



Women and Gender Studies

Women, Law and Justice

WMST 450:003 and 550:003, M/W 10:30 – 11:45 a.m. in East Hall, room 201

Cross-listed courses: CRIM 490:010; GOVT 319:007

INSTRUCTOR: Alexandria Zylstra, J.D., LL.M., Associate Professor
OFFICE LOCATION: Enterprise Hall, Room 030
OFFICE TELEPHONE: (703) 993-5067
OFFICE E-MAIL: azylstr2@gmu.edu (this is the best way to contact me)
OFFICE HOURS: Tuesdays 10:30 – 11:45 a.m. and Wednesdays 12:00 – 1:15 p.m.
Other times by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course explores the American legal system, focusing on the constitutional and legal rights of women. Topics include women's struggle for constitutional equality, employment discrimination, marriage and divorce, reproductive issues, criminal law, and women and education.

COURSE PREREQUISITES: sophomore standing for undergraduate course; graduate standing for graduate course

COURSE OBJECTIVES: Upon successful completion of this course students will be able to:

- (1) Identify and explain basic principles relating to the American legal system, including: constitutional law, privacy law, family law, and employment law.
- (2) Demonstrate an understanding of legal issues related to gender, including the ability to critically analyze these issues.

APPROACH TO LEARNING: Lecture, discussion, and activities. Students are also encouraged to post questions regarding the structure or content of the course on the discussion board on Blackboard, to which other students and the professor may respond.

REQUIRED COURSE TEXTBOOK: *The Constitutional and Legal Rights of Women*, Judith Baer and Leslie Friedman Goldstein (Roxbury Publishing 2006).

BLACKBOARD: This is a course management website that students may access from the GMU web page at <http://gmueu> ; click on "mymason" at the top of the page; sign in to "mymason" using your GMU e-mail username and password and then click on the "courses" tab near the top of the page. This site contains the syllabus, supplemental readings and a course grade book. If you experience technical problems with or have difficulty logging on to Blackboard contact the IT Support Center at 703-993-8870 or support@gmu.edu.

CLASS PROTOCOL:

- (1) Electronics – **Use of laptops and cell phones during class is prohibited, including texting, and checking emails and messages.** If you carry a cell phone, please be sure to turn it off during class. Students in violation of this policy more than one time may be administratively dropped from the course.
- (2) Recording – **Recording (audio or video) of class lectures is prohibited** without express permission of the instructor and, if granted, may only be done so for personal use and not shared with others.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES: (1) regular class attendance; (2) completion of reading and other assignments *prior* to class; (3) participation in course discussions; and (4) completion of all assessments.

HONOR CODE: The University Honor Code as published in the University Catalog is in effect for all the graded assignments for this course: <http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code/>. This Code prohibits cheating, plagiarism, and attempted cheating or plagiarism. Suspected, possible, or potential violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the University Honor Committee which will make the final determination whether or not a violation occurred and if so, the consequence of the violation. **Mason's Honor Code requires you to report suspected violations;** you committed to do so by signing the application for admission. As a reminder, **no collaboration is allowed for class participation, exams, or assignments**, unless expressly authorized by the instructor.

WOMEN AND GENDER STUDIES COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY STATEMENT: Women and Gender Studies seeks to create a learning environment that fosters respect for people across identities. We welcome and value individuals and their differences, including gender expression and identity, race, economic status, sex, sexuality, ethnicity, national origin, first language, religion, age and ability. We encourage all members of the learning environment to engage with the material personally, but to also be open to exploring and learning from experiences different than their own. Additionally, if you have a preferred pronoun for use in this space, please let the instructor know in person, or by email.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: The instructor is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities, including the use of laptops for note-taking. Students requesting accommodations should promptly contact the university's Office of Disability Services (ODS) in SUB I, Suite 2500 (phone: 993-2474) and provide the Center with appropriate documentation to support their requests for reasonable accommodations. The instructor must be notified of any request for accommodations for exams at least five business days prior to the dates the accommodations are requested, and at the beginning of the semester for accommodations related to class participation.

CAMPUS RESOURCES:

Counseling and Psychology Services

Student Union 1 (SUB 1), Suite 3129; 993-2380; <https://caps.gmu.edu/>

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Questioning Resources

Student Union 1 (SUB 1), Suite 2200; 993-2702 lgbtq.gmu.edu

Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Multicultural Education

SUB 1, Suite 2400; 993-2700; <https://odime.gmu.edu/>

Student Support and Advocacy Center

Fairfax Campus: SUB I, Suite 3200; 993-9999;

24-hour sexual and intimate partner violence crisis number: 703-380-1434; <https://ssac.gmu.edu/>

Women and Gender Studies Center

Johnson Center, Suite 240K; 993-2896; <http://wmst.gmu.edu/center>

Writing Center

Multiple locations: <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>

METHOD OF STUDENT EVALUATION:

1. Three take-home exams (50 points each) submitted via Blackboard. No other submission formats accepted.
2. Three writing assignments (50 points each) submitted via Blackboard. No other submission formats accepted.
3. Four case briefs (20 points each): Case briefs must be submitted prior to the beginning of class via Blackboard. Additionally, students must bring a paper copy of the brief to class.
4. Ten two-question quizzes (8 points each): I will announce in class when a quiz will be posted for the next set of assigned readings. The quiz will be posted on Blackboard under “Assignments” and will be multiple choice and/or short answer format. Quizzes will be due by 9:30 a.m. on the day we discuss the assigned readings. Students have five minutes to complete the quiz once it is opened. The correct answers, along with an explanation of the answer, will be visible after 10:00 a.m. on that same day by clicking on the grade in Blackboard’s Gradebook. **There are no make-up quizzes, except for a student’s *documented* medical emergency, but I will drop the **two** lowest quiz scores to compute your course grade.**
5. Class attendance and participation (26 points): Students should plan to attend every class, as participation is expected and necessary in order to do well in this course.

GRADING CRITERIA FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS:

Three exams (50 points each)	150 points
Three writing assignments (50 points each)	150 points
Three highest scores of 4 case briefs (20 points each)	60 points
Eight highest scores of 10 quizzes	64 points
<u>Class attendance/participation</u>	<u>26 points</u>
TOTAL POINTS	450 points

Notes: Late writing assignments or exams will be penalized 10 points for every day past the due date. No late exams will be accepted for the third exam, as it is due during finals week. No late case briefs or quizzes will be accepted. