Assistants
Each student will be assigned a TA.
Graduate TA’s are: Alex Madva (alexmadva@gmail.com) and David Blancha (db2586@columbia.edu). Anna Couturier (amc2209@columbia.edu), a senior Gender Studies major, will also be assisting me.

Course Description
Is there an essential difference between women and men? If so, what is the source of this difference (e.g., the body or the soul?) and what does the difference imply in moral, social, and political terms? If not, how are the apparent differences produced? If the “facts” about gender are social and cultural products, then what does this imply about other (apparent) facts about the world? How do questions about race and ethnicity conflict or overlap with those about gender? Is there a “normal” way of being “queer”? Should these questions be applied globally? If not, why not? If so, how? This course introduces students to philosophy and feminism through a critical discussion of these and related questions. Assigned materials include historical and contemporary texts, the arts, and lectures on Columbia campus.

Course Goals
Learn what philosophy is and how philosophy relates to problems in feminism and gender studies.
Develop critical and analytical reading and writing skills.
Explore fundamental philosophical questions about the nature of humanity, the construction of the human subject, the universality of moral concepts, the nature of bias, and the possibility of knowledge and/or objectivity in science.
Learn how to use the powerful tools of gender and philosophy to dissect contemporary and historical materials.
Reconsider basic assumptions about who you are and what you want to be.

Readings
Because we will read and discuss particular passages in class, it is important that you have HARD COPIES OF REQUIRED READINGS with you. Some assigned readings are ONLY available in Courseworks. Find them in the Assignments section, listed alphabetically by author’s name. The following books are required and available at Book Culture (on 112th b/w Brdwy and Amsterdam) and in the reserve room at Butler Library:
Miriam Schneir, ed., Feminism: The Essential Historical Writings
Plato, The Last Days of Socrates (Penguin) [or another version of Plato’s Phaedo will do]
Elaine Pagels, Adam, Eve, and the Serpent (Vintage)
Thomas Laqueur, Making Sex: Body, Gender,... (Harvard)
Michael Foucault, The History of Sexuality, vol. I
Judith Butler, Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity
Toni Morrison, Race-ing Justice, En-gendering Power (Pantheon)
Michael Warner, The Trouble with Normal (Free Press)
Miranda Fricker and Jennifer Hornsby, Cambridge Companion to Feminism in Philosophy

Assignments
Your primary goal is to read and think about the assigned materials, and to discuss them in class. This means coming to class prepared! We will take role and expect students to be in class and prepared.
Three one-page, single-spaced papers
One 5-page double-spaced paper
Final examination
Two lecture analyses: Attend a lecture at Columbia (Barnard/Columbia/Law/anywhere on campus) and write a 300-400 word account and analysis.

Grades
Three one-page papers 36%; one five-page paper 25%
Lecture analyses combined with class attendance and participation 14%
Final Exam 25%
Lecture Topics and Readings

A. Essentialism: A Philosophical and Historical Perspective

Week 1 Introduction to Course // The Origins of Essentialism.
Reading: Plato’s Phaedo in The Last Days of Socrates (another edition of the Phaedo is fine).

Week 2 Mind, Body, Nature, and Truth
1/26: Reading: Pagels’ Adam, Eve, and the Serpent, ch. 1 (all), ch. 2 (pp. 32-43), ch. 3 (64-77).
1/28: Reading: Pagels’ Adam, Eve, …, ch. 4 (all), ch. 6 (all); New Testament, Paul Romans,1-8.
Trip to the Metropolitan Museum of Art First Paper Assignment Distributed.

Week 3 Women’s Souls and Virtue // Bodies and Property
2/2: Reading in Schneir: Wollstonecraft (pp. 5-16); Grimke (pp. 35-48); Sojourner Truth, pp. 92-98.
2/4: Reading: in Schneir, Goldman (308-24); Engels (pp. 189-204).
FIRST PAPER DUE by 5:00, Friday

B. Essentialism: Construction and Critique

Week 4 Foucault, the Discourse of the Normal and the Perverse.
2/9 and 2/11: Reading: Foucault, History of Sexuality, Parts 1, 2, 3.

Week 5 Constructing Sexual Difference.
2/16: Reading: Laqueur’s Making Sex, ch. 1-2, 3 (quick read though focus a bit on pp. 69, 82, 88, 98-99).
2/18: Reading: Laqueur, ch.5 (pp. 149-63), ch.6 (pp. 193-207; 243).
First Lecture Analysis Due Friday, 4:00.

Week 6 Constructing Gender
2/23-25: Reading: Butler, Gender Trouble, preface, ch. 1, ch. 3, § Concluding Unscientific Postscript to end.
Second Paper Assignment Distributed.

Week 7 The Normal
3/2-4: Reading: Michael Warner, The Trouble with Normal, chs. 1, 2, 3, and pp. 142-54, 192-3.
SECOND PAPER DUE by 5:00 Friday

C. Ethnicity, Gender, and Truth

Week 8 Race, Gender, and Power.

Week 9 Spring Break: March 15-21

Week 10 Race-ing Objectivity
3/25: Reading: TBA, Lecture by Alex Madva
Third Paper Assignment Distributed

D. Feminism, Gender, and the Global Context

Week 11 Constructing the Global Subject and Re-orienting Desire
4/1 Readings: Abu-Lughod, “Rethinking;” Massad in Courseworks [readings may be reordered]
THIRD PAPER DUE by 5:00 Friday

Week 12 Globalizing Desire
Second Lecture Analysis Due Friday, 4:00.

E. Feminism, Objectivity, and Science

Week 13 Feminism, Objectivity, and Knowledge.
4/15: Fricker (ch.8), and Wylie (ch. 9)
Final Paper Assignment Distributed

Week 14 Feminism and Nature.

Week 15 The Abuses of Essentialism Reconsidered // Conclusions.
Final PAPER DUE at 3:00, Thursday, May 6.
REMEMBER: 3-hour EXAM during exam period.