

TITLE OF COURSE AND COURSE NUMBER:

Women and the Law
WS 325 3 Credits

DESCRIPTION OF COURSE:

This course will examine the legal and social status of women historically and in modern American society and the law and policy relating to that status. The course will also address legal tools developed to address sexual inequality, and the possibility that law both challenges and supports women's subordination. The course and the materials are organized around concrete legal problems of particular and current concern to women. Issues are approached intersectionally, addressing sex, race, sexual orientation and other differences simultaneously. The issue areas will include, but not be limited to: employment, education, family, reproduction, health, sexuality, violence, Equal Rights Amendment, criminal law, and equality theory; and the laws, cases, current statutes and legislative proposals that apply to and affect women.

COURSE PREREQUISITES: WS 110 or WS 150 or WS 210 or AACS 150 or AACS 155

COURSE OBJECTIVES:***This Course Will:***

1. Analyze and explore laws in U.S. society and its impact on women, their lives and their rights, through legal, social and cultural perspectives.
2. Explore the relationship between culture, politics and gender with respect to women's rights and laws;
3. Explore feminism and numerous other issues which impact female lives;
4. Examine the feminist and women's movements and how laws were changed and created therefrom;
5. Encourage students to interact in a teacher/learner atmosphere through a "shared inquiry" process;
6. Encourage students to work cooperatively with others in small (or large groups if the need arises) groups on collaborative projects in class; and
7. Persuade students to express themselves verbally, think critically by backing up their opinions with evidence through knowledge and assigned readings.

5. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:***Students Will:***

1. Show familiarity and knowledge of legal issues impacting women through classroom in-depth discussions and writing thorough reader-response logs on weekly basis;
2. Explore the relationship between culture, politics and gender with respect to women's rights and laws in class discussions and written work;
3. Demonstrate their knowledge about feminism and feminist pedagogy as a result of their
4. Indicate how the feminist and women's movements instigated legal reform;

5. Uncover more about themselves personally by engaging in a feminist learning process, which encourages introspection and connection of the personal with the political;
6. Rehearse interaction skills by working with others in groups, and demonstrate the ability to make oral in class presentations;
7. Demonstrate their ability to think critically by writing major essays regarding the class subject matter, etc.
8. Sharpen the ability to speak freely and listen with respect when it comes to issues concerning violence, sexual assault, reproductive choice, sexual orientation, health issues and other issues.

TOPICAL OUTLINE FOR COURSE CONTENT:

- & Course overview, preliminaries of historical aspects of women and sexism in the law (“Women and the Constitution”. etc.), definitions, brief overview/refresher of women’s suffrage, history and status of Equal Rights Amendment.
- & Equal Rights Amendment, Women and Employment- Gender Discrimination, Sexual Harassment – Women, Law and the Work/Family Conflict- “Comparable Worth”- Law and Wages, Affirmative Action
- & Women’s Intimate Lives-Women and the Family (Law and Society), Family Medical Leave Act
- & Women and Reproduction-Reproductive Rights/Privacy and Laws, Women’s Bodies and the Law
- & Gateways and Barriers, Education and Participation
- & History/Chronology of Women and Education and Laws – Courts, Congress and Civil Rights Act of 1964- Women and Athletics – Title IX
- & Practitioners, Actors, Subjects: Women in the Legal System- Violence against Women in Intimate Relationships, Sexual Violence and Rape, Incestuous Sexual Abuse, etc.
- & Legal (and other) Issues of Female Prostitution, Pornography and Slavery, and other classroom discussions
- & Gay and Lesbian Rights, Issues, Discrimination, Heterosexism, Legislation, etc. (and vs. heterosexuals)
- & Women, the Law and the Economy- Women in Poverty, Marriage, Divorce, Childcare, Financial Support, Welfare Benefits and Reform – How it affects Women
- & The HealthCare System, Elder Law, the Americans with Disabilities –Act- How it Affects Women in American Society
- & Racism and Sexism, Hate– Overview of the Laws, the Courts Rulings and
- & History, Female Immigrants and the Law, Women in the Military

GUIDELINES/SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHING METHODS:

- & Lectures
- & Discussion groups
- & Guest speakers

& Films

TEACHING METHODS AND STUDENT LEARNING ACTIVITIES:

- & Reader response logs
- & Oral presentations
- & Essays
- & Research projects

SUGGESTED TEXTS FOR THE COURSE:

- & *Women in American Law, The Struggle Toward Equality from the New Deal to the Present*, Judith A. Baer, Second Edition, Holmes & Meier, 1996.
- & *The Pig Farmer's Daughter and Other Tales of American Justice – Episodes of Racism and Sexism in the Courts from 1865 to the Present*, Mary Frances Berry, First Vintage Books, 2000.

OTHER RESOURCES USED/BIBLIOGRAPHY OF SUPPORTIVE TEXTS/OTHER MATERIALS:

- Frugg, Mary Jo. Women and the Law. Foundation Press, Second Edition, 1998.
- Jones, Nancy L, with Phil Philcox. The Women's Guide to Legal Issues. Renaissance Books, 2000.
- MacKinnon, Catherine. Sex Equality. Foundation Press, 2001.
- Murdoch, Joyce and Deb Price. Courting Justice. Basic Books, 2001.
- Muraskin, Roslyn. It's a Crime, Women and Justice. Prentice Hall, Third Edition, 2003.
- Otten, Laura A. Women's Rights and the Law., Praeger, 1993.
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www.usdoj.org (United States Department of Justice)
www.FindLaw.com
www.aba.net (American Bar Association)

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REVISER'S NAME AND DATE: Dr. Arlene Holpp Scala

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