

## **Topics in Political Theory: Gender and Equality**

**POLS 370, Section AB**

**Davis 307 / MWF 10:00-10:50am**

**Instructor: Professor Russell Arben Fox**

**Office and Office Hours: Davis 313; MTRF 3:00-5:00pm and by appointment**

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### **The Topic:**

This is an upper-level political science course, focusing the way in which the goal of “equality” in our society is complicated by the reality of gender. This is a complication which goes all the way back to Thomas Jefferson’s Declaration of Independence: which, of course, famously stated that it was “self-evident...that all men are created equal.” What about women? Are they created equal? From the beginning of this country—indeed, from the beginning of the revolutionary project which this country is perhaps the greatest expression of—that question has been debated...though it is only within the last century, and particularly within the last 50 years, that this debate has led to genuine changes in the way people in our country think and act. The goal of this course, in our focus on gender and equality, is to consider whether those changes have resulted in the kind of equality they aimed for—and if not, why not?

The subject matter of this course will begin as mostly theoretical, but then will move into the sociological and the practical. There will be many readings about which you will be expected to write responses; there will be discussion boards that you will have to contribute to; there will be visitors to class that you will write responses about; and there will be a final exam at the end of the semester. All of these assignments will require significant effort—especially since we have eight weeks to get through it all! So while any student who has demonstrated their competence in other political science or similar classes is welcome, this course should not be treated lightly—I aim to make this class rewarding, but you’ll have to work for those rewards. Successful completion of the class satisfies a requirements for the Political Science major.

### **The Instructor:**

That’s me. My name, office hours, and office e-mail are included at the top of this sheet. Please make use of my office hours if you have a question or concern, or send me an e-mail message and set up a meeting.

### **The Reading:**

There is only one book required for this course--Susan Moller Okin, *Justice, Gender, and the Family* (Basic Books, 1989). However, there will also be many readings posted on Moodle in PDF format, and two weeks’s of readings included as part of the discussion boards who will participate in. It is important that you have regular access to all these in class. This can be done by printing them off, by saving them on an electronic device, or by bringing a laptop or phone with internet access to class.

### **The Schedule:**

Monday, March 10—first day of class; why gender inequality?

Wednesday, March 12—de Gouge and Wollstonecraft readings; the beginning of feminism

Friday, March 14—Stanton and Addams readings; early American feminism

Monday, March 17 to Friday, March 21—spring break; no class

Monday, March 24–Friedan and Redstocking readings; contemporary liberal feminism  
Wednesday, March 26–Sommers and Schlafly readings; conservative challenges to feminism  
Friday, March 28–Elstain and Gilligan readings; the alternative of difference feminism

Monday, March 31–Gould reading; feminism and democracy  
Wednesday, April 2–Okin, chp. 1; feminist justice  
Friday, April 4–Okin, chp. 2; family justice

Monday, April 7–lecture with Dr. Wynn; workplace inequality (professor not in attendance)  
Wednesday, April 9–lecture with Dr. Wynn; workplace inequality, continued  
Friday, April 11–guest speaker

Monday, April 14–Okin, chp. 4; libertarianism and feminism  
Wednesday, April 16–Okin, chp. 5, egalitarianism and feminism  
Friday, April 18–Good Friday; no class

Monday, April 21–Okin, chp. 6; private and public justice  
Wednesday, April 23–lecture with Dr. Wynn; masculinity and equality  
Friday, April 25–guest speaker

Monday, April 28–Okin, chp. 7; marriage and equality  
Wednesday, April 30–last day of class; the future of gender equality

Tuesday, May 6, 10am–final examination

### **The Grades:**

Grading in this course will follow a strict 100-point scale:

91 - 100        = A  
81 - 90         = B  
71 - 80         = C  
61 - 70         = D  
60 and below = let's not talk about that, shall we?

In calculating the grades, however, I throw in a 10-point margin for error:

Attendance	15 points
Reading response papers	30 points (5 points per assignment)
Presentation response papers	10 points (5 points per assignment)
Discussion board participation	20 points (10 points per week)
Final examination	35 points
<b>Total:</b>	<b>110 points</b>

So, while grades will be distributed according to the 100-point scale listed above, there is actually 110 points possible in this class. This margin exists to provide cover for those inevitable bad days that plague us all. Don't abuse it, for you'll find that 10 points goes quickly.

**Attendance**—Normally I do not take attendance; I figure that by this point you are adults, and you can take responsibility for yourself. However, in a concentrated course such as this, it is **IMPERATIVE** that you attend, and participate, as much as you possibly can. So I will begin the semester with everyone in possession of 10 attendance points, and every day that I am in attendance I will take roll. Between the first and the last days of the class, we have 17 regular class periods, 16 of which I will be present. Everyone will be allowed **one unexcused absence**. After that, you will be docked 1 point for every day you miss, until your fifteen points are **GONE**.

**Reading response papers**—These papers are 2-3 page, typed, double-spaced, papers which provide a brief summary and a response to any particular reading assignment given on any particular day in class. I will give a response question to every chapter out of the Okin book, and every essay I post on Moodle. Response papers will be worth up to 5 points each, and will be due no less than one week following the assigned reading. **Late papers, without prior arrangement, will not be accepted**. Up to **SIX** response papers may be written.

