Spring 2020 Graduate Course Descriptions

WSGS 522/Comm 521 Communication and Gender
T/Th 12:15 (P. Arneson)

Examines research addressing differences and similarities in male and female communication styles in a variety of contexts, ranging from personal to social to work relationships, with attention given to philosophical and narrative understandings of what it means to be male and female persons.

WSGS 529/ENGL 558 Civil Rights Literature
Mon 6:00-8:40pm (K. Glass)

This course examines selected writings from the civil rights period in America. Students will have an opportunity to situate texts by Maya Angelou, James Baldwin, Nikki Giovanni, Dr. King, Huey P. Newton (and many others) in their sociopolitical contexts, while addressing broader questions of race, class, gender, orientation, and social justice. We'll focus on richly diverse (and often diverging) texts by well-known civil rights leaders, but we'll also study works by lesser-known figures who helped drive the movement. In this literature course, we'll consider the "literary" as well as sociopolitical dimensions of the works on our list. In addition to examining primary and secondary texts, we'll explore the oral tradition, which infuses the literature and social activism of the period.

WSGS 637/PHIL 570 Early Modern Women Philosophers
Wed 5-7:40 (D. Selcer)

Though typically excluded from the philosophical canon, early modern women made significant conceptual contributions to and interventions in metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, political theory, and the philosophical foundations of modern science. This seminar will engage primary texts by women philosophers (and occasionally their allies and interlocutors) written in Europe during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, including Élisabeth de Bohême, Margaret Cavendish, Anne Finch Conway, and Olympe de Gouges. Though gender in the sense we now understand it was not yet an explicitly formulated category, these philosophers critically engage theories of embodiment, knowledge-production, and politics in ways we can now describe in its terms,
establishing rich theoretical models for arraying experience and experiment, reason and passion, intellectual and political equality, as well as simultaneously metaphysical, 'natural philosophical' (i.e., scientific), and social accounts of power. The seminar will require active intellectual and discursive participation. Student writing may engage our thinkers and texts from any relevant disciplinary or multidisciplinary perspective. Undergraduate-level enrollment requires no specific background, but is intended for relatively advanced students studying any liberal arts discipline who are interested in philosophy or gender studies. Graduate-level enrollment also requires no specific background, though it will be useful to have at least some training either in philosophy, the early modern period (whatever the discipline), or in historical approaches to gender (whatever the period or discipline).