COURSE DESCRIPTION
This seminar examines critical debates in contemporary feminist theory through the themes and controversies generated by Carole Pateman’s landmark work, *The Sexual Contract*. Arguing that the continued subordination of women is written into the conceptual basis of modern civil society—the social contract, *The Sexual Contract* has become a classic text in the feminist canon since its publication in 1988, “a distinction as deserved as it probably is double edged, given how quickly a book under the sign of the “classic” can become a reliquary (read, little cited), a manifesto (cited, little read), or an afterthought (little read, little cited)…” (Dietz, 2018). We will attempt to move past that double edged designation to consider the text’s substantive contributions, challenges, and the broader discussions the *Sexual Contract*’s interventions have generated over the past three decades.

We begin with the text itself, and then pursue the varied questions and themes which can be linked to its core arguments: the role of feminist interpretive methods in political thought, the gendered underpinnings of canonical texts, and the racial, colonial, or queer politics which might supplement (or supplant) Pateman’s expansive critique of the canon, contract, consent, inequality, and freedom. Centering our seminar around this now-classic text and its varied interlocutors thus affords us an opportunity to consider the operation of feminist political thought in its disciplinary, normative, and applied contexts.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS:
This course runs as a graduate seminar. Following the standards of academic work, graduate seminars are designed around intensive reading, discussion, and writing. Weekly readings are assigned on the basis on relevance, cohesion, and depth of coverage – not page numbers. Some familiarity with the major texts of political theory is assumed, and active participation is expected. Consider carefully if you will have the time and background to complete this course.

Students should be prepared to actively participate every week by listening and contributing to discussion. To be prepared for class discussion, you must read all assigned texts very carefully, take notes, and select passages for discussion. Arrive in class on time and prepared to comment, raise questions, and respond to seminar colleagues. All written work will be submitted through Quercus (see Course Policies for more information). Grades are based on a variety of written and participatory assignments throughout the term, as described under Evaluation. You must keep an electronic copy of all submitted work and copies of drafts of work in progress.

EVALUATION

- Participation 25%
- Book Review 20%
- Position Papers and Discussion 35%
- Public Facing Article and Presentation 20%

Participation: As a graduate seminar, regular attendance and thoughtful contributions to seminar meetings are vital; one of the essential components of graduate training is learning to critically engage with texts and ideas through collegial debate and discussion. Seminar discussion should be student-driven, and absences will be noted and keenly felt. You must keep up with the readings and come to class with questions and comments in hand. An ‘A’ grade for participation assumes, at minimum, that you have consistently played an active role in shaping seminar discussions.

Book Review: A book review (2-3 pages, approx. 1200 words) of The Sexual Contract will be due once we conclude reading the text (see Schedule of Classes). You will be prompted with an ‘invitation’ to review The Sexual Contract—following the format of Perspectives on Politics (APSA’s official venue for book reviews)—but with a slight twist: the review should take a retrospective evaluation of the book. A complete description of the assignment can be found in the Assignments link on Quercus.

Position Papers [PP]: Over the term, students will submit 4 position papers (1-2 pages, approx. 500-700 words). These papers must take a position on a particular claim, concept, or supporting evidence given in a text. Do not summarize the readings. To avoid summary and keep your argument concise, you are encouraged to focus on select topics rather than on the readings as a whole. You may stake your intervention on a single text, a portion of a text on its own, or you may relate some aspect or passage in the text to previous readings or to recurring issues in the course. Your goal is to develop pithy, textually engaged claims, which can provoke questions for debate
and discussion in seminar. These papers will be assigned at the start of term, and must be submitted via Quercus the day before the relevant meeting. To receive full credit for your position papers, you must attend class that week to share your ideas in discussion.

**Public Facing Article and Presentations:** The concluding assignment for the course involves a ‘public facing’ post similar to what one might write for outlets like the *Monkey Cage* (approx. 1000 words). Part of your task will be to review similar posts to understand how to frame your own piece. In developing a topic, students should identify a contemporary issue or problem to address through their analysis of one of the themes/texts in class. Full guidelines will be detailed on the Assignments link on Quercus. In the final class, students will present a summary of their post.

