8	The Quartet- Murdoch	“Sovereignty of Good” <i>Metaphysical Animals</i> Chapters	Opportunity for Timeline Entry Short Paper #2 Due on Brightspace
9	The Quartet- Midgley	<i>Animals and Why They Matter</i> Chapter 3, 7, & 9 <i>Metaphysical Animals</i> Chapters	Opportunity for Timeline Entry
10	Feminism Around the Work: Anzaldua & De Beauvoir	“ <i>La conciencia de la mestiza: Towards a New Consciousness</i> ” <i>The Second Sex</i> Chapter II	Opportunity for Timeline Entry
11	Late 20 th Century- Baier	“Trust and Antitrust” “The Need for More than Justice”	Opportunity for Timeline Entry
12	Later 20 th Century- Spillers	“Mama’s Baby, Papa’s Maybe: An American Grammar Book”	Opportunity for Timeline Entry Final Paper Assignment Description Available on Brightspace

Week	Topic	Reading	Assignments
13	Entering the new Millenia- hooks	<i>All About Love</i> Chapters 1-3	Opportunity for Timeline Entry
		<i>Teaching to Transgress</i> Chapters 7-9	Annotated Bibliography due on Brightspace
14	Entering the new Millenia- Held	<i>Ethics of Care</i> Chapters 1-2	Opportunity for Timeline Entry
		<i>Ethics of Care</i> Chapters 4 and 10	Final Paper Draft Due on Brightspace
15	Entering the new Millenia- Davis & Young	<i>Are Prisons Obsolete?</i> Chapters 1-2	Opportunity for Timeline Entry
		“Throwing Like a Girl”	
16	Wrap-Up Week- Hassoun	<i>“The Past 110 Years: Historical Data on the Underrepresentati on of Women in Philosophy Journals”</i>	Final Paper Due on Brightspace

Additional Information and Resources

Accessibility and Accommodations

Vanderbilt University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. To receive such accommodations students are to apply for services through the Student Access Center. The Center can be reached at disabilityservices@vanderbilt.edu and is located in the Baker Building, Suite 108.

Technology and AI Use Policy

The use of technology in the classroom (such as laptops or tablets) is often crucial for students with accessibility needs, but it can also be a distraction for some students. Similarity, AI is a powerful tool for which we are still establishing norms for the use of. To ensure everyone’s needs are met to the best of our collective abilities and that AI tools are used responsibly, we will co-author our technology and AI policy on the first day of class. After which, it will then be posted to Brightspace. Cell phones should be kept away during class.

FERPA Compliance Reminder

To protect student privacy, FERPA guidelines state that professors are not to discuss grades via email. If you would like to discuss your grades, please come to office hours, email me to make an appointment or use your private "journal" discussion board on Brightspace.

Academic Integrity

All students are required to make themselves familiar with and abide by the University Honor Code. I reserve the right to report cases of suspected misconduct, which includes use of AI prohibited by the class policy, will be submitted to the Honor Council for further review. If you are unsure if the way you are using a resource or AI tool is permitted, please consult the University policy and contact me with any further questions *before* turning in your assignment.

Grading Scale

Grading Breakdown

Letter Grade	Numerical Equivalent	Assignment	% of Final Grade
A A-	93-100 90-92	Participation	5%
B+ B B-	87-89 83-86 80-82	Timeline Entries	10%
C+ C C-	77-79 73-76 70-72	Short Paper #1	20%
D+ D D-	67-69 63-66 60-62	Short Paper #2	20%
F	0-59	Annotated Bibliography	15%
		Final Paper Draft	5%
		Final Paper	25%