

Gender, Law & Politics 46.310.201 (Fall 2015)

Instructor: Susan E. Gallagher Susan_Gallagher@uml.edu
Time: Monday, 2:00 – 4:50 **Room:** 207 Dugan Hall
Course Page: <http://faculty.uml.edu/sgallagher>
Office: Dugan 201
Office Hours: Mon, 5 – 6 pm; Wed, 2 – 3 pm (on campus)
Fri, 9 – 10 am (online); and by appointment.

Note: Links to all required readings and assignments are included on the course web page.

This course explores legal constructions of gender by examining Supreme Court cases, federal legislation, historical documents, news stories, and scholarly essays on sexual inequality in the United States. Topics include the evolution of the family as a legal (and illegal) reality; political regulation of reproduction and sexual activity; feminist critiques of economic inequality; the changing role of gender in class consolidation; and ongoing debates about the relationships between public and private life.

During the first two thirds of the course, we will review landmark rulings and classic readings on gender and politics. During the final third, students will give presentations and write papers on legal cases, news stories, and historical events that illuminate the intersections between gender and politics in American law and society.

Outcomes: Course readings and assignments are designed to enable students to enhance their critical thinking and writing skills as they gain a comprehensive understanding of evolving approaches to gender in American law.

Requirements: You are not required to purchase any books. All course materials, including required readings and assignments, are available at <http://faculty.uml.edu/sgallagher>.

When you contact me via e-mail, you must include the letters “GLP” in the subject heading of your message. If you do not include “GLP,” your e-mail could be misdirected or rejected as spam. Also, you must use your UML e-mail address whenever you contact me.

If you need to miss a session, please e-mail a valid excuse beforehand if you can or as soon as possible after that session. If you miss more than two sessions without providing a valid excuse, you will receive an “F” for the course.

You must not plagiarize. If you copy from any outside source without providing proper attribution in any of your assignments, you will receive an “F” for that assignment. If you copy from any outside source without providing proper attribution on either the midterm or the final paper, you will automatically fail the entire course. To review UML’s policies on academic integrity, visit <http://www.uml.edu/Catalog/Undergraduate/Policies/Academic-Integrity.aspx>



Assignments: The lecture/discussion portion of the course is divided seven Units. We will generally spend a week covering each Unit, but a few might run into the next session. To complete each Unit, you must provide brief answers to questions on the required readings. All assignments must be submitted via email. In most cases, you will also be required to bring a copy of your answers to class to facilitate discussion. Please follow the instructions included with each set of reading questions and always arrive in class prepared to show that you have completed your work.

In all of your assignments, you must demonstrate your ability to write college-level prose. Consequently, all of your work must be thoughtfully composed and free of grammatical errors. I will do my best to help you solve writing problems, but if your assignments are carelessly written, or if you neglect to proofread, or if you submit work late without a valid explanation, you will not do well in this class.

During the part of the term, each student will prepare and give a presentation on specific issues related to gender, politics, and law. On the date of their presentations, students will be required to submit a summary of their main points either in PowerPoint or in Microsoft Word. Please note that you must choose the same topic for your presentation and final paper.

Exams: For your midterm exam, you will be required to write two two-page essays on specific aspects of the required readings. Your work will be graded according to your ability to write college-level prose. Consequently, like your answers to the reading questions, your midterm must be carefully written and proofread. If your essays do not conform to the basic rules of college-level composition, you should not expect to receive a passing grade.

For your final exam, you must choose one of the following options:

1. You may write a five-page paper on a topic chosen from a list that I will supply well in advance.
2. You may write a five-page paper on a topic of your own choosing so long as you discuss it with me beforehand.
3. If you already possess the required technical skills, you may create a web page on a specific aspect of one of the major issues covered in class.

No matter which of these options you choose, you must submit a thesis statement on your topic approximately three weeks before the work is due. In order to help you complete this task, we will discuss possible thesis statements in class well in advance of the due date for the final exam. Then you must submit a complete and polished first draft approximately two weeks before the end of the term. Finally, after I review and correct your first drafts, you must submit a revised version of your paper.

Grade Formula: Weekly Assignments and Class Participation = 30%
Midterm = 30%
Final Paper/Presentation = 40%