



College of Social and Applied Human Sciences
Department of Sociology and Anthropology

**SOC*4320 I Advanced Seminar in Criminal Justice
Gender, Law, and Social Change
Winter 2024**

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Office Hours: TBA

Class Time & Location: Tuesdays and Thursdays 10 am – 11.20 am in GRHM 2302, and online via Zoom on select dates

Course Overview

This course is designed to introduce students to the key issues, theories, and debates concerned with the workings of the law and legal institutions in relation to gender. In this course, we will explore how notions of sex and gender inform/shape, and are informed/shaped by, the laws and public policies, and examine how gender is embedded in the politics of law making, by looking specifically at the organization of public and legal institutions, the behaviors of legal, political, and social actors, and the discourses employed in these processes. Within the scope of this course, the law is understood and analyzed as both a tool of monitoring, classifying, regulating, and constraining the living conditions, bodies, and sexualities of women and LGBTQs, racialized, Indigenous or otherwise, and their everyday experiences in households, markets, and communities, as well as a site of discursive struggle and emancipatory practice.

The course seeks to develop a theoretically rich, nuanced, and comprehensive understanding of the socio-legal connections between gender, law, and social change. To this end, the course will begin with an examination of feminist, intersectional, and interdisciplinary theories that inform the engagements of women's rights activists with the state in order to influence laws and that have shaped the main issues of contestation in the field of feminist/gender legal studies. By drawing on and employing concepts, ideas, and insights from a range of disciplines and fields, including sociology, anthropology, criminology, and law, the course will continue with a survey of some of the key topics that gender and feminist legal scholars have substantially studied, including, but not limited to, gender and sexual violence, employment, care work, family and parenting, the regulation of sexuality and intimate relationships, and reproductive rights and justice, sex work/prostitution, and immigration.

In the course, we will probe the explicit and implicit assumptions about gender, race, class, sexuality, and other axes of social differentiation that influence, are promoted and built into

law as well as legal processes and practices. While gender is the central concept around which the course is organized, we recognize that all people — including women — differ on many other dimensions, such as class, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, religion, geography, etc. to name a few, and that these factors impact law making, policy orientations, and legal decisions significantly. The course will wrap up with a discussion of the recent developments and debates in the field of international laws with respect to gender-based rights.

The readings will include both foundational texts in feminist and law and society scholarships and newer critical literatures on specific, contemporary social, legal, and political issues.

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this course, you will be able:

- to develop a sociological and feminist understanding of the law both as a tool of regulation and control as a site of dissent and contestation.
- to develop a comprehension of the major theoretical approaches elaborated and adopted by gender and feminist scholars in socio-legal studies.
- to better understand inequities based on sex and gender, their sources, and attempts to reduce them through political and legal means.
- to have an in-depth grasp of the key topics, methodologies, and debates that animate the literature.
- to clearly articulate in both speaking and writing their theoretically informed and empirically supported arguments on those issues and debates.
- to develop the ability to understand the extent to which gender matters with respect to law with a particular focus on how states and governments regulate relationships and axes of social differentiation (i.e., gender, race, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, citizenship status, etc.) through the making and implementation of laws and their interpretation by various institutions and read and critique feminist social science research and theory.
- to approach controversial issues, texts, and arguments with an open and reflective mind and a critical lens and to engage in thoughtful and respectful discussion.
- to apply course content and class discussions to contemporary everyday life (what we read and discuss in class is highly relevant to our lives!).
- to improve your critical thinking, reading and writing skills to use academic sources to make convincing and well-grounded arguments through engagement with course materials and your classmates (i.e., to develop, structure, and present an academic argument).
- to demonstrate competence in critically evaluating, synthesizing and communicating information, arguments, and analyses accurately and effectively orally and in writing.

Format

As a seminar, this is a reading-intensive, interactive, and discussion-driven class. Our learning environment will be centered on principles of curiosity, participation, and inclusivity/belonging; the successful realization of these principles requires a commitment to dialogue and reflection from everyone in class as well as meaningful engagement and participation. Students are asked to come to class well prepared (i.e., having completed the

assigned readings) and ready to contribute and participate in class activities that allow us to work through ideas and apply course material. Please note that both individually and collectively, the success of this class will depend on adequate preparation and active participation in discussions. So, it is absolutely important that everyone is familiar with the assigned readings for each week and is ready to grapple with them in a thoughtful and constructive fashion during class.

In each class, I will deliver what I call “agenda setting” lectures (i.e., in the form of extended introductory remarks) to provide a general overview of each topic/theme as well as the main ideas we will engage. The bulk of each meeting, however, will consist of collaborative and peer-led in-depth discussion of the works assigned for that week.

Restrictions

Registration in BAH:CJPP and BAH:CJPP:C.

Requisites

14.00 credits including (POLS*3650 or SOAN*3120), (1 of ANTH*3690, SOC*2700, SOC*3310), (2 of SOC*3490, SOC*3710, SOC*3730, SOC*3740, SOC*3750)

Textbooks and Other Materials

No book is required for this course. Readings will be available online via ARES Course Reserve, CourseLink, and the links on the course outline.

Evaluation Components

This course has several evaluation components that encourage students to demonstrate their learning in different ways. These components include seminar participation, bi-weekly entry tickets, a presentation, an outline assignment, and a research paper. Details will be provided in the course outline.

Note: This draft outline is for informational purposes only and may change at the instructor’s discretion. A complete outline will be shared with the students during the first class. In the meanwhile, if you have any questions about the course, please email me at tugce@uoguelph.ca.