**REQUIRED BOOKS***

The required texts for this course are readily available for purchase from various sites – please keep to the listed editions below:

*Other required readings will be posted to Quercus, or hyperlinked in the Schedule of Classes*


**IMPORTANT DATES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>September 20</td>
<td>Last day to enroll</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 9</td>
<td>UofT closed</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 12</td>
<td>Seminar Book Reviews Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 5—6</td>
<td>UT Grad Workshop: Women in the History of Political Thought</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 6</td>
<td>Last day to drop</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 6—10</td>
<td>UTSG Reading week.</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 30</td>
<td>Seminar Presentations</td>
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SCHEDULE OF READINGS (subject to change with notice)

PART I: THE SEXUAL CONTRACT AND ITS CRITICS

September 7th

Week 1: Syllabus and Introductions


September 14th

Week 2: TSC I: Feminism and the Canon [PP]

- TSC
  - Preface
  - CH 1. Contracting in
  - CH 2. Patriarchal confusions


September 21st

Week 3: TSC II: Gender and the Social Contract [PP]

- TSC
  - CH 3. Contract, the individual and slavery
  - CH 4. Genesis, fathers and political liberty of sons
  - CH 5. Wives, slaves and wage slaves


September 28th

Week 4: TSC III: Contractual Relations [PP]

- TSC
  - CH 6. Feminism and the marriage contract
  - CH 7. What’s wrong with prostitution?
  - CH 8. The end of the story


**PART II: THE SEXUAL CONTRACT AND BEYOND**

**October 5**

**Week 5: Retrieving ‘Women’ in the History of Political Thought [PP]**


- Wollstonecraft, Mary. A Vindication of the Rights of Woman, (Ch. 5) 2002. https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/3420. [PDF on Quercus]


**October 12**

**Week 6: Book Reviews due**

**October 19**

**Week 7: Feminism and the ‘Canon or Feminism against the ‘Canon’? [PP]**


October 26th

Week 8: The Domination Contract [PP]

  - Introduction
  - CH 2. The Settler Contract
  - CH 3. The Domination Contract


November 2nd

Week 9: The Racial Contract [PP]


• *The Contract and Domination*.
  - CH 5. Race, Sex, and Indifference
  - CH 6. Intersecting Contracts


November 6-10 UTSG READING WEEK
November 16th

Week 10: Culture, Power, and Freedom [PP]

- Okin, Susan M. et. al, *Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?*


  - CH 1. The Category of Sex
  - CH 2. One is Not Born a Woman

November 23

Week 11: Queering the ‘Sexual Contract’ [PP]


November 30th

Week 12 Presentations and closing discussion.
UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Student Conduct
“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”.

Late essay assignments will be subject to a late penalty of 5% per day (including weekends) of the total marks for the assignment. Assignments submitted five calendar days beyond the due date will be assigned a grade of zero. Assignments handed in after the work has been returned to the class cannot be marked for credit. Accommodations due to late registration into the course will NOT be approved. We do not grant essay extensions except in cases of documented emergency.

Ouriginal
The University is now partnering with Ouriginal for its plagiarism detection platform. More information is available here.

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to the University’s plagiarism detection tool for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the tool’s reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University’s use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation web site (https://uoft.me/pdt-faq).

Accessibility Services
Students with disabilities may receive accommodation from the University and need to register with accessibility services. Instructors are notified with a request for accommodation and can give the request consideration. For best practices around accommodations, visit Accessibility Services https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/department/accessibility-services/
Or email accessibility.services@utoronto.ca or Tel: 416-978-8060.

Technology Support for Students
For Quercus and all other technology support, contact the Information Common Helps Desk: help.desk@utoronto.ca For more details, visit Info Commons Help Desk, Robarts Library.

Health and Wellness
Students can access a wide range of programs and services to support their health and wellbeing. Many of these programs are listed at: https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/department/health-wellness/

Contacts for Students
- U of T Health & Wellness uoft.me/5EB
- 416-978-8030
- Support if Students are Feeling Distressed uoft.me/5EC
- U of T My Student Support Program (My SSP) uoft.me/5ED
- Community Safety Office communitysafety.utoronto.ca/ 416-978-1485
- U of T Safety & Support safety.utoronto.ca/