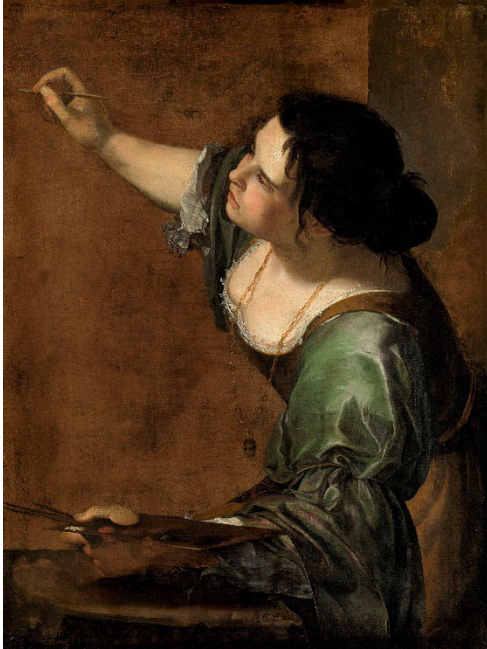


# FEMINIST POLITICAL THOUGHT



**POL432/2024H1F L0101 FALL 2023**

**R 1-3**

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Office Hours: R 10 am -11:30 am, or by appointment

## 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 Ouriginal, accessed 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 the 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*

- Pateman, Carol. *The Sexual Contract*. Stanford University Press, 1988. [TSC]
- Pateman, Carole, and Charles Mills. *The Contract and Domination*. Cambridge: Polity, 2007.
- Okin, Susan Moller, et al. *Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women? / Susan Moller Okin with Respondents*. Edited by Joshua Cohen, Matthew Howard, and Martha C. Nussbaum. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1999.

**IMPORTANT DATES**

September 20	Last day to enroll
October 9	UofT closed
October 12	Seminar Book Reviews Due
November 5—6	UT Grad Workshop: Women in the History of Political Thought
November 6	Last day to drop
November 6—10	UTSG Reading week.
November 30	Seminar Presentations

## SCHEDULE OF READINGS (subject to change with notice)

### PART I: *THE SEXUAL CONTRACT* AND ITS CRITICS

September 7<sup>th</sup>

#### Week 1: Syllabus and Introductions

- Thompson, Sharon, Lydia Hayes, Daniel Newman, and Carole Pateman. “The Sexual Contract 30 Years on: A Conversation with Carole Pateman.” *Feminist Legal Studies* 26, no. 1 (April 1, 2018): 93–104.

September 14<sup>th</sup>

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

- TSC
  - Preface
  - CH 1. Contracting in
  - CH 2. Patriarchal confusions
- Brennan, Teresa, and Carole Pateman. “‘Mere Auxiliaries to the Commonwealth’: Women and the Origins of Liberalism.” *Political Studies* 27, no. 2 (June 1979): 183–200.

September 21<sup>st</sup>

#### 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
- Jaquette, Jane S. “Contract and Coercion: Power and Gender in Leviathan.” In *Women Writers and the Early Modern British Political Tradition*, edited by Hilda L. Smith, 200–219. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

September 28<sup>th</sup>

#### 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
- Boucher, Joanne. “Male Power and Contract Theory: Hobbes and Locke in Carole

Pateman's 'The Sexual Contract.'" *Canadian Journal of Political Science / Revue Canadienne de Science Politique* 36, no. 1 (2003): 23–38.

- Fraser, Nancy. "Beyond the Master/Subject Model: Reflections on Carole Pateman's Sexual Contract." *Social Text*, no. 37 (1993): 173–81.

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

**October 5<sup>th</sup>**

### **Week 5: Retrieving 'Women' in the History of Political Thought [PP]**

- Brill, Sara. "Self-Sacrifice as Wifely Virtue in Aristotle's Political Theory." In *The Wives of Western Philosophy*, 36–55. Routledge, 2020.
- Wollstonecraft, Mary. *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, (Ch. 5) 2002. <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/3420>. [PDF on Quercus]
- Brace, Laura. "Not Empire, but Equality: Mary Wollstonecraft, the Marriage State and the Sexual Contract." *Journal of Political Philosophy* 8, no. 4 (2000): 433–55.
- "Hobbes, History, Politics, and Gender: A Conversation with Carole Pateman and Quentin Skinner." In *Feminist Interpretations of Thomas Hobbes*, 18–43. Penn State University Press, 2012.

