

COURSE DETAIL

CATHARINE MACKINNON: TOWARD A FEMINIST THEORY OF THE STATE

Country

Germany

Host Institution

Free University of Berlin

Program(s)

Free University Berlin

UCEAP Course Level

Upper Division

UCEAP Subject Area(s)

Women's & Gender Studies Philosophy

UCEAP Course Number

127

UCEAP Course Suffix**UCEAP Official Title**

CATHARINE MACKINNON: TOWARD A FEMINIST THEORY OF THE STATE

UCEAP Transcript Title

CAT MCK: FMNST THRY

UCEAP Quarter Units

4.50

UCEAP Semester Units

Course Description

Catharine MacKinnon's 1989 *Toward a Feminist Theory of the State* remains one of the most influential works in feminist theory and is the most comprehensive statement of radical feminist philosophy. This class is dedicated to a semester-long close reading of the text. Central to MacKinnon's thought is the attempt to develop an autonomous theory of sexist domination on the basis of sexuality. Students critically reconstruct this theory and examine its relationship to theories of class and gender based domination, as well as its opposition to liberalism and liberal feminism. Over the course of the semester, the book guides the class through many of the core themes of feminist philosophizing, including the social ontology of gender, feminist epistemology, sexual and reproductive freedom, the role of sexuality and pornography in patriarchal domination, and feminism's relationship to law and the state. MacKinnon's thoroughgoing social constructionism with regards to gender and sexuality is of particular interest, as in recent years radical feminism has sometimes been invoked to justify trans exclusionary views. MacKinnon herself has since firmly rejected this use of radical feminism. Accordingly, the class, too, examines her rejection of biologicist models of gender and the queer potentialities of radical feminism. Finally, the class discusses how radical feminism in general, and MacKinnon's thought in particular, currently experiences a revival in feminist discussions about sexual freedom and the politics of desire.

Language(s) of Instruction

English

Host Institution Course Number

16059

Host Institution Course Title

CATHARINE MACKINNON: TOWARD A FEMINIST THEORY OF THE STATE

Host Institution Course Details

<https://www.fu-berlin.de/vv/en/lv/1070298?m=243230&pc=256005&sm=965826>

Host Institution Campus

Host Institution Faculty

Host Institution Degree

Host Institution Department

Institut für Philosophie

Course Last Reviewed

2025-2026

[Print](#)