

PHIL 463/563
Author: Luce Irigaray

Fall 2014
noon – 13:50, T & TH

Instructor: Professor Beata Stawarska
Office Hours: T & TH 2:30-3:20 pm &
by appointment
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Description

We will discuss key writings by the contemporary Belgian/French feminist philosopher Luce Irigaray (1932-). Following Irigaray's own presentation of her work as falling into three main phases: an immanent critique of the canon, a new theory of sexual difference, and a new understanding of being in terms of a relational ontology, we will read a representative selection from each phase, situate it within her philosophical trajectory as a whole, and relate it to texts by other thinkers she explicitly engages within her own writing. Specifically, we will be reading *Speculum of the Other: Woman*, in conjunction with a sample of writings by Sigmund Freud, and *This Sex which is not One*, to flesh out her method of an immanent critique. We will then turn to *Ethics of Sexual Difference*, read in conjunction with selections by Plato, Descartes, and Levinas, and *I Love to You*, as exemplary of Irigaray's emphasis on the primacy of sexual difference. We will also engage Irigaray in a conversation with other feminist philosophers, notably Beauvoir on the question of sexual equality and difference, and Butler on the problem of essentialism in Irigaray's work. We will conclude with the theme of Irigaray's relational ontology, as developed in *The Way of Love*, read in a conversation with Heidegger's *On The Way to Language*. The students will thus be grounded in Irigaray's own distinctive philosophical project, and become aware of its place within contemporary Continental philosophy. They will also be exposed to relevant secondary literature, especially relative to the early essentialist critique of Irigaray's conception of sexuality, and the more recent developments within Irigaray scholarship.

Course requirements:

ATTENDANCE: This is a small seminar style class, and you are expected to attend all the meetings and participate actively in the conversation. One unexcused absence is allowed per term.

READING. This course has a sizable reading load, and you will be required to read the assigned texts carefully, and be prepared to discuss them in class. In addition to attending the class, you will need to plan your schedule to allow sufficient time for the required reading ahead of class.

WRITING. Undergrads: Each Thursday (excluding week 1 and 10) you will submit a one to two pages typed up response to the readings assigned for the week. The response is not expected to be a polished piece of writing (but needs to be readable and free from spelling/grammatical errors); it provides an opportunity for you to actively engage and reflect on the reading assigned for the week.

There will be one midterm and one term paper. The midterm is 5-7 pages long. The term paper is 8-12 pages long. Topics and guidelines for both papers will be provided in advance; in some cases, the students may write the final on a topic of their own choice (approved in advance by the instructor).

Grads: students select their own topic for the final, and submit a 1-2 pages long prospectus with a topic outline and literature review for approval and comments. The prospectus is due in week 9. You are advised to meet with me at least once before submitting the prospectus.

All written assignments should be typewritten, double-spaced, font size no smaller than 11. They need to include the class title, your name, and the prompt you are writing about (midterm and final papers for the Undergrads).

Grade components (Undergrads):

Participation: 10%

Weekly response to the reading: 20%

Midterm paper: 30%

Final paper: 40%

Total: 100%

Grade components (Grads):

Participation, including one in-class presentation: 20%

Prospectus, including an in-class presentation: 20%

Final paper: 60%

Total: 100%

Grading

What kind of paper deserves an “A,” “B,” etc.? The following rubric reflects the general standards of the Philosophy Department at the University of Oregon.

A = excellent. No mistakes, well-written, and distinctive in some way or other.

B = good. No significant mistakes, well-written, but not distinctive in any way.

C = OK. Some errors, but a basic grasp of the material.

D = poor. Several errors. A tenuous grasp of the material.

F = failing. Problematic on all fronts indicating either no real grasp of the material or a complete lack of effort.

Please note: what counts as “excellent” or “OK,” for example, depends in part upon the nature and level of the class in question.

Late paper policy: the overall grade for the paper will be reduced by 0.3 grade if no extension has been granted by the instructor before the paper is due.

Plagiarism: a failure to cite your sources and give credit to others for their work is a violation of academic honesty, and can result in an F grade for the class.

Final Paper due at noon on Thursday December 11. Please submit the paper electronically as a Word document to stawarsk@uoregon.edu

Required Texts:

Available at Black Sun Bookstore, 2467 Hilyard (next to Allan Bros Café):
Speculum of the Other Woman, Cornell UP 1985.
Ethics of Sexual Difference, Cornell UP 1993.
The Way of Love, Continuum 2004.

There is also a selection of readings available on Blackboard (Bb).

Meeting Schedule:**WEEK 1 (September 29 – October 5)**

- Introducing Irigaray's project: French feminism and Continental Philosophy. Learning expectations in this course.
Tuesday Reading: Je - Luce Irigaray (1995 Interview, available on Blackboard).

The feminine in psychoanalysis and in philosophy:

- Thursday Reading: *Speculum of the Other* pp. 11-34;
Required reading (Grads and UGs): Freud, Some psychological consequences of the anatomical distinction between the sexes (available on Blackboard).

WEEK 2 (October 6 - 12)

- Tuesday Reading: *Speculum of the Other*, 34- 61.
- Thursday Reading: *Speculum of the Other*, 61-90.

