PHIL 4362: ST: Philosophy of Woman

W 5:30- 8:15pm Strake 202

Dr. Sommers sommers@stthom.edu 713.942.5048

Office Hours: T-TH 11:00-1:00pm; Wednesday 2:00-5:00pm. Other times by appointment

Texts:


Sor Juna Ines de la Cruz, The Answer / La Respuesta, Including a Selection of Poems. The Feminist Press at the City University of New York 1994)


Edith Stein, Essays on Woman ICS Publications; 2 edition, 1996

Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Herland.

Various other primary sources: on Blackboard or online.


Requirements:

1) All reading assignments should be completed by the date listed.

2) All students will make a presentation in Pt. 6 of the course on an approved topic; outlines and bibliography for presentation are due 19 October.

3) A 15pp. paper based on the presentation material will be due at the end of the semester.

4) Midterm and final exam are each 25% of the final grade; presentation and 15pp. paper are 40%; participation is 10%.

Attendance is required: a second absence from class will result in 50 points off the participation grade; a third absence from the class will result in a 0 for participation. Attending class includes having the
readings for the day in one’s hands. Before each class (except for Presentation days), students will be asked to hand in a question based on the reading for the day. This question should include a direct quotation from one of the books or articles assigned (other than PMPW) and be written on a 3x5 notecard. This card will signify attendance.

The University policies requiring intellectual honesty and the penalties for plagiarism will be strictly enforced.

No electronic paraphernalia in class, unless you need this accommodation. Any student with a disability requiring accommodations in this course is encouraged to contact me after class or during office hours. Additionally, students will need to contact Counseling and Disability Services in Crooker Center. This office can be reached at (713) 525-2169 or 6953.

Course Objectives:

1) To gain an historical understanding of what Prudence Allen terms “The Concept of Woman”.

2) To engage in philosophical discussion, rather than polemical debate, about issues of gender, identity, and public and private roles.

3) To examine the claim that human beings are “always or for the most part” men or women, male or female.

4) To ask whether the “public square” can be a field of collaboration for men and women or is it necessarily the battle field in a class-war.

5) To determine whether there is any meaning to the term “private” in the contemporary world and, if there is, whether it can be denominate a place of collaboration between men and women instead of a place of segregation.

Topics & Assignments

Introduction


Pt. 1: Is Woman a “political animal”? (PMPW, c. 1)

31 August: Plato, Republic III 410 (“Neither are the two arts of music and gymnastic really designed, as is often supposed, the one for the training of the soul, the other for the training of the body.” – V) http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/republic.html
Pt. 2: Is Woman a Citizen of the “Heavenly City”? (PMPW, c. 2)

14 September: The Passion of the Holy Martyrs Perpetua and Felicitas
http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/tertullian24.html; Augustine, City of God, selections:
(Blackboard Course Documents)


28 September: Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz, The Answer / La Respuesta, Film: Yo, las peor de todas

Pt. 3 Is Democracy for Woman, too? (PMPW c. 3)

05 October: Thomas Hobbes: Leviathan, II, c. 20 OF DOMINION PATERNAL AND DESPOTICAL

Take-Home Exam: Due 12 October

10-11 October Fall Break

12 October: John Stuart Mill, Subjection of Women

Pt. 4: Where is Woman Après la Révolution? (PMPW c. 4)


Pt. 5: Can Woman, Can the Human Person, be “Re-described”? (PMPW c. 5)

26 October: Radical Feminism, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Herland

02 November: Edith Stein, Essays On Woman

Pt. 6: Negotiating Public & Private (PMPW c. 6)

09 November: Presentations

16 November: Presentations

23-25 Thanksgiving Holiday

30 November: Presentations

07 December 4:30- 7:00pm: Final Exam