COURSE OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVES

This course is designed as a gender and public policy "solutions lab". The goals of this course are to use a comparative politics and public policy lens to critically examine some of the gender-based and intersectional inequalities faced by different communities of women, girls, and LGBTQIA+ people, and to reflect on the role that political institutions and public policies play in both creating and overcoming those inequalities.

Some of the most intractable policy challenges around the globe centre around gender.

The World Bank gender data portal notes that on a number of dimensions of gender inequality — including economic structures and access to resources; education; health and related services; public life and decision-making; and human rights — women are still disadvantaged in relation to men; while data are scarcer, racialized women, as well as lesbian, trans, and other gender sexual minority (GSM) groups face even more disadvantages compared to both white men and women. There are vastly different human rights regimes around the world and constitutional provisions that permit discrimination on the basis of gender, sex, sexuality, and sexual orientation. In those countries where women have made gains economically, they may remain underrepresented in political office and other political institutions.

What makes these problems intractable is that gender inequality is multidimensional. Inequality manifests on the basis of multiple aspects of identity and in multiple structures, institutions, and organizations. Issues of intersectionality – of gender, sexuality and sexual orientation, race, class, indigeneity, religion, ethno-national group so on – along with global power imbalances between North and South, political regimes and welfare state traditions make gender inequality in all its aspects challenging to solve.
Drawing on a variety of political science and other social science research, the first part of the course focuses on examining various aspects of gender-based inequality; the second part critically examines some contemporary policy solutions. Canada, at points, provides an anchor point for comparative discussion but, as much as possible, the comparative lens is used to critically reflect on the varieties of lived experiences (and thus positions of advantage and disadvantage) of women, girls, and racialized and LGBTQIA+ people around the world.

By the end of this course students will:

- Gain a broader and deeper understanding of the role that gender plays in politics and policymaking in comparative cross-national context
- Apply political science theory and analysis to understand the multiple aspects of gender inequality (such as comparative analysis; intersectional analysis; structural and institutional analysis)
- Develop critical analytic skills and techniques to analyze policies and reflect on possible policy solutions using multiple lens.

Please note that the course material includes challenging topics and course material that some students may find disturbing and/or traumatizing or may evoke strong emotional reactions. Recognizing that we all come at this material from different perspectives and lived experiences, I encourage the cultivation of an atmosphere of mutual respect and sensitivity throughout the course.

Please also note that this course covers material protected under academic freedom in Canada but that may not be if students are learning in other countries.

**Required course materials**

This course is designed to be an introduction to the topic of gender, politics, and public policy. It cannot cover everything related to these topics; we can merely scratch the surface on these issues. I hope students are inspired to go beyond the course material and continue their learning well beyond this 12-week introductory course. To that end, in addition to the required weekly readings, the syllabus lists a number of non-mandatory additional readings and other resources should you want to explore a topic in further depth and that may be helpful in writing the final essay. Those readings are easily accessible via the University of Toronto library system. On the U of T library home page, just enter the article title in the search box and the search system will take you to the article.

The required readings provide the foundation for the learning in the course. They comprise a mix of academic journal articles and book chapters as well some high-quality journalism. All the readings are available on Quercus or as otherwise indicated. Students should complete all the required readings before watching the Zoom lectures, reading closely and with a critical eye. **Weekly Zoom lectures** will be posted on Quercus. I suggest viewing those lectures well in advance of the weekly responses due Wednesdays 10 am EST.
On Quercus, in addition to the Zoom lectures, you will find additional videos/video clips with links. Most are easily accessible through platforms such as YouTube. A few others require use of the University of Toronto media commons video streaming services, free and accessible via the library at: https://mediacommons.library.utoronto.ca/streaming-video. There you will find a treasure trove of documentary and other video collections (Alexander Street, National Film Board, and many others). Enjoy!

Quercus will be used for sharing other important information and announcements. It is your responsibility to log on to Quercus regularly and obtain relevant information for the course. I suggest changing your settings to receive emails of any announcements and updates.

Communication

I will hold regular Zoom office hours on Wednesdays 11:00 am - 12:00 noon EST. The Zoom invitation link is posted on Quercus (under “syllabus”). Recognizing the challenges of multiple time zones, I am also available for office hours “as needed” by appointment – just email me at linda.white@utoronto.ca and we can set up a mutually convenient time. I check my email regularly during working hours (weekdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. EST) and I will try my best to respond within 24 hours. Response times will be longer on evenings and weekends.

Note that other email addresses (e.g. gmail) can end up in spam. It is thus important for all students to use a valid UTOR email address for communication.

For anything other than straightforward questions which can be answered in a sentence or two via email, I encourage students to use those office hours to speak with me about any of the material covered in the course and the assignments. If the response requires more than one sentence, email is not the appropriate medium for discussion of course materials. If it takes more, please come to my virtual office hours.

