

WOMEN IN WESTERN POLITICAL THOUGHT

Fall 2015

J. Nedelsky

Thursdays – 10-12, Room Location – SS 2106

Office Hours: THURSDAY, 12-12:30 without appointment. 12-1:30 with appointment

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The focus of this course is not on critique of the tradition, but how contemporary feminists build on the strengths of the tradition and offer alternatives to its limitations. In particular, we will focus on four overlapping areas that have been the subject of important critiques of the tradition by feminists: the conception of reason, the treatment of the body, the concept of autonomy, and the role of human dependence in envisioning the autonomous individual and the competent citizen. We will see how contemporary feminist theorists are developing serious alternatives to the tradition. We will also consider the ways in which these areas—reason, the body, autonomy, and dependence—are related to one another. Taken together, the feminist alternative approaches to these issues not only transform the role of women in political thought, but the core arguments of political theory.

COURSE MATERIALS: Joan C. Tronto, *Caring Democracy: Markets, Equality, and Justice*. Available from Amazon.ca for Kindle (app is free, also works on computers) for \$16.00. This is an essential part of the reading for the last part of the course. Additional readings are posted on Blackboard (BB), sometimes as links, sometimes as pdfs. The links also appear in the syllabus.

ALL CLASSES WILL BE BASED ON DISCUSSIONS OF THE READINGS, SO PLEASE GET THE MATERIALS AND READ THEM. I suggest printing out the on line materials in advance. The readings are accessible and the assignments moderate in length. Part of the objective of the course is to learn how to do close reading and analysis of texts. That is why the number of pages assigned is modest. But it also means that you will not get much out of the course unless you have done the readings for each class.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Summary:

Two papers (500-650 words), 13.5% each (details below): 27%

Two “comments” (150-300 words) on other students’ papers, and class summary (300-500 words), 6% each: 18%

Final exam: 55%

Class participation can provide bonus marks, which will be used to raise a grade if the student is close to the dividing line between letter grades, such as B+ and A-. Students are expected to have read at least one of their fellow students’ papers for each class, to facilitate discussion.

Details:

PAPERS: This assignment is for individual papers, but it is organized by groups noted in the syllabus. There are 5 groups, one group each week except first and last. The weeks papers are due are listed in the outline of the readings below. **Assignments to groups will be posted on Blackboard under “Course Materials”.** The **500-650 word** papers should offer an analysis of one of the main issues or arguments of the readings assigned for that week. When more than one reading is assigned, (unless otherwise noted) students may choose to focus on one, or compare the two, but there needs to be at least some discussion of both readings. It is also useful to make comparisons to previous readings or class discussions. **The papers should also include one question you have about the readings.** The papers must be posted on Blackboard under the discussion forum for that week, by **8:00 PM THE TUESDAY BEFORE CLASS.** Students will receive their papers back after class. Students should be prepared to discuss their paper in class. **If you know you cannot be in class on the day your paper is to be discussed, please do your paper another week instead. (Let me know by e-mail.) IF YOU ARE NOT IN CLASS TO DISCUSS YOUR PAPER, YOU WILL LOSE 3 POINTS FROM YOUR GRADE ON THE PAPER.**

LATE PAPERS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

If you want to improve your mark, you can do an additional paper for the last week, and the best 2 marks will be counted.

Students will also be responsible for two **COMMENTS** on (two different) fellow students’ papers. Comments should be 150-300 word responses to the arguments presented in the papers. The purpose is not primarily critique, but engagement with the argument: what do you agree with, disagree with, what additional ideas does the paper stimulate for you? How does it connect to your own response to the readings? **The comment should also include one question you have about the readings. Once you decide which paper you will be commenting on, please post that choice on BB so that other students will select different papers and (normally) each paper will receive one comment.** Comments are to be posted under the appropriate week of the discussion forum by **5:00 PM THE WEDNESDAY BEFORE CLASS.** Students should

be prepared to discuss their comments in class. **If you know you cannot be in class on the day your comment is to be discussed, please do it another week instead. IF YOU ARE NOT IN CLASS TO DISCUSS YOUR COMMENT, YOU WILL LOSE 3 POINTS FROM YOUR GRADE ON THE COMMENTARY.**

LATE COMMENTS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

You must do your papers and responses on different authors. So if you have to miss a paper or response and make it up, make sure you are not planning to make up more than one per class. For the last week, students can write an additional (or make up) paper **OR** an additional commentary.

Each student will participate in writing ONE class **SUMMARY**. Groups of 3-5 students will be responsible for providing a 300-500 word **SUMMARY** of the last class's discussion, with a brief commentary about how the discussion contributed to the main themes of the course. The summary is to be posted by **NOON ON THE WEDNESDAY BEFORE CLASS**. The summary should be posted in the discussion forum for BOTH the week of the class summarized AND the week it is due—**WITH THE DATE OF THE CLASS SUMMARIZED CLEARLY ON THE TOP**. In the first class, I will create a list of which students will be responsible for which week. (If you do not tell me a group you want to be part of, I will randomly assign remaining students to groups.) **These students should be prepared to comment on the links between the main points of the previous week's discussion and the current readings. IF YOU ARE NOT IN CLASS TO DISCUSS YOUR SUMMARY, YOU LOSE 3 POINTS FROM YOUR SUMMARY MARK.** (If you are ill and cannot make the class, you should participate in another summary group.) The same grade for the written summary will be assigned to all students in the group.

LATE SUMMARIES WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

“Plagiarism is a serious academic offence and will be dealt with accordingly. For further clarification and information on plagiarism please see Writing at the University of Toronto <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources>”.

