

**POL SCI 464**  
**SEX, GENDER, & THE LAW**  
**\*\*ONLINE EDITION\*\***  
**University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (Spring 2016)**

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This online course explores developments with respect to sex/gender and the law in select areas of employment, education, family, criminal, and constitutional law. Specific topics examined in the course include: equal employment opportunity, sexual harassment, affirmative action, educational opportunity, marriage and divorce, child custody, domestic violence, rape law, and reproductive rights. In this context, students will analyze court cases, statutes, and legal scholarship. Students will also have the opportunity to participate in online discussions and debates involving contemporary issues relating to sex/gender and the law.

**COURSE PREREQUISITE**

Junior or senior status

**REQUIRED TEXTBOOK**

Lindgren, J. Ralph, Nadine Taub, Beth Anne Wolfson, and Carla M. Palumbo. 2011. The Law of Sex Discrimination. Fourth Edition. Cengage Learning.

**CLASS REQUIREMENTS AND POLICIES**

**U/G Course**

This is a U/G course. This syllabus pertains to the requirements and grade allocations for those students taking this course for undergraduate credit. If you are graduate student taking this course for graduate-level credit, you must obtain a separate graduate-level syllabus from the instructor.

**General Class Conduct**

It is imperative that you always maintain a professional tone in all online postings and that you keep your response in line with the question being asked. You should feel free to challenge the ideas expressed by those in the class, but discussion forums (described below) are not venues for personal

attacks, non-scholarly commentary, or personal anecdotes. Please take the time necessary to convey your ideas in a respectful and thoughtful manner. Failure to do so will result in a significant deduction in your discussion postings grade.

### **Online Class Structure, D2L, E-Mail Communication**

This is an online course, which will be administered via D2L. The official time zone utilized to assess whether assignments and exams are submitted on time is the Central Time Zone. Please pay careful attention to the deadlines for the assignments and the designated time periods for course exams.

In addition, all students in this course are expected to regularly check our course D2L site as well as their UWM e-mail accounts for important messages and updates regarding this class. Please note that students should use their UWM e-mail accounts for all (e-mailed) correspondence regarding this class. I will utilize your UWM e-mail address when responding to student inquiries or when sending class announcements via e-mail.

### **Assigned Reading and Framing Notes**

Our class will center on the assigned reading of court cases and associated material from the Lindgren et al. text. To complement your reading, we will engage in detailed discussions of the cases and their implications. In addition, we will spend a fair amount of time debating contemporary issues relating to sex/gender and the law.

As noted below, I have assigned reading for most weeks of the semester. Throughout the semester, I will post framing notes for the assigned reading associated with that week of class. These notes will be posted under "Content" on D2L and will highlight important themes, issues, and concepts in hopes of fitting the cases and other materials into a broader framework. The notes will be available for your review by Monday evening of each week.

### **Regular Weekly Discussion Questions & Postings ("Regular Weekly Posts")**

With the exception of week 1, those weeks in which you are taking the mid-term or final examinations, the week of spring break, and the last week of classes, I will post a discussion question in the "Discussion Forums" section of our D2L course page. Each student will be required to respond directly to the question that I pose each week ("regular weekly posts").

In this process, I expect you to seriously engage the assigned reading and to develop thoughtful remarks to the questions I pose. I suggest you think of these "posts" as short essay assignments. Consequently, your responses should be approximately two to three paragraphs (single-spaced) and should clearly indicate that you have read and thought about the assigned reading. These weekly posts will be assigned one of four grades (0, 50, 75, or 100%). In order to receive a 100%, you must submit a thoughtful response that thoroughly answers all parts of the question, is free of major grammatical and spelling errors, is of a scholarly nature with a highly professional tone, and does not veer from the topic of the question posed. Simple bullet point posts will not suffice for this purpose. Further, your writing should be free of any online lingo, abbreviated words, and contractions. Any reference to the assigned or outside reading must be properly cited with in-text parenthetical citations (and quotation marks, if necessary), and you should include a works cited/references list. Do not post your response as an attachment.

Your regular weekly discussion responses must be posted no later than **Friday at 11:59 pm** of the relevant week of the discussion. For example, your response to Week 2's discussion question must be

posted no later than Friday, February 5 (by 11:59 pm). You should submit only one direct response to my discussion question for grading purposes each week (if you submit more than one, we will grade the first one only). Late responses (even by one minute) to the regular weekly discussion questions will be assigned a grade of zero. I will, however, drop two of your lowest grades (e.g., two zeros) in this category of postings (and in this category only).