Evaluation

Your final grade will be determined by your performance in these areas:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight/Value</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weekly responses (3 components)</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Each Wednesday at 10 am EST.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtual discussion group and response</td>
<td>2+3=5%</td>
<td>Once in the semester. Details below.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take-home mid-term exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>Posted on Quercus October 28, 10 am EST; due October 29 10 am EST.</td>
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</tbody>
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Final essay proposal and draft bibliography | 10% | November 18, 10 am EST.
Final essay | 30% | December 9, 10 am EST.

1. **Weekly responses (30%)**

Each week starting in week 2, you will be required to complete the following components:

1. Answer this question: What was the most important thing you learned this week from the lecture or related course material? (Roughly 100-200 words) • Due: Wednesday 10:00 am EST each week

2. Write one question that you had about the material. • Due: Wednesday 10:00 am EST each week

3. Answer one question that your classmate had about the material. The question will be assigned using the peer review feature on Quercus. • Due: Friday 10:00 am EST each week

Each response component will be worth 1% for a total of 3% per week. The lowest weekly score will be dropped so that your cumulative weekly response mark will be based on the 10 best scores out of 11 submissions. Therefore, you are allowed to “miss” one week of responses without penalty. No assignments are accepted past their due dates. You will not be assigned component 3 (answering a peer’s question) unless you turn in component 2 (your own question) by the due date and time on the Wednesday. **There are no exceptions to this rule.**

2. **Virtual discussion group (2%) and discussion response (3%)**

In order to foster an online community, I will host a series of small group discussions throughout the semester via Zoom Wednesdays 10 am EST. Students will sign up to participate in ONE of the virtual discussion groups in the semester where they should come prepared to discuss that week’s readings, after which they must submit a one page (maximum 250 words) discussion response due 24 hours later, **no exceptions.**

That discussion response should include the following components:

1. Themes of the week’s materials (1-2 sentences);
2. One or two arguments raised in the materials (1-2 sentences each);
3. Description of the evidence the author(s) provide to support the arguments (1-2 sentences each);
4. What you think about the arguments and evidence (1-2 sentences).
These one-hour sessions generally run during what would have been the first hour of our regularly scheduled class time (Wednesdays 10 am-11 am EST): Sept 23 (Theorizing Gender Inequality); Sept 30 (Structural Barriers); Oct 7 (Political Violence, Conflict, and Human Rights Regimes); Oct 14 (The Problem of Political Representation); Oct 21 (Labour Market Challenges); Nov 4 (The Role of IOs, Transnational Policy Advocates, and Political Regimes); Nov 18 (Courts and Social Movement Allies); Nov 25 (Quotas); Dec 2 (Policy Design).

Recognizing that students may be participating from multiple time zones, I am open to scheduling at least one session at a different time, as long as you let me know of your need to re-schedule by 18 September at 10 am EST.

When you participate, please change your Zoom settings to list your preferred name and pronoun. If you would prefer not to turn on your camera, you may feel free to add a headshot in your Zoom settings.

Please note that I am committed to creating and fostering a positive learning environment based on open communication, mutual respect, and inclusion. In this course, each voice has something of value to contribute. I thus encourage all forms of course communication to be conducted with respect to and consideration of the different experiences, beliefs and values expressed by fellow participants.

3. Take-home midterm exam (25%)

For this assignment, students will prepare ONE 5-6 paragraph argumentative essay in response to questions that will be posted on Quercus. In the essay, you must advance an argument that directly addresses the question. This argument must be clear and coherent and supported by evidence from at least four (4) required readings in the course. Each article or book chapter counts as 1 reading. The essay must be organized and demonstrate university-level writing. You must paraphrase and directly refer to the readings, using appropriate citations.

The questions will be posted on Quercus on October 28 10 am EST. Each student will be given 24 hours to write the exam, but the exam should take no more than 2 hours to finish. You can, of course, submit anytime within the 24-hour period. Once complete, the exam must be uploaded in Word format on Quercus.

An exam turned in after October 29 at 10 am EST will be considered late. A late penalty of 20% points (5 out of 25 points) per hour will be applied, starting at the deadline. Assignments submitted between 0 and 1 hour late will receive a 20% penalty, between 1 and 2 hours a 40% penalty, and so on.

Grading criteria:
4. Final essay proposal and draft bibliography (10%) AND 5. Final essay (30%)

The final essay builds on the learning you have done over the course of the semester to critically examine a particular aspect of gender equality in more depth.

The topic of the final essay is as follows:

Choose ONE policy challenge that relates to gender inequality and the range of policy solutions that have been proposed to deal with the challenge. How, and how well do the policy solutions address the problem that you have identified?

