

**SOC495H1F – LEC5101**  
**NEW TOPICS IN SOCIOLOGY:**  
**SOCIOLOGY OF FEMININITIES**

**University of Toronto**

Term: Summer 2023 – Seminar Date/Time: Monday and Wednesday 6:10-8p.m. Location:  
Online Synchronous

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**Office Hours:** Online for tests and papers; posted to website each week

**Webpage:** q.toronto.ca

**Course Description**

This is an upper-year seminar-style course. Each session will therefore be run as a discussion rather than a lecture.

This course examines the emergent sociology of femininities, exploring intragender and intersectional relationships of power between women, and their complex and often ambivalent relationships to the masculinist gender order. Since sexual violence – and fearing it, surviving it, and planning for it – is central to feminine existence, our theoretical exploration of femininities will be empirically anchored in relevant readings on women’s fear of violent crime, their violent crime avoidance practices, and contemporary state discourses on gendered violent crime prevention. You will leave this course with an ability to apply key concepts and theories from the emergent sociology of femininities to cis and trans women’s lived experiences of gender-based violent crime and violent crime avoidance.

The first part of the course consists of both modern and classic readings which situate how femininity is conceptualized within theoretical, empirical and institutional settings and terms. Through readings such those by West and Zimmerman and Judith Lorber, students will gain an understanding of how gender and femininity more specifically function as categories of difference and discrepancy in terms of power. Students will therefore gain an understanding of how violence against women and female-presenting people is often engendered within these dichotomies. The second part of the course focuses on how understandings around femininity and gender more broadly impact issues around gendered violent crime more specifically, such as those centered on women and female-presenting individuals’ fears of violence, their violent crime avoidance practices, policing and crime prevention discourse and legislation. The third part of the course employs an explicitly intersectional lens and explores how race further complicates and contributes to gendered violence within various contexts, including crimes such as domestic abuse and homicides in Canada that often disproportionately affect Indigenous women. These readings also focus on how racist and colonialist practices and discourses complicate essentialist understandings of gendered violence, particularly within a North American context.

The main goals of this course are to allow students to have both a strong background in the relevant gender and femininities scholarship, and to be able to critically evaluate gendered violence and practices from an intersectional feminist lens. For example, how does understanding violence against women as an inherently gendered phenomenon impact how we evaluate policing and anti-violence legislation through a sociological lens? And how do racialized and Indigenous women experience gendered violence differently than white women due to intersecting aspects of their identity, including not only race but also socioeconomic status and geographic locations? Also, how do essentialist understandings of femininity such as those rooted in the male/female gender binary impact or potentially contribute to higher rates of violent crimes against women. In discussing questions like these, students will develop the ability to understand gendered violence more critically, with an understanding of these processes that is intersectional in nature.

### **Prerequisite**

The prerequisite to take SOC495H1F is successful completion of 1.0 SOC FCE at the 300+ level. Students without the prerequisite can be removed at any time discovered, and without notice.

### **Requirements and Grading**

Students' overall grades in the course will be determined based on the following assignments:

1. One take-home test due to the course website on **May 30<sup>th</sup>: 25%**
2. Seminar participation: **15%**
  - Weekly reading responses, attendance, active participation in seminar discussion
3. Seminar presentation: **10%**
  - Evaluation based on summary and critique of readings and strength and insightfulness of questions
4. Course paper, due to the course website on **June 25<sup>th</sup>: 50%**

### **Readings**

All readings will be available on the course website hosted on Quercus, along with the course syllabus, course announcements, and handouts. Each student is responsible for obtaining and reading all required material before class. It is strongly encouraged that you give yourself enough time to deal with any potential problems or delays in accessing the readings that may occur so you come to class having done the readings and are prepared to discuss the materials. Problems accessing readings will not excuse failure to demonstrate having done the required readings.

### **Attendance and Participation (15%)**

Class attendance is **mandatory**. Proper documentation (described below) is required if an absence occurs. Each student is responsible for all material presented in class, including additional information about the next week's assignments. Students who are unable to attend class should contact a classmate to obtain this information. Classes will not be recorded.

### **Weekly Reading Responses**

For 8 of the 12 classes, students will be asked to write weekly responses to the assigned course material (approx. 500 words). Students should consider the following:

- What, in your view, were the most important ideas or themes from the assigned readings?
- How are the readings similar and how are they different? Do they raise similar points but ultimately come to different conclusions about them?
- What are your critical reactions to the readings (i.e., their strengths and weaknesses)?
- Which issues contained in the readings did you find particularly interesting, and what would you like to discuss in class?

