Theorizing Power in Knowledge: Developments in Feminist Epistemology
PHIL 402/673 / WS 422
Winter 2017

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Class Meetings: Tues 11:30-2:30
HH 227

Course Description
For those interested in how social power dynamics shape the production of knowledge and how to develop good models of inquiry given the role of social power, the field of feminist epistemology has proved to be a rich resource. In this seminar we will investigate some of the key questions, concepts, and concerns of feminist epistemologists and philosophers of science: How is knowledge socially situated? What does it mean to look at knowledge through a gendered lens and how does the recognition of the interplay of multiple axes of oppression complicate this? How is objective knowledge possible according to feminist epistemologies? After initially examining some of the classic contributions of feminist epistemology, we will turn our attention to recent research in the field, taking up contemporary work on the role of ignorance in knowledge production, the idea of epistemic injustice, and the role of trust in knowing across differently situated agents. Throughout, we will work to understand the influence of feminist epistemologies in contemporary philosophy, as well as consider how feminist epistemologies have guided research on gendered and raced relations.

This course will be run in seminar format. In addition to familiarizing you with a focused area of study, one of the goals of the course is to develop your philosophical and analytical skills within a small seminar context. Thus, we will investigate the readings together, using the insights of each other to further both our understanding of the authors and our understanding of the philosophical problems at hand. We are all responsible for the quality of the course; each of us must come to class having already put thought into the issues at hand, prepared to articulate and discuss these issues. On particular days, you will be asked to lead the discussion. Additionally, late in the term, you will give a presentation to the class based on your research for your final paper.

Texts

Required:
• Epistemologies of Resistance, J. Medina (JM)
• collection of journal articles and chapters available through library e-reserve (LER)
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Recommended:
• *Epistemic Injustice*, M. Fricker (2007) (ordered at the bookstore and on library reserve) (MF)
• *Engendering Rationalities*, ed. N. Tuana and S. Morgen (2001) (ordered at the bookstore and on library reserve) (T&M)
• Additional readings available through library e-reserve (LER)

Course Requirements

Undergraduate Requirements:

1. take home midterm (series of short essays) 20%
2. short analysis paper 4-6 pp. 20%
3. research paper approx. 10 pp 25%
4. research presentation (based on paper) 5%
5. class participation 30%

Class participation includes regular preparation of questions for class, occasional 1-page response papers, leading of discussions, and closing remarks)

Graduate Requirements:

1. two short analysis papers 4-6 pp. 20% each
2. research paper 15-18 pp 25%
3. research presentation (based on paper) 5%
4. class participation 30%

Class participation includes regular preparation of questions for class, occasional 1-page response papers, leading of discussions, and closing remarks

For classes where there is recommended reading in addition to required reading, graduate students are expected to also read at least one of the recommended essays. These can be incorporated into class discussion, while recognizing that not all of your classmates will have read it.

Late Policy: All assignments are expected to be handed in on time. Late papers will be subject to grade lowering (usually 1/3 letter grade per day), unless an extension has been granted ahead of time. Extensions will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, and must be arranged prior to the due date.

Class Participation: Being a seminar style course and a once-a-week class, class participation is very important and class attendance is mandatory. Therefore, it is particularly important that you speak with me (preferably ahead of time) if you will be missing any classes. If necessary, we can make arrangements for you to do some additional assignments to make up for excused absences
from class discussion. Notes from classes missed should be obtained by talking with other students.

Class participation, of course, involves more than just attendance. In order to be an active class participant, you need not always have something to say. But you must be an attentive listener of others in the class, and contribute to class discussion when you feel you do have something to say. Especially in a seminar style class, we all share the responsibility of making our class time as productive as possible. The class participation component of this course also includes some written preparation, usually in the form of preparing questions for particular class meetings.

**CLOSING REMARKS:** Closing remarks are submitted electronically to the entire class and consist of 1 paragraph of post-class thoughts submitted 48 hrs. after class. You will be assigned dates such that you must submit every second week.

**Communications:** Do not hesitate to contact me via email to set up an appointment whenever you need to see me in person. 48 hrs advance notice is recommended. There are only a couple of times throughout the term where my in-person availability will be a bit restricted due to travel commitments, but in most cases I will still be available for consultation via email or other means if necessary.
Reading Schedule: Subject to Adjustments

Wk 1  Intro to Feminist Epistemologies
3/1/17  background reading to do shortly after class; you can include in closing remarks:
Sandra Harding “Why has the Sex/Gender System Become Visible Only Now?” (LER)
Sandra Harding “Is There a Feminist Method?” (LER)

Recomm: Intro Alcoff and Potter Feminist Epistemologies (A&P)

Wk 2  History and Major Developments: Situated Knowing
10/1/17  Discuss week 1 readings and:
Lorraine Code “Taking Subjectivity into Account” (A&P)
Dorothy Smith “Women’s Perspective as a Radical Critique of Sociology” (LER)

Recomm:
Lorraine Code “Is the Sex of the Knower Epistemologically Significant?”
(early version) (LER)
Nancy Hartsock “The Feminist Standpoint: Developing the Ground for a Specifically Feminist Historical Materialism” (LER)

Closing Remarks: Group A (submit to discussion thread on LEARN)

Wk 3  Standpoint Theory: its transformations
17/1/17  Donna Haraway “Situated Knowledges” (LER)
Sandra Harding “Rethinking Standpoint Epistemology” (FE)
Bat-Ami Bar On “Marginality and Epistemic Privilege” (FE)