Recommended for Week 2: The Power of Discourse in *This Sex which is not One*, pp. 68-85.

WEEK 3 (October 13 - 19)

- Tuesday Reading: *Speculum of the Other*, pp. 90- 129.
- Thursday Reading: This Sex which is not One in *This Sex which is not One*, pp. 23-33 (available on Bb).

Recommended: Margaret Whitford 'Reading Irigaray in the Nineties', Naomi Shor: 'This Essentialism which is not One', *Engaging with Irigaray*, 15-33; 57-78 (available on Bb).

WEEK 4 (October 20 - 26)**The feminine subject and sexual difference:**

- Tuesday Reading: *An Ethics of Sexual Difference* – I. Sexual Difference; Sorcerer Love: A Reading of Plato, *Symposium*, "Diotima's Speech," pp. 5-33.
Recommended: Plato, *Symposium*, "Diotima's Speech" (on Bb).
- Thursday Reading: *An Ethics of Sexual Difference* contd. II. Love of Self. Wonder: A Reading of Descartes' *Passions of the Soul*, pp. 59-82.
Recommended: Romancing the Philosophers, Burke (available on Bb).
Instructor at SPEP conference. Guest Lecturer TBA.

WEEK 5 (October 27 – November 2)

- Tuesday Reading: *An Ethics of Sexual Difference* contd. III, Love of Same, Love of Other; *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, 97-129.
Recommended: The Hetero and the Homo: The Sexual Ethics of Luce Irigaray, Grosz (*Engaging with Irigaray*), (available on Bb).
- Thursday Reading: *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, IV. The Fecundity of Caress, 185-217.

Grads/Recommended UGs: Levinas: *Totality and Infinity*, Section IV, A. The Ambiguity of Love, B. Phenomenology of Eros, C. Fecundity, D. The Subjectivity in Eros, F. Filiality and Fraternity, 254-273; 278-80 (available on Bb).

Recommended: What Other Are We Talking about? 67-81 (*Yale French Studies*, 2004; available on Bb).

WEEK 6 (November 3 - 9)

Language and sexual difference:

- Tuesday Reading: *I Love to You* (1992), Ch. 2, 3, and 5, pp. 35-48; 59-69 (available on Bb Bb).

Midterm paper due in class (Undergrads).

- Thursday Reading: *I Love to You* (1992), Ch. 6-8, pp. 69-102.

WEEK 7 (November 10 - 16)

- Tuesday Reading: *I Love to You*, ch. 9-11, 13, Epilogue, pp. 103-119; 129-150.

Equal and/or Different? Beauvoir and Irigaray:

- Thursday Reading: Beauvoir: Introduction to the *Second Sex*. Irigaray: The Question of the Other (*Yale French Studies*, 1995, 7-19).

WEEK 8 (November 17 - 23)

The essentialism debate: Butler's critique of Irigaray

- Tuesday Reading: The Future of Sexual Difference. An interview with Judith Butler and Drucilla Cornell (*Diacritics* 1998), 19-40.

The way of language, and the way of love

- Thursday Reading: *The Way of Love*, 1- 53.
Grads/Recommended UGs: Heidegger: *On the Way to Language: The Way to Language*, 111-136 (available on Blackboard).

WEEK 9 (November 24 - 30)

- Tuesday Reading: *The Way of Love*, 55-95.

Prospectus due in class (Grads).

- Thursday: Thanksgiving Holiday.

WEEK 10 (December 1-7)

- Tuesday Reading: *The Way of Love*, 99-136.
- Thursday Reading: *The Way of Love*: 139-174. Grad final paper presentations.

NOTE: The reading schedule is subject to change. All the changes will be announced in advance in class and online.

Learning outcomes:

By the end of the term, the students should be able to represent and evaluate arguments from contemporary feminist and continental philosophy related to sexual difference and sexual equality, and gendered identity (feminine and masculine subjectivity) as developed especially in the works of Luce Irigaray. They should be able to relate Irigaray's philosophy to philosophical views of love, femininity, sexuality, and language as developed by other major Western philosophers, and to situate her philosophy in the context of contemporary feminist debates about sexual difference and equality, and about the risks of essentializing sexual (or sexuate) identity. They should be able to critically and charitably engage these

arguments within oral class discussion and a scholarly essay format, drawing on relevant primary and secondary sources as relevant and appropriate.

Statement Regarding Sexual Violence

The UO is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic and dating violence and gender-based stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or experiences gender-based violence (intimate partner violence, attempted or completed sexual assault, harassment, coercion, stalking, etc.), know that you are not alone. UO has staff members trained to support survivors in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more. Please be aware that all UO employees are required reporters. This means that if you tell me about a situation, I may have to report the information to my supervisor or the Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity. Although I have to report the situation, you will still have options about how your case will be handled, including whether or not you wish to pursue a formal complaint. Our goal is to make sure you are aware of the range of options available to you and have access to the resources you need. If you wish to speak to someone confidentially, you can call 541-346-SAFE, UO's 24- hour hotline, to be connected to a confidential counselor to discuss your options. You can also visit the SAFE website at safe.uoregon.edu.