Because this is a 400-level course and students are by now experienced sociological readers and writers, there are no strict guidelines for the structure or content of each reading response – you are welcome to organize your response in whatever way makes sense to you. You are required, however, to include a short summary of the central ideas and concepts from the readings while also including a brief critical analysis of the readings. Here, students should attempt to answer some of the questions outlined above. Responses will be evaluated based on the following criteria: (1) how well students identify and demonstrate comprehension of the readings' main points; and (2) the overall quality of the analysis. Quality and clarity of students' writing would also be considered.

*The reading responses must be submitted to the course website no later than noon the day before each class. Please submit ALL responses to the Discussion Section on Quercus for the appropriate week. Each week's responses will be designated as Week 2, Week 3, etc., so you will know where to post.* Since these assignments are meant to prepare students to engage in the in-class discussion, late responses cannot be accepted.

To allow for some flexibility, each student is allowed *one opportunity* to submit reading responses late for full credit, meaning **after the noon deadline on the day before class, but before the start of each class.** While students who submit responses late will not be able to receive feedback, they will still receive full credit for submitting the response.

### **Take-Home Tests (25%)**

There will be **one** take-home test worth **25%**. It will be due to the course website (on Quercus) on **May 30<sup>th</sup> at 11:59**. Tests submitted late without documented explanations will not be accepted. The test will cover **all the readings from classes prior to the date of the test.** The test will consist of three short-answer and three longer essay questions each. Students may start the test any time during the **three days before it is due.** Students will have **two hours to complete each test.** Late tests will not be accepted without proper documentation.

### **Presentations (10%)**

Each student will select **one week's readings** to present on. Students are required to briefly **summarize each of the readings, while leading class discussion and asking the class questions related to the readings.** Students will be evaluated based on their **understanding and ability to summarize the most important aspects of readings, as well as for asking complex and high-level questions that engage the class and result in thoughtful discussion.** Students are also asked to submit their summary and discussion questions to Quercus prior to the class on which they are presenting.

Because there are more students than individual classes for presenting, some students will be required to present in pairs on the weeks of their choosing. If students are presenting in pairs, it is recommended that they each cover two of the four readings per week so that work is divided evenly. Students presenting in pairs will receive the same presentation mark, unless I am otherwise notified by a presenter that work was not shared equally between the pair.

Students will have the chance to select which week they would prefer to present on a designated discussion thread on Quercus. This will be on a first-come, first-serve basis. Also, students who would like to present with someone else on a week that they have already selected will be required to contact that student on their own time to work out divisions of readings and work.

### **Course Paper (50%)**

Students are also required to write a paper at the end of this course, which will count for **half of the student's final grade**. It is due to the course website on **June 25<sup>th</sup> at 11:59**. The paper must be between **ten and fifteen pages, doubled-spaced** and in **12-point font**. Students will receive essay prompts on the course website before each paper is due.

Sometimes, students will be required to submit their assignments to the University's plagiarism detection tool 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 tool's reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation web site (<https://uoft.me/pdt-faq>).

For some of your assignments, we will be using the software Ouriginal. It uses text matching technology as a method to uphold the University's high academic integrity standards to detect any potential plagiarism. Ouriginal is integrated into Quercus. For the assignments set up to use Ouriginal, the software will review your paper when you upload it to Quercus. To learn more, please review Ouriginal's Privacy Policy.

Students not wishing their assignments to be submitted through Ouriginal will not be assessed unless a student instead provides, along with their work, sufficient secondary material (e.g., reading notes, outlines of the paper, rough drafts, etc.) to establish that the paper they submit is truly their own.

### **Late Paper Penalty**

Any late papers will incur an initial five-point penalty, unless submitted with proper documentation (listed below). If penalization occurs, for example, the highest possible grade a student can receive on a paper submitted after midnight on the due date will be 95 points. Five additional points will also be deducted for each additional day after the paper is late (i.e., the highest possible grade of 100 will drop to 90 after two days, 85 after three days, etc.).

This course **follows university policy regarding the documentation for late work and assignments:**

If students are unable to turn in an assignment or miss a test for medical reasons, they will need to **email me, the instructor, and also declare their absence on ACORN.**

If a **personal or family crisis** prevents students from meeting any deadlines, they are required to **ask their college registrar to contact me, the instructor by emailing me directly.** (It is also a good idea regardless to advise your college registrar if any crisis or personal situation is interfering with your studies.) Your registrar must also contact me before you write the make-up test.

If you miss a test for **accessibility reasons**, (e.g., you miss the test for disability-related reasons and you are registered with accessibility services), you are required to **contact your accessibility advisor about the circumstances and ask them to contact me.** Additionally, your accessibility advisor must also contact me before you are able to write the make-up test.