### **Responses to the Posts of Other Students (“Peer Response Posts”)**

In two separate weeks this semester, you must also submit a response to a posting of another student. Specifically, your “peer response post” should take the major point your peer expressed in his or her post and elaborate on it or critique it in a substantive way (positive critique is welcome). You should not critique the writing or grammar of your peers in these response posts. You may respond to multiple postings in a given week, and you may respond to more than two student postings over the semester. However, the TA will only grade one of your peer response posts per week and a total of two “peer response posts” per student this semester. Thus, you must indicate which of your peer response posts you would like graded. In order to do this, you should include “I submit this peer response post to be graded” in the first line of the text in your peer response post. Responses to student postings (“peer response posts”) are due no later than **Sunday at 11:59 pm** of the relevant week of the discussion. For example, if you would like to submit a graded peer response post during Week 2, you must submit your post no later than Sunday, February 7 by 11:59 pm. In the event that you submit multiple peer response posts in a given week without clearly noting which one you would like graded, the TA will grade your first peer response post. In the event that you submit more than two peer response posts over the semester and do not indicate which two you want graded, the TA will grade the first two peer response posts across separate weeks. Peer response posts will be assigned one of four grades (0, 50, 75, or 100%). Only those students who seriously engage the comments of another student in a meaningful and clear way (i.e., the student provides a well-developed response that is free of major spelling and grammatical errors) will receive full credit (i.e. 100%). Late peer response posts will receive a grade of zero.

### **Debate Position Paper**

Each student will be required to submit a “position paper” in which they offer at least three well-developed arguments to support either the pro or con position for one of three debate topics. Students will be randomly assigned to one of three topics for this purpose (see syllabus schedule for paper due dates); however, students will be permitted to argue either the pro or con position with respect to their assigned debate topic. The debate topic assignments will be posted by February 1 on our D2L site.

I expect all students to engage in research for the purposes of this writing assignment. Thus, any reference used in the development of a student’s paper should be cited in the body of the paper using in-text parenthetical citations (wherever that source is used). If you directly quote someone else’s language, you must indicate this by way of quotation marks around that language. Such quotations must also be followed (immediately) by a parenthetical citation that includes the page number on which this language may be found. APA, MLA, or APSA styles are acceptable, but you should be consistent in the citation style you employ. Each paper must also include a “works cited” list in which the student provides the full reference information for all sources cited in the body of the paper. By definition, all references in your “works cited” list must be cited in the body of your paper. At least four scholarly works (e.g., books and journal articles) should be cited in your paper. Substantial deductions will be applied to papers that do not use the requisite number of scholarly sources.

Your debate paper should be approximately 4-5 pages long (12-point font, double-spaced, one-inch margins). The cover page, works cited list, and any tables/figures are not included in this page limit. Your position paper (which must be submitted as a Microsoft Word document or PDF file) will be due to the D2L dropbox by 11:59 pm on its due date (again, see syllabus schedule). Late deductions (see below) will apply for any paper received after that time. Please make sure that the file name of your paper designates your last name, the topic, and whether you wrote in accordance with the pro or con side.

Please note that the instructor *may* opt to post select debate papers to facilitate class discussion in that week of class. It is essential that your paper is highly organized, free of spelling and grammatical errors, and uses proper citations.

### **Exams**

There will be two exams in this course. Exam material will be drawn from the assigned reading, the framing notes, and the discussion forums. Both exams will include a series of multiple choice and true/false questions and will be administered through our D2L Web page in a timed setting.

The mid-term exam will be available online beginning **Monday, March 7 at 12:00 am until Wednesday, March 9 at 10:00 pm**. You may select the day and time in which you take the exam within this time frame, but you are strongly advised to give yourself the full amount of time that I will permit in order to complete the exam.

The final exam will be available beginning **Monday, May 16 at 12:00 am until Wednesday, May 18 at 10:00 pm**. Please note that the final exam will not be cumulative in nature. It will emphasize material covered since the mid-term examination.

Once you begin an exam, the clock counts down, and you will have to complete the exam within the time limit (50 minutes). Thus, it is your responsibility to ensure that you have a secure Internet connection, a functional computer, and a proper testing environment before you begin the exam. Moreover, you will have a very limited amount of time to answer each question. Consequently, you should prepare for these online exams as you would a closed-book exam in a regular classroom environment. The exams are designed so that you will not have time to consult your notes or the book!

Make-up examinations will be allowed under very limited circumstances. In order to qualify for a make-up exam, you will have to supply documentation that demonstrates that you were not able to take the exam during the time frame offered due to an illness, family emergency, or a University-excused absence. Students who seek a make-up opportunity must make a reasonable effort to contact me in a timely fashion (no later than 24 hrs. after the last scheduled day of the exam).

### **Grades**

Mid-term exam	30%
Final exam	30%
Regular discussion posts	20%
Peer response posts	5%
Debate Position Paper	15%

### **Point Scale**

A	93-100	A-	90-92
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B+	87-89	C-	70-72
B	83-86	D+	67-69
B-	80-82	D	63-66
C+	77-79	D-	60-62
C	73-76	F	...-59

### **Time Allocation**

This is a three-credit hour class. Students, on average, should expect to spend nine hours a week on activities related to POL SCI 464.