Final exam during exam period: 55%

To prepare for the final exam, students must review all the readings and class discussions. Sample questions will be available in advance. It is a 3 hour exam.

WEEK 1 09/17

NO READING

Introduction

WEEK 2 09/24

Linda Zerilli, "Feminist Theory and the Canon of Political Thought," in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Theory*

http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/oso/private/content/oho_politics/9780199548439/p021.html#oxfordhb-9780199548439-chapter-5 Search under "Contemporary Currents" section. (BB)

Wendell, Susan, "Feminism, disability and transcendence of the body" *Canadian Woman Studies* 13.4 (Summer 1993): 116-122. (BB)

Susan Bordo, *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture and the Body*, Introduction, pp. 1-15, 33-42. (BB)

Recommended

Nancy Mairs, "Carnal acts," from *Minding the body*, Patricia Foster, ed. (BB)

Moira Gatens, "Politicizing the Body," in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Theory*

http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/oso/private/content/oho_politics/9780199548439/p060.html#oxfordhb-9780199548439-chapter-37 (BB)

Group 1 paper, group 2 comment

WEEK 3 10/01

Lloyd, *Man of Reason*, Introduction, on line:

<http://site.ebrary.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/lib/utoronto/docDetail.action?docID=10096981>. (BB)

J. Nedelsky, "Embodied Diversity: Challenges to Law," *McGill Law Journal* 42 (1997), 91-117. (BB)

Audre Lorde, "Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power" in *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*

<http://lit.alexanderstreet.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/wols/view/1000060649> (BB).

Group 2 paper, group 3 comment.

WEEK 4 10/08

Sharon Krause, *Civil Passions: Moral Sentiment and Democratic Deliberation*, Introduction. (BB).

Audre Lorde, "The Uses of Anger: Women Responding to Racism" in *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*

<http://lit.alexanderstreet.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/wols/view/1000060649> (BB)

Group 3 paper, group 4 comment.

WEEK 5 10/15

Robin May Schott, "Resurrecting Embodiment," in *A Mind of One's Own: Feminist Essays on Reason and Objectivity*, Louise M. Antony and Charlotte E. Witt, eds. (Boulder: Westview Press, 2002). (BB).

Marilyn Friedman, "Autonomy, Social Disruption, and Women", in Relational Autonomy: Feminist Perspectives on Autonomy, Agency, and the Social Self, Catriona Mackenzie and Natalie Stoljar, eds.

<http://books2.scholarsportal.info.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/viewdoc.html?id=/ebooks/ebooks/0/oxford/2009-11-30/2/0195123336> (BB)

Group 4 paper, group 5 comment. Discuss both articles.

WEEK 6 10/22

Jennifer Nedelsky, "Reconceiving Autonomy," *The Yale Journal of Law and Feminism* 1 (1989): 7-36. (BB)

Dorothy Allison, Skin, pp. 9-36. (BB)

Group 5 paper, group 6 comment. Be sure to discuss both pieces. You might want to comment on the ways in which Allison uses emotion as an integral part of a reasoned presentation of the construction of self and autonomy.

WEEK 7 10/29

J. Nedelsky, "Dilemmas of Passion, Privilege, and Isolation: Reflections on Mothering in a White, Middle-Class Nuclear Family" in *Mother Troubles: Rethinking Contemporary Maternal Dilemmas* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1999). Posted on (BB). Think about the role of affect in this article.

Nancy Fraser, "Between Marketization and Social Protection," in *Fortunes of Feminism: From State-Managed Capitalism to Neoliberal Crisis* (Verso, 2013). (BB)

Group 1 paper, group 2 comment

WEEK 8 11/05

Creating a Caring Society Author(s): Evelyn Nakano Glenn Source: *Contemporary Sociology*, Vol. 29, No. 1, Utopian Visions: Engaged Sociologies for the 21st Century (Jan., 2000), pp. 84-94 Published by: American Sociological Association Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2654934> (BB)

Millennial Men Aren't the Dads They Thought They'd Be, <http://nyti.ms/1JU5XCq> (BB)

Alisdair MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, Ch1, Vulnerability, dependence, animality. (BB).

Brigid Schulte, *Overwhelmed: Work, Love and Play When There is No Time*, (Harper Collins, 2014), pp. 76-82, 87-92, 157-171. (BB)

Group 2 paper, group 3 comment.

WEEK 9 11/12

Tronto, *Caring Democracy*, “Redefining Democracy as Settling Disputes About Care Responsibilities,” pp. 16-45, Part of “Tough Guys Don’t Care – Do They?” 81-94.

Group 3 paper, group 4 comment

WEEK 10 11/19

Tronto, “Vicious Circles of privatized Caring,” 94-112, and part of “Democratic Caring, pp.138-158, part of “Caring Democracy,” pp. 169-176

Group 4 paper, group 5 comment

WEEK 11 11/26

Daniel Engster, *Justice, Care, and the Welfare State*, Ch2, “Justice, Care, and Children” (forthcoming Oxford University Press, 2016) (BB)

Group 5 paper, group 1 comment

WEEK 12 12/03

Nedelsky, “Introduction” to *Part time for All*. (BB)

Allison Weir, “The Global Universal Caregiver: Imagining Women’s Liberation in the New Millennium,” *12 Constellations* 308-330 (2005). (BB)

Replacement paper; replacement questions. (You cannot do both questions and paper). **Be sure to discuss both pieces.**

REVIEW: Bring questions