

Learning Guide Unit 7

Reading Assignment

As you read and watch the learning resources, consider the following:

1. Consider the role of empathy and inclusivity in feminist ethics as you embark on this reading. How might incorporating diverse perspectives and valuing empathy contribute to a more just and equitable society for all individuals?
 2. How do you think an intersectional approach to feminism might reshape your understanding of discrimination and social inequities? Consider how various forms of discrimination intersect and compound in different contexts.
 3. Reflect on your understanding of autonomy and independence. How might the concept of relational autonomy presented in the chapter challenge or enhance your perceptions of self-governance and individual agency?
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Read:

1. Matthews, G., & Hendricks, C. (2019). *Introduction to philosophy: Ethics*. Rebus Community.
<https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/textbooks/introduction-to-philosophy-ethics> Licensed under CC 4.0

- View the Online Book
- Read Chapter 7 – [Feminism and Feminist Ethics](#)

Chapter 7 delves into the evolution of feminism through three distinct waves. The First Wave, represented by early feminist writers like Mary Wollstonecraft and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, focused on addressing political, economic, and educational inequalities faced by women in the 18th and 19th centuries. This wave laid the groundwork for significant progress in emancipation and enfranchisement for women and minorities in the Western world.

The Second Wave, propelled by figures like Betty Friedan and Simone de Beauvoir in the 20th century, brought attention to issues such as maternity leave, domestic violence, and equal pay in the workplace. This wave also highlighted the disparities in political and employment rights between men and women, sparking a renewed exploration of cultural, political, and moral dimensions of women's experiences. The Third Wave, emerging in the late 1980s and early 1990s, marked a shift towards the development of a specifically feminist ethics that challenged traditional moral theories for overlooking women's unique perspectives and values. This wave emphasized the importance of inclusivity, intersectionality, and relational ethics in addressing gender inequality and oppression across diverse identities and experiences.

Additional Readings:

1. Gopaldas, A. (2013). Intersectionality 101. *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, 32, 90–94. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43305317>

This article explains how different social identities like race, class, and gender interact to create unique experiences of privilege and oppression. The article traces the origins of intersectionality from black feminist thought and contrasts it with traditional diversity research, emphasizing the need for more inclusive and context-aware approaches.

2. Carbado, D. W. (2013). Colorblind intersectionality. *Signs*, 38(4), 811–845. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/669666>

This article explores how legal and civil rights frameworks often ignore the intersection of race and other social categories, particularly focusing on whiteness and gender. Carbado introduces concepts like "colorblind intersectionality" and "gender-blind intersectionality" to show how these frameworks fail to recognize the unique experiences of marginalized groups.

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Watch:

1. TED. (2016, October 6). *The urgency of intersectionality* | Kimberlé Crenshaw. [Video]. YouTube.

In this moving TED talk, Kimberlé Crenshaw explains her groundbreaking concept of intersectionality. This concept acknowledges that individuals can face multiple layers of discrimination and oppression due to their overlapping identities and social statuses.

Crenshaw emphasizes that when a problem goes unnamed and unrecognized, addressing and resolving it becomes nearly impossible. It is like trying to solve a puzzle without knowing all the pieces. She illustrates this notion through powerful examples of discrimination in hiring practices and police brutality against African American women.

In the realm of hiring, Crenshaw highlights how traditional anti-discrimination laws often fail to capture the unique experiences of African American women. These laws tend to focus on addressing either race or gender discrimination separately, overlooking the intersectional nature of the issue. As a result, African American women may face hiring biases that consider both their race and gender, leaving them at a significant disadvantage.

Crenshaw also delves into the harrowing issue of police brutality, particularly as it pertains to African American women. She emphasizes that police encounters can be particularly dangerous for African American women, who are more likely to be subject to excessive force, racial profiling, and wrongful arrests compared to white women or African American men.

Crenshaw argues that the concept of intersectionality is crucial for understanding and dismantling systems of oppression. By acknowledging the complex interplay of various forms of discrimination, we can develop more comprehensive and effective solutions. Intersectionality allows us to see the problem in its entirety, empowering us to address it with greater precision and empathy.

Crenshaw's TED talk serves as a powerful call to action, urging us to embrace intersectionality as a lens through which we view the world. By doing so, we can work towards creating a just society where everyone has an equal opportunity to thrive, regardless of their intersecting identities.