### **Grading Concerns**

If you have questions or concerns regarding the grading of an assignment, please contact the TA within one week of receiving the grade. If you are not satisfied with the TA's response, please contact the instructor. If you have questions or concerns regarding the grading of the exams, please first consult with the instructor.

### **Academic Misconduct**

I do not tolerate acts of plagiarism or any forms of cheating. Students who are caught engaging in academic misconduct will receive an "F" (zero percentage points) for the assignment or exam. It is also possible that a student who is caught engaging in academic misconduct will receive an "F" for the course. If I suspect a case of academic misconduct, I will follow the academic misconduct and reporting policies of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

### **Dropping the Course & Incompletes**

Each student should become familiar with all relevant drop deadlines (please see the UWM calendar for further details). An incomplete may be given to a student who is unable to complete the course requirements due to extenuating circumstances (e.g., serious illness, injury, family emergency, etc.). Students seeking an incomplete must submit supporting documentation.

### **Late Assignment Policy & Penalties**

As noted above, late assignments with respect to regular discussion posts and peer response posts will receive a grade of zero. Debate position papers, however, will be graded if they are submitted after their due date/time. These assignments will be subject to a ten percentage point deduction for each day they are late (including weekends).

### **Student Accommodations**

If you will need accommodations in order to meet any of the requirements of this course, please contact me as soon as possible. Students should also contact an Accessibility Resource Center (ARC) counselor on campus at (414) 229-6287.

### **Religious Accommodations**

I will follow UWM's policy regarding the provision of religious accommodations. This policy can be found at: <https://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S1.5.htm>

## COURSE SCHEDULE

### **WEEK 1 (BEGINNING JANUARY 25): GENDER DISCRIMINATION IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

Read pgs. 1-31; 34-36

- Please also consult course content for a PowerPoint presentation on the judicial process and legal research.

### **WEEK 2 (BEGINNING FEBRUARY 1): EQUAL PROTECTION ANALYSIS I**

Read pgs. 37-53

- **PRACTICE QUIZ**: Students are required to take a practice online quiz by the end of week 2. The results of the practice quiz will not be factored into your grade

### **WEEK 3 (BEGINNING FEBRUARY 8): EQUAL PROTECTION ANALYSIS II**

Read pgs. 53-61; 66-76; 32-33

### **WEEK 4 (BEGINNING FEBRUARY 15): EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY I**

Read pgs. 77-99

### **WEEK 5 (BEGINNING FEBRUARY 22): EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY II**

Read pgs. 100-133

### **WEEK 6 (BEGINNING FEBRUARY 29): SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

Read pgs. 134-165

### **WEEK 7: MID-TERM EXAM**

The mid-term exam will be available online beginning **Monday, March 7 at 12:00 am** until **Wednesday, March 9 at 10:00 pm**.

### **WEEK 8 (BEGINNING MARCH 14): SPRING BREAK**

No assigned reading

### **WEEK 9 (BEGINNING MARCH 21): PAY EQUITY, FAMILY LEAVE, AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION**

Read pgs. 165-184; 187-199

- **DEBATE 1**: Are affirmative action policies for women necessary? Are these policies desirable? (Papers due to dropbox by Monday, March 21 at 11:59 pm).

**WEEK 10 (BEGINNING MARCH 28): EQUAL EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY**

Read pgs. 200-233

- **DEBATE 2:** Do Title IX's compliance regulations with respect to gender equity in athletic programs result in discrimination against males? (Papers due to dropbox by Monday, March 28 at 11:59 pm)

**WEEK 11 (BEGINNING APRIL 4): MARRIAGE & FAMILY I**

Read pgs. 250-264

**WEEK 12 (BEGINNING APRIL 11): MARRIAGE & FAMILY II**

Read pgs. 295-308 and TBA

**WEEK 13 (BEGINNING APRIL 18): DIVORCE, CHILD CUSTODY, PARENTAL RIGHTS**

Read pgs. 272-295; 308-321

- **DEBATE 3:** Should states reconsider no-fault divorce? (Papers due to dropbox by Monday, April 18 at 11:59 pm)

**WEEK 14 (BEGINNING APRIL 25): DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & CRIMINAL SEXUAL CONTACT**

Read pgs. 264-272; 392-416

**WEEK 15 (BEGINNING MAY 2): REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS I**

Read pgs. 322-337

**WEEK 16 (BEGINNING MAY 9): REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS II**

Read pgs. 337-355

**WEEK 17: FINAL EXAM**

Final exam available beginning **Monday, May 16 at 12:00 am** until **Wednesday, May 18 at 10:00 pm.**