**Presentation response papers**—These papers are the same as the reading response papers; same size, and due in the same time frame. Only in this case, the material to be summarized and responded to will be comments given us by either visitors to the class, or to the lectures given by Dr. Tor Wynn. Up to **TWO** of these response papers may be written.

**Discussion board participation**—On the weeks of March 31-April 4, and April 14-18, students will sign into a discussion board hosted by both Dr. Wynn and myself, and you will be expected to post comments online, both original and in response to others' comments, about material which will be provided as a prompt to the topic of Dr. Wynn's upcoming lectures. (So, the March 31-April 4 material will anticipate Dr. Wynn's lectures on April 7 and 9, and the April 14-18 material will anticipate Dr. Wynn's lecture on April 23.) Students are encouraged to **respond at length**; however, at least **THREE** separate posts during the week will be expected. You are encouraged to draw inferences between the assigned material and personal experiences, outside media, and/or current events. Discussion board posts will be evaluated on four factors: 1) familiarity with the assigned materials, 2) contribution to the discussion, 3) timeliness, and 4) spelling and grammar. You may earn up to 10 points for each week of participation.

**Final exam**—The only test this semester will be **comprehensive**, and will involve both short answer and essay questions. The exam will be worth up to 35 points.

#### **A Declaration:**

It should go without saying that **ANY** sort of academic dishonesty is detrimental to both your own education and my ability to fairly and sympathetically administer and grade this class. Hence, **any cheating, plagiarism, fabrication or falsification of data or communications, or other general malfeasance that I verify will potentially result in an automatic ZERO ("0") for the assignment or test in question, depending on the gravity of the offense**. In order to enforce this policy, I reserve the right to take whatever steps I deem appropriate, including banning cell phones and other electronic implements during test-taking, changing the wording or deadlines of assignments (with due notice), and so forth. You're grown-ups by now, so you consider the odds, and the consequences. If you feel you need more guidance or specifications on this policy, see the attached **HONOR CODE** sheet.

### **HONOR CODE Sanctions and Procedures:**

The value of an Academic Honor Code and Sanctions for Honor Code violations is that it allows faculty and students to have a clear indication of how specific types of “cheating” and violations of academic integrity are addressed.

#### **Sanctions for first time offenses:**

The professor suspects and verifies violation of the honor code and notifies the Division Chair/Program Director who sends the information via a form to the Registrar to check for priors. The professor meets with the student to discuss the problem. If the student has no priors, he or she can admit and accept the sanction (generally a zero for the assignment). If the student disagrees, a meeting with the Division Chair/Program Director is scheduled. If the student then agrees to the sanction, notification is sent to the adviser and appropriate division chair/program director. The case is closed and filed in the Registrar’s office. If there is no agreement, the case is sent to the Academic Integrity Board for a final decision.

#### **Sanctions if there has been a prior offense:**

All second (or 2+) time offenses and those where the student doesn’t agree with the sanctions will be heard by the Academic Integrity Board. If the student is deemed not guilty, the case is closed and the information is filed in the Registrar’s office. If the student is found responsible, sanctions could include a failing grade for the course, a notation on the transcript, suspension or expulsion from the university or any combination of these sanctions.

#### **Examples of Academic Dishonesty:**

- 1. Cheating:** using unauthorized notes, study aids, or information on an examination; altering a graded work after it has been returned, then submitting the work for re-grading; allowing another person to do one's work and submitting that work under one's own name; submitting identical or similar papers for credit in more than one course without prior permission from the course instructors.
- 2. Plagiarism:** submitting material that in part or whole is not entirely one's own work without attributing those same portions to their correct source.
- 3. Fabrication:** falsifying or inventing any information, data or citation; presenting data that were not gathered in accordance with standard guidelines defining the appropriate methods for collecting or generating data and failing to include an accurate account of the method by which the data were gathered or collected.
- 4. Obtaining an Unfair Advantage:** (a) stealing, reproducing, circulating or otherwise gaining access to examination materials prior to the time authorized by the instructor; (b) stealing, destroying, defacing or concealing library materials with the purpose of depriving others of their use; (c) unauthorized collaborating on an academic assignment (d) retaining, possessing, using or circulating previously given examination materials, where those materials clearly indicate that they are to be returned to the instructor at the conclusion of the examination; (e) intentionally obstructing or interfering with another student's academic work (f) unauthorized consultation with other students personally, or use of any electronic devices or (g) otherwise undertaking activity with the purpose of creating or obtaining an unfair academic advantage over other students' academic work.
- 5. Aiding and Abetting Academic Dishonesty:** (a) providing material, information, or other assistance to another person with knowledge that such aid could be used in any of the violations stated above, or (b) providing false information in connection with any inquiry regarding academic integrity.
- 6. Falsification of Records and Official Documents:** altering documents affecting academic records; forging signatures of authorization or falsifying information on an official academic document, grade report, letter of permission, petition, drop/add form, ID card, or any other official University document.
- 7. Unauthorized Access to computerized academic or administrative records or systems:** viewing or altering computer records, modifying computer programs or systems, releasing or dispensing information gained via unauthorized access, or interfering with the use or availability of computer systems or information.

*Examples of academic dishonesty used by permission of the Northwestern University Undergraduate Academic Conduct Committee.*