### **Regrading Policy**

If you feel you have received a grade on an assignment that is unjustified, you can **present your argument in writing explaining why this is the case**, as well as **schedule a meeting with me** within **one week** after the assignment has been returned to you. This argument should respond substantively to feedback provided on the assignment by stating where and why you think the feedback is misjudged.

### **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is a serious academic offence with serious policies. Plagiarism means presenting work done by another person or source as your own or using the works of others without acknowledgement. If you are unsure about whether you are plagiarizing, please consult the following tips on using sources from the University of Toronto website on writing: <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>.

### **Email**

My goal is to answer each email I receive from students on weekdays within 24 hours. Please include "SOC 495" in the subject line of the email.

### **Office Hours**

Office hours will be by appointment and will be conducted over Zoom. This is to ensure students registered for this class get the opportunity for one-on-one consultations. Students may use office hours as an opportunity to explore ideas and experiences related to the course material, discuss plans for a career in Sociology, or discuss other course and career-related matters. To schedule an appointment with me, please use the appointment slots made available weekly on Quercus: Click on the "Calendar" in the menu on the left-hand side, then go to "Find Appointments" on the right-hand side. After you sign up for a slot, I will send you a Zoom link so you can attend the meeting.

### **Accessibility Needs**

As a course instructor, I am committed to accessibility for all students. If you require accommodations for a disability or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the

classroom or course materials, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible: [disability.services@utoronto.ca](mailto:disability.services@utoronto.ca) or <http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility>.

### **Gender-Inclusive Language**

Respectful classroom practices and etiquette includes using gender-inclusive language. Language is gender-inclusive and non-sexist when we use words that affirm and respect how people describe, express and experience their gender. Gender-inclusive language both acknowledges people of any gender and affirms non-binary gender identifications, recognizing the difference between biological sex and gender expression. Students may share their preferred pronouns and names, and these gender identities and gender expressions should be honored.

## ***COURSE SCHEDULE AND READINGS***

### **PART I: FEMININITIES AND GENDER: THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL BACKGROUND**

**MAY 8**

**\*Overview of Course Structure and Syllabus, Presentation Date Selection\***

#### **Situating Gender within Social Practices**

***Reading Response Prompt: How does understanding gender as socially constructed disrupt commonly held assumptions about what constitutes “male” and “female” behaviour? How might these assumptions impact our understandings of how violent crimes are gendered and committed within certain situations and environments?***

Lorber, Judith. 200. “The Social Construction of Gender” Pp. 113-119 in Disch, Estelle (ed.), *Reconstructing Gender: A Multicultural Anthology. Fourth Edition*. Massachusetts: McGraw-Hill.

West, Candace and Don H. Zimmerman. 1987. “Doing Gender.” *Gender & Society*, 1, 2: 125-151.

Kessler, Suzanne and Wendy McKenna. Chapter 1. “The Primacy of Gender Attribution.” Pp. 1-20 in Kessler, Suzanne and Wendy McKenna, *Gender: An Ethnomethodological Approach*. University of Chicago Press.

**May 10**

#### **A Plurality of Femininities: Understanding Gender and Femininity Beyond the Binary**

***Reading Response Prompt: How does conceptualizing femininities pluralistically disrupt our understanding of gendered behaviour? How might men or male-presenting people enacting femininity potentially challenge or, alternately, affirm our understandings of men as inherently more dominant and violent than women?***

Butler, Judith. 1993. "Imitation and Gender Insubordination" Pp. 307-320 in Abelove, Henry, Michele Aina Burale and David Halperin, *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*. New York: Routledge.

Fausto-Sterling, Anne. 2002. "The Five Sexes: Why Male and Female are not Enough." Pp. 468-473 in Williams, Christine L. and Arlene Stein (eds.), *Sexuality and Gender*. Mass.: Blackwell.

Atkinson, Michael. 2008. "Exploring Male Femininity in the 'Crisis:' Men and Cosmetic Surgery." *Body & society*, 14(1): 67-87.

**May 15**

### **Intersectionality and Multi-racial Femininities**

***Reading Response Prompt: How does understanding femininities as simultaneously gendered and racialized further complicate understandings of how the gender binary operates? Also, how does exploring white femininity, which usually constitutes an unmarked category in everyday societal discourse and practices, enhance our understanding of certain types of femininity as normalized and emphasized constructs?***

Pyke, Karen D., Johnson, Denise L. 2003. "Asian American Women and Racialized Femininities: 'Doing' Gender across Cultural Worlds." *Gender & Society*, 17(1): 33-53.