(NB Oct 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>: UT Grad Workshop: 'Women in the History of Political Thought: Labor, Property, and the Family')

**October 12<sup>th</sup>**

### **Week 6: Book Reviews due**

**October 19<sup>th</sup>**

### **Week 7: Feminism *and* the 'Canon or Feminism *against* the 'Canon'? [PP]**

- Pateman, Carole. "Conclusion: Women's Writing, Women's Standing: Theory and Politics in the Early Modern Period." In *Women Writers and the Early Modern British Political Tradition*, edited by Hilda L. Smith, 363–82. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Ross, Dorothy. "Against Canons: Liberating the Social Sciences." *Society* 29, no. 1 (1991): 10–13.

- Linda Zerilli, “Machiavelli’s Sisters: Women and ‘the Conversation’ of Political Theory,” *Political Theory* 19, no. 2 (May 1, 1991): 252–76.
- Carver, Terrell. “‘Mere Auxiliaries to the Movement:’ How Intellectual Biography Obscures Marx’s and Engels’s Gendered Political Partnerships.” In *The Wives of Western Philosophy*, 167–84. Routledge, 2020.

## October 26<sup>th</sup>

### Week 8: The Domination Contract [PP]

- Carole Pateman and Charles Mills. *The Contract and Domination*. 1st edition. Cambridge: Polity, 2007.
  - Introduction
  - CH 2. The Settler Contract
  - CH 3. The Domination Contract
- Patil, Vrushali. “From Patriarchy to Intersectionality: A Transnational Feminist Assessment of How Far We’ve Really Come.” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 38, no. 4 (2013): 847–67.
- Janara, Laura. “Brothers and Others: Tocqueville and Beaumont, U.S. Genealogy, Democracy, and Racism.” *Political Theory* 32, no. 6 (December 1, 2004): 773–800.

## November 2<sup>nd</sup>

### Week 9: The Racial Contract [PP]

- Crenshaw, Kimberle. “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics.” *University of Chicago Legal Forum* 1989, no. 1 (December 7, 2015).
- *The Contract and Domination*.
  - CH 5. Race, Sex, and Indifference
  - CH 6. Intersecting Contracts
- Gines, Kathryn T. “Black Feminist Reflections on Charles Mills’s ‘Intersecting Contracts.’” *Critical Philosophy of Race* 5, no. 1 (2017): 19–28.
- Shanks, Torrey. “Affect, Critique, and the Social Contract.” *Theory & Event* 18, no. 1 (2015): N\_A.

## November 6-10 UTSG READING WEEK

**November 16<sup>th</sup>**

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

- Okin, Susan M. et. al, *Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?*
- Part I, Part III: 2 (*Tywman vs. Tywman*), in Janet Halley, *Split Decisions: How and Why to Take a Break from Feminism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006.
- Monique Wittig, *The Straight Mind and Other Essays*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.
  - CH 1. The Category of Sex)
  - CH 2. One is Not Born a Woman

**November 23**

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

- Rubin, Gayle S. “Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality.” In *Culture, Society and Sexuality: A Reader*, edited by Peter Aggleton and Richard G. Parker, 150–87. Routledge, 2006.
- Cohen, Cathy J. “Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics?” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 3, no. 4 (May 1, 1997): 437–65.
- Butler, Judith. “Doing Justice to Someone: Sex Reassignment and Allegories of Transsexuality.” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 7, no. 4 (2001): 621–36.
- MacKinnon, Catharine. “Exploring Transgender Law and Politics.” University of Oxford, November 28, 2022. <https://signsjournal.org/exploring-transgender-law-and-politics/>.

**November 30<sup>th</sup>**

**Week 12 Presentations and closing discussion.**

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## 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://uoft.me/5EB)
- 416-978-8030
- Support if Students are Feeling Distressed [uoft.me/5EC](http://uoft.me/5EC)
- U of T My Student Support Program (My SSP) [uoft.me/5ED](http://uoft.me/5ED)
- Community Safety Office [communitysafety.utoronto.ca/](http://communitysafety.utoronto.ca/) 416-978-1485
- U of T Safety & Support [safety.utoronto.ca/](http://safety.utoronto.ca/)