The final essay should conform to the learning goals of the course: that is, it must theoretically grounded in the core themes of the course; engage with the conceptual and analytic material; be explicitly comparative; and be policy oriented.

The final essay is comprised of two components: a proposal and draft bibliography; and the final essay.

The proposal (due 18 November 2020 at 10:00 am EST) should be one-page (double-spaced) submitted in Word ONLY to Quercus and must contain the following components:

- Your name and a title for your essay
- A statement of your research topic (that is, what problem, and tentatively, what solution(s))
- A tentative thesis statement (that is, your position or answer to the essay question), with some reference to the jurisdictions you are thinking of including
- A brief description of the theories and the approaches you will draw on to advance your argument
- A brief description of the sources of evidence you will use to make your argument
- A draft bibliography in addition to the one-page proposal of possible sources (academic articles, books, government reports, data sets)
The final essay (due 9 December 2020 at 11:59 pm EST) should be between 10-12 double spaced pages, use 12-point font, with 1-inch margins and include page numbers. Please submit your assignments in Word ONLY to Quercus. It MUST contain the following components:

- Clear identification of the policy challenge as well as a clear rationale for the choice (e.g. some might choose to focus on a problem that is easily addressed and thus the rationale is this is “low hanging fruit”; others might focus on a policy challenge because it has proven to be intractable).

- A clear statement about scope of the policy challenge, backed up with empirical evidence (is this a global challenge; pertinent to only some countries, regions; highly localized)

- A clear articulation of the social as well as political institutional context, that is, which levels/branches of governance are responsible (international; national; regional; local; legislative; executive; judicial; non-governmental), which civil society organizations, and so on.

- A clear statement of the range of policy solutions that have been proposed, and the criteria you use to assess the effectiveness and appropriateness of the policy solutions.

- A bibliography that lists all the sources you have used in your essay. Please be sure to cite all sources using a consistently applied citation system. Be sure to including specific page references when drawing on authors’ specific arguments.

Policy on missed assignments

The policies regarding late or missing weekly responses, virtual discussion group and response, and the take-home mid-term exam are outlined above. For the proposal and final essay, if you miss the assignment deadline, your grade for this component will be reduced by 2 per cent per day, including weekends. Late assignments will not be accepted after 7 days.

In the event that you miss an assignment deadline because of illness or personal emergency, you must inform me as soon as possible and preferably in advance of the assignment deadline, and you must submit one type of official medical documentation: Verification of Illness or Injury Form (illnessverification.utoronto.ca); Student Health or Disability Related Certificate; College Registrar’s Letter; Accessibility Services Letter.

Students are strongly advised to keep rough and draft work and hard copies of their assignments. These should be kept until the marked assignments have been returned and grades have been posted on ACORN.
Learning during a pandemic

Prof. Andrew Heiss at Georgia State University shared the following text on twitter (13 August 2020) and encouraged faculty to use it for their own courses if they support it. I support it! I have reproduced some of it below:

You most likely know people who have lost their jobs, have tested positive for COVID-19, have been hospitalized, or perhaps have even died. You all have increased (or possibly decreased) work responsibilities and increased family care responsibilities—you might be caring for extra people (young and/or old!) right now, and you are likely facing uncertain job prospects (or have been laid off?).

I'm fully committed to making sure that you learn everything you were hoping to learn from this class! I will make whatever accommodations I can to help you finish your exercises, do well on your projects, and learn and understand the class material. Under ordinary conditions, I am flexible and lenient with grading and course expectations when students face difficult challenges. Under pandemic conditions, that flexibility and leniency is intensified. If you tell me you're having trouble, I will not judge you or think less of you. I hope you’ll extend me the same grace.

Assistance and accommodation

The University of Toronto is committed to supporting student accessibility and overall student well-being. Many resources exist to help students who are in need of assistance for a number of reasons. Those resources include but are not limited to: accessibility services, health and counseling services, writing centres, and peer mentoring systems. The University also is committed to providing allowances for religious observances.

If you have a accessibility consideration that may require accommodation, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible. The Accessibility Services office is located at 455 Spadina Ave, 4th Floor, Suite 400 (next to the campus bookstore). Accessibility Services staff can be contacted via email at accessibility.services@utoronto.ca and phone at (416) 978-8060.

A few (i.e. not exhaustive) links to additional resources include:
- http://healthandwellness.utoronto.ca/
- http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/writing-centres/arts-and-science
- http://uoft.me/religiousaccommodation

Grade appeals

The teaching assistant and I are happy to discuss evaluation criteria on any assignment as well as strategies for improvement. If you judge a received grade to be inaccurate (with respect to the grading guidelines outlined by the Faculty of Arts & Sciences and the
assignment instructions given) and would like your assignment to be re-graded, you may appeal the assigned grade. The process by which to appeal the grade is to submit in writing (via email within one week of receiving the graded assignment to the person who graded the assignment) a paragraph explaining the basis of the appeal, as well as the original graded assignment. Please note decisions on appeals are ultimately at the instructor's discretion. Once an appeal is submitted, the entire assignment (and not specific questions/parts) will be examined. Please note that your grade may go down, go up or remain unchanged after this process.

**Academic integrity**

Academic integrity is essential to the pursuit of learning and scholarship in the university. The university treats cases of cheating and plagiarism very seriously.

To help you understand the University of Toronto’s rules and decision-making structures regarding plagiarism and other matters related to academic integrity, please go to https://www.academicintegrity.utoronto.ca/ which links to The Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters. As this link explains, plagiarism and other academic offences: “are in direct opposition to the University’s mission to foster internationally significant research and excellent programs—a mission that can be realized only if members of the University appropriately acknowledge sources of information and ideas, present independent work on assignments and examinations, and complete and submit group projects in accordance with the standards of the discipline being studied.”

Examples of academic offences include (but are not limited to):

- Representing someone else’s work or words as your own
- Falsifying documents such as a medical note
- Submitting someone else’s work – in whole or in part - as your own
- Submitting the same assignment in more than one course (without permission)
- Making up sources or facts for an essay or report.

Plagiarism – presenting others’ thoughts, ideas, or other material without properly acknowledging the source - is a serious academic office and will be dealt with accordingly. If you are unclear about what constitutes plagiarism or how to properly acknowledge sources, please see Writing at the University of Toronto: http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources.

If you have questions on these matters, please ask me or the teaching assistant in the course. It is the responsibility of each student to be able to demonstrate the originality of their work.

**In this course, we use turnitin.com for submission of assignments**
Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the university’s use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site.
WHAT YOU NEED TO READ EACH WEEK (NOTE: REQUIRED VIDEOS WILL BE POSTED ON QUERCUS UNDER MODULES)

Week 1 – On September 16 - Introduction: situating the policy challenge(s) in global context and using various metrics

Melling, Louise. 2018. “12 Things Other Countries Have Done to Promote Gender Equity.” American Civil Liberties Union (13 August). Online: [https://www.aclu.org/blog/womens-rights/12-things-other-countries-have-done-promote-gender-equity](https://www.aclu.org/blog/womens-rights/12-things-other-countries-have-done-promote-gender-equity).

ONE. 2018. “Can You Spot the Real Sexist Laws?” Quiz. Online: [https://sexistlaws.one.org/?source=homepage&utm_source=homepage&hootPostID=4a8d6a170d3b043c96c5d9d91166c45f](https://sexistlaws.one.org/?source=homepage&utm_source=homepage&hootPostID=4a8d6a170d3b043c96c5d9d91166c45f).


**Additional data resources:**


WORLD Policy Analysis Center (laws and social policies around the globe): 
https://www.worldpolicycenter.org/

Week 2 – By September 23 – Theorizing gender inequality: identity, intersectionality, and the complexities of different lived experiences


Newspaper clips:


Additional resources:


Week 3 – By September 30 – Structural barriers to gender equality: poverty, access to education, health care, and related services


Newspaper clip:


**Additional resources:**


**Week 4 – By October 7 – Political violence, conflict, and variation in political institutions and human rights regimes**


Magazine story:


**Additional resources:**


Week 5 – By October 14 – The problem of political representation: How politics and political leadership affect gender equality


Additional Resources:


Equal Voice Canada (online https://www.equalvoice.ca/)


COVID-19 related research on gender and political leadership:


**Week 6 – By October 21 – Labour market challenges: wage gaps, occupation segregation, workplace harassment, employment discrimination, and precarity**


**Magazine story:**


**Additional resources:**


**Week 7 – By October 28 – The enduring issue of care**

**MID-TERM TAKE-HOME EXAM POSTED TODAY**


Magazine story:


Additional Resources:


CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF POLICY SOLUTIONS

Week 8 – By November 4 - The role of IOs, transnational policy actors/advocates, and political regimes


**Additional Resources:**


**READING WEEK – November 11 – NO LECTURE POSTED OR ASSIGNMENTS DUE; PAPER PROPOSAL DUE 18 November**

**Week 9 – By November 18 – Courts and social movement alliances**


**Additional resources:**


Week 10 – By November 25 – Quotas and other mechanisms to achieve greater diversity in elected office and administration


Newspaper op-ed:


Additional Resources:


Week 11 – By December 2 - Nudges, gender-based budgeting and other elements of policy design


Newspaper op-ed:


Additional resources:


Week 12 – By December 9 – Conclusion: lessons for policy change

FINAL PAPER DUE