Recomm:
Patricia Hill Collins “Learning from the Outsider Within: The Sociological Significance of Black Feminist Thought” (LER)
Sandra Harding “Strong Objectivity” from Whose Science? Whose Knowledge? (LER)

-Response paper on this week’s reading due from everyone in hard copy in class
-Closing Remarks: Group B

Wk 4  Situated Knowing and the Sciences
24/1/17  Alison Wylie “Why Standpoint Matters” (LER)
Helen Longino “Subjects Power and Knowledge…” (FE)
Kristen Intemann “25 Years of Feminist Empiricism and Standpoint Theory: Where are We Now?” (LER)
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Recomm:
Helen Longino “Can There Be a Feminist Science?” (LER)
Kristina Rolin “Gender and Trust in Science” (LER)
Standpoint Theory Symposium in Hypatia (V24, #4 Fall 2009) including:
-Kristina Rolin “Standpoint Theory as a Methodology for the Study of Power Relations” (LER)
-Sandra Harding “Standpoint Theories: Productively Controversial” (LER)
-Janet Kourany “The Place of Standpoint Theory in Feminist Science Studies” (LER)

Discussion questions submitted by all
Closing Remarks: Group A

Wk 5 Values/Objectivity/the Bias Paradox
31/1/17
Elizabeth Anderson “Uses of Value Judgments in Science: A General Argument, with Lessons from a Case Study of Feminist Research on Divorce” (LER)
Louise Antony “Quine as Feminist” (LER)
Recomm:
Helen Longino “Can There Be a Feminist Science?” (LER)
Kathryn Pyne Addelson “Man of Professional Wisdom” (LER)
Elizabeth Anderson “Knowledge, Human Interests, and Objectivity in Feminist Epistemology” (LER—pending)
Richmond Campbell “The Bias Paradox in Feminist Epistemology (LER and T&M)

**Hand out take-home midterm/paper assignment this week: DUE FEBRUARY 10th

Closing Remarks: Group B

Wk 6 Epistemic Subjects and Their Relations
7/2/17
Lynn Hankinson Nelson “Epistemological Communities” (FE)
Heidi Grasswick “Individuals in Communities” (LER)
Naomi Scheman “Epistemology Resuscitated” (LER)

Recomm:
Louise Antony “Sisters Please, I’d Rather Do it Myself” (LER)
Nancy Tuana “Material Locations: An Interactionist Alternative to realism/social constructivism” (LER and T&M)
Karen Frost-Arnold “Imposters, Tricksters, and Trustworthiness as an Epistemic Virtue” (LER)

Closing Remarks: Group A
(reminder: midterm/paper due Fri Feb 10th)
Wk 7
14/2/17
Taking Stock: Feminist Epistemology within “Epistemology”
Phyllis Rooney “What is Distinctive about Feminist Epistemology at 25?” (LER)
Elizabeth Anderson “Feminist Epistemology: an Interpretation and Defense” (LER)
Nancy Daukas “Altogether Now: A Virtue-theoretic Approach to Pluralism in Feminist Epistemology” (LER)

Recommended Reading
Heidi Grasswick “Understanding Epistemic Normativity in Feminist Epistemology” (LER)

Closing Remarks: Group B

***BREAK Feb 20-24

Wk 8
28/2/17
Theorizing Ignorance and Epistemic Injustice
Cynthia Townley “Toward a Reevaluation of Ignorance” (LER)
Miranda Fricker, ch. 1 “Testimonial Injustice” (MF and soon available on LER)
Kristie Dotson “Tracking Epistemic Violence, Tracking Practices of Silencing” (LER)

Recomm:
Nancy Daukas “Epistemic Trust and Social Location” (LER)
Kristie Dotson “Cautionary Tale: On Limiting Epistemic Oppression” (LER)
Karen Jones “The Politics of Credibility?” (LER)

**Hand Out (2nd) Paper Assignment: DUE FRIDAY MARCH 6TH**

Closing Remarks: Group A

Wk 9
7/3/17
Theorizing Ignorance and Epistemic Injustice
Gaile Pohlhaus “Relational Knowing and Epistemic Injustice: Toward a Theory of Willful Hermeneutical Ignorance” (LER)
José Medina Epistemologies of Resistance pp. for focus TBA

Recomm:
Elizabeth Anderson “Epistemic Justice as a Virtue of Social Institutions” (LER)
Kristie Dotson “Conceptualizing Epistemic Oppression” (LER)

Closing Remarks: Group B

(reminder: analysis paper due Fri March 6)
Wk 10  Theorizing Ignorance and Epistemic Injustice  
14/3/17  José Medina *Epistemologies of Resistance* pp. for focus TBA 

*Closing Remarks: Group A and B*

Wk 11  Research Presentations and related reading material TBA  
21/3/17

Wk 12  Research Presentations and related reading material TBA  
28/3/17

***Final paper due date TBA (it will fall during exam period)***

**General Recommended Resources available (or linked) through LER**

Anderson, Elizabeth “Feminist Epistemology and Philosophy of Science” (in Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)

Grasswick, Heidi “Feminist Social Epistemology” (in Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)

Grasswick, Heidi “Introduction: Feminist Epistemology and Philosophy of Science in the Twenty-first Century” (LER)