

**PHILOSOPHY 4B03/6B03: Theory of Value**  
**Term 2 (Winter) 2018-19**  
**Class meets: Fridays, 11.30-2.00**

Instructor: Dr. Elisabeth Gedge  
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Office: UH 303  
Office hours: TBA

**Course description:**

In this course we will critically review recent work in relational autonomy. Since feminist theory has taken the ‘relational turn,’ theorists have been grappling with how our situatedness in a network of social relations affects our prospect of enjoying full autonomy. If our desires and preferences are unduly influenced by social norms and expectations, can we be autonomous? If opportunities for education or employment are constrained by gendered cultural expectations, can we be viewed as autonomous? If our lives are lived under oppressive pressures, can we be said to be acting on autonomously chosen values? These, and related questions, have shaped feminist theories of autonomy, and we will judge whether progress has been made in providing clear and coherent answers to them as we work through the essays in our chosen text.

**Course Objectives**

By the end of this course students will have identified the complex meanings of autonomy, and the challenges to its definition. They will have a more sophisticated understanding of the relationship – positive and negative – between socialisation and autonomous agency. They will also be familiar with recent debates within feminist autonomy theory and have developed critical skills with which to mediate those debates.

**Required Reading**

Andrea Veltman and Mark Piper (eds): *Autonomy, Oppression, and Gender*  
(Oxford UP, 2014)

**Method of Assessment**

Weekly reading summaries (approx. 1 page): 10/12 weeks	- 10%
Seminar presentations	- 30%
Paper outline (due March 15)	- 10%
Major paper (due April 12)	- 50%

The purpose of the weekly reading **summaries** is to ensure that students come to the seminar ready to discuss the material in an informed and critical manner. The summary should include a question for discussion by the group. Reading summaries will be handed in immediately after class or submitted electronically before class. If you hand in your summary on time you automatically receive 1%.

At the first class we will collectively assign dates and topics for the **seminar presentations**. Each presentation will be based on the reading for the week, and should engage the class in a critical discussion

of the ideas presented. The grade will be determined by the accuracy of the textual interpretation, and the depth and interest of the critique presented. The emphasis in the presentation should be on critical discussion rather than exposition, since it is assumed all students will have read the material for the week. It is likely that students will want to use the presentation as a basis for the major paper.

An **outline** of the proposed major paper is due by March 15. Each student will send me her/his outline in advance of an appointment to discuss it. The outline should describe the critical aim of the paper and sketch the argument to be taken. If secondary materials are to be used these should be identified.

The **major paper** should be 8-12 pages for 4B students, 12-15 pages for 6B students. Students may submit drafts of their essay for review prior to March 29. Papers may be submitted in person or by email.

### **Policy on Missed Work, Extensions, and Late Penalties**

Course assignments must be met on the due dates, unless permission for an extension has been granted by the instructor. Extensions may be granted for legitimate reasons (eg. medical or personal exigencies). Late assignments will be penalized by 5% a day (included weekends). Students are expected to attend and participate in each class.

### **Schedule of Readings (all readings are from the required text):**

January 11: Introduction (p.1-11)

January 18: Catriona Mackenzie: "Three Dimensions of Autonomy" (p.15)

January 25: Marilyn Friedman: "Relational Autonomy and Independence" (p.42)

February 1: Paul Benson: "Feminist Commitments and Relational Autonomy" (p.87)

February 8: Diana Meyers: "The Feminist Debate Over Values in Autonomy Theory" (p.114)

February 15: Marina Oshana: "A Commitment to Autonomy is a Commitment to Feminism" (p.141)

### **No class February 22 – Reading Week**

March 1: John Christman: "Coping or Oppression:..." (p.201)

March 8: "Natalie Stoljar: "Autonomy and Adaptive Preference Formation" (p.227)

March 15: Mark Piper: "Raising Daughters: Autonomy, Feminism, and Gender Socialization" (p.255)

March 22: "Andrea Veltman: "Autonomy and Oppression at Work" (p. 280)

March 29: "Anita Superson: "The Right to Bodily Autonomy and the Abortion Controversy" (p. 301)

April 3: "Anita Ho: "Choosing Death: Autonomy and Ableism" (p. 326)

## Please Note the Following Policies and Statements:

### Academic Dishonesty

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, located at [www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity)

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

### Email correspondence policy

It is the policy of the Faculty of Humanities that all email communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from each student's own McMaster University email account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. Instructors will delete emails that do not originate from a McMaster email account.

### Modification of course outlines

The University reserves the right to change dates and/or deadlines etc. for any or all courses in the case of an emergency situation or labour disruption or civil unrest/disobedience, etc. If a modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with an explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. Any significant changes should be made in consultation with the Department Chair.

### McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF)

In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work. Please note these regulations have changed beginning Fall 2015. You can find information at [mcmaster.ca/msaf/](http://mcmaster.ca/msaf/). If you have any questions about the MSAF, please contact your Associate Dean's office.

### Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

Students who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. Academic accommodations must be arranged for each term of study. Student Accessibility Services can be contacted by phone 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or e-mail [sas@mcmaster.ca](mailto:sas@mcmaster.ca). For further information, consult McMaster University's Policy for [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#).

### Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous and Spiritual Observances

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religion and spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the Course Calendar or by their respective Faculty. In most cases, the student should contact his or her professor or academic advisor as soon as possible to arrange accommodations for classes, assignments, tests and examinations that might be affected by a religious holiday or spiritual observance.