Deliovsky, Kathy. 2008. "Normative White Femininity: Race, Gender and the Politics of Beauty." *Atlantis*, 33(1): 49-59.

Jerald, Morgan C., Ward, L. Monique, Moss, Lolita, Thomas, Khia, and Fletcher, Kyla D. 2017. "Subordinates, Sex Objects, or Sapphires? Investigating Contributions of Media Use to Black Students' Femininity Ideologies and Stereotypes About Black Women." *Journal of Black Psychology*, 43(6): 608-635.

## **PART II: ANALYZING GENDERED VIOLENCE SOCIOLOGICALLY: DISCOURSE, LEGISLATION, PROTECTION AND APPROACHES**

**May 17**

### **Defining and Labelling Gendered Violence**

***Reading Response Prompt: How is gendered violence defined and conceptualized differently within each of the readings? In your opinion, what are the strengths of each approach and what are some of the shortcomings?***

Muehlenhard, Charlene L., and Kimes, Leigh Ann. 1999. "The Social Construction of Violence: The Case of Sexual and Domestic Violence." *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 3(3): 234-245.

Buiten, Denise and Naidoo, Kammila. 2020. "Laying Claim to a Name: Towards a Sociology of 'Gender-Based Violence.'" *South African Review of Sociology*, 51(2).

Roggeband, Conny. 2021. "Violence against women and gender-based violence." Pp. 352-363 in Abels, Gabriele, Krizsan, Andrea, MacRae, Heather, and van der Vleuten, Anna, *The Routledge Handbook of Gender and EU Politics*. London: Routledge.

**May 22**

**Victoria Day (no class)**

**May 24**

**Social Stigma around Gendered Violence**

***Reading Response Prompt: How does social stigma work to silence survivors of gendered violence? What are some of the strategies being used to combat gender stigma, and how to they potentially subvert or challenge how we think of femininity and gender more broadly?***

Richie, B. E. 1995. "Stigma, Stereotypes, and Gender Entrapment: Violence Against Women and Poverty." *Georgetown Journal on Fighting Poverty*, 3(1): 35-38.

Murra, C., Crowe, A., & Akers, W. (2016). How can we end the stigma surrounding domestic and sexual violence? A modified Delphi study with national advocacy leaders. *Journal of Family Violence*, 31(3): 271-287.

Perrin, N., Marsh, M., Clough, A. *et al.* 2019. Social norms and beliefs about gender based violence scale: a measure for use with gender based violence prevention programs in low-resource and humanitarian settings. *Confl Health*, 13(6).

**May 29**

**Avoiding and Resisting Gendered Violence: Policies and Practices**

***Reading Response Prompt: Which forms of resistance and prevention against gendered violence does each article address? What are some of the differences and similarities between these approaches in terms of how gendered violence is conceptualized, where it is situated, and how women respond to it, based on criteria such as their social and geographic location, and access to different resources?***

Cermele, Jill A. 2004. "Teaching Resistance to Teach Resistance: The Use of Self-Defence in Teaching Undergraduates about Gender Violence." *Feminist Teacher*, 15(1): 1-15.

Tellez, Michelle. 2008. "Community of Struggle: Gender, Violence, and Resistance on the U.S./Mexico Border." *Gender & Society*, 22(5): 545-567.



Dolan, Chris. 2014. "Letting go of the gender binary: Charting new pathways for humanitarian interventions on gender-based violence." *International Review of the Red Cross*, 96(894): 485-501.

**\*Take-Home Test due May 30\***

**May 31**

**Violence Against Women at Canadian and U.S. Borders**

**Reading Response Prompt: According to the readings, what is unique about how North American borders are constructed and policed insofar as these impact gendered violence? How is various forms of gendered violence often exacerbated by subjects' racial, ethnic and/or geographical identities?**

Morales, Maria Cristina, and Bejarano, Cynthia. 2009. "Transnational sexual and gendered violence: an application of border sexual conquest at a Mexico-US border." *Global Networks*, 9(3): 420-439.

Estes, Nick. "Anti-Indian Common Sense: Border Town Violence and Resistance in Mni Luzahan." Pp. 44-69 in Dorries, H., Henry, R., Hugill, D., McCreary, T., & Tomiak, J. (Eds.) (2019). *Settler city limits: Indigenous resurgence and colonial violence in the urban prairie west*. University of Manitoba Press.

Maynard, Robyn. 2019. "Black Life and Death across the U.S.—Canada Border: Border Violence, Black Fugitive Belonging, and a Turtle Island View of Black Liberation." *Journal of the Critical Ethnic Studies Association*, 5(1-2).

**June 5**

**State and Legal Discourse around Gendered Violence**

**Reading Response Prompt: How does state and legal discourse alternately challenge or perpetuate social expectations around how we view and prosecute gendered violence? In your view, which aspects of these discourses has changed over time, and which have remained the same?**

Das, Veena. 1996. "Sexual Violence, Discursive Formations and the State." *Economic and Political Weekly*, 31(35/37): 2411-2423.

Friend, Colleen, Shlonsky, Aron, and Lambert, Liz. 2008. "From evolving discourses to new practice approaches in domestic violence and child protective services." *Children and Youth Services Review*, 30(6): 689-698.

Gash, Alison, and Harding, Ryan. 2018. "#MeToo? Legal Discourse and Everyday Responses to Sexual Violence." *Laws*, 7(2): 21.

## **PART III: UNDERSTANDING GENDERED VIOLENCE THROUGH AN INTERSECTIONAL LENS**

**June 7**

### **Gendered Violence and Othering through a Racialized Lens: Historical and Theoretical Readings**

***Reading Response Prompt: What types of tropes and images have been used to dehumanize women of colour, and how are they reflected in modern policing and surveillance techniques disproportionately used against racialized populations?***

Collins, Patricia Hill. 2000. "Mammies, Matriarchs, and Other Controlling Images." Pp. 68-95. In *Black Feminist Thought: Second Edition*. Routledge.

Powell, Amber Joy, and Phelps, Michelle S. 2021. "Gendered racial vulnerability: How women confront crime and criminalization." *Law & Society Review*, 55(3): 429-451.

Villalon, Roberta. "Violence against Latina Immigrants and Immigration Law." Pp. 17-40. In *Violence Against Latina Immigrants: Citizenship, Inequality, and Community*

**June 12**

### **Immigrant and Refugee Women and Gendered Violence**

***Reading Response Prompt: How is gendered violence socially and legally construed in relation to immigration and refugee women? How do aspects of identity such as immigrant status and socioeconomic status complicate understandings of immigrant femininity, especially when we contrast them with how white native-born women are construed within media and legal discourse?***

Menjívar, Cecilia, and Salcido, Olivia. 2002. "Immigrant Women and Domestic Violence: Common Experiences in Different Countries." *Gender & Society*, 16(6): 898-920.

Olwan, Dana M. 2013. "Gendered Violence, Cultural Otherness, and Honour Crimes in Canadian National Logics." *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, 38(4).

Arbel, Efrat. 2013. "The Culture of Rights Protection in Canadian Refugee Law: Examining the Domestic Violence Cases." *McGill Law Journal*, 58(3).

**June 14**

### **Violence against Indigenous Women in North America**

***Reading Response Prompt: How have Indigenous femininities in North America been constructed through colonial and post-colonial practices and discourses, and how have these served to dehumanize Indigenous women and often render their bodies sites of violence? What are some forms of resistance used by Indigenous women to reclaim their agency and heritage?***

Rule, Elizabeth. 2018. "Seals, Selfies, and the Settler State: Indigenous Motherhood and Gendered Violence in Canada." *American Quarterly*, 70(4): 741-754.

Presley, Rachel. 2020. "Embodied Liminality and Gendered State Violence: Artist Expressions in the MMIW Movement (missing and murdered Indigenous women)." *Journal of international women's studies*, 21(7): 91-109.

Rindfleisch, Bryan. 2020. "A pattern of violence: Muscogee (Creek Indian) women in the eighteenth century and today's MMIWG – the missing and murdered indigenous women & girls." *The Historian*, 82(3): 346-362.

## **June 19**

### **Violence Against Transgender people**

***Reading Response Prompt: How are transgender people uniquely vulnerable to gendered violence? How do including and understanding the experiences of trans people of colour and transmen add to or, alternately, complicate our understandings of how femininity is constructed through gendered violence?***

Wirtz, Andrea L., Poteat, Tonia C., Malik, Mannat, and Glass, Nancy. 2020. "Gender-Based Violence Against Transgender People in the United States: A Call for Research and Programming." *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse* 21(2): 227-241.

Ussher, J.M., Hawkey, A., Perz, J., Liamputtong, P., Sekar, J., Marjadi, B., Schmied, V., Dune, T., Brook, E. 2022. "Crossing Boundaries and Fetishization: Experiences of Sexual Violence for Trans Women of Color." *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 37(5-6).

Abelson, Miriam J. 2014. "Dangerous Privilege: Trans Men, Masculinities, and Changing Perceptions of Safety." *Sociological Forum*, 29(3): 549-570.

**\*Course Paper due to Quercus on June 25<sup>th</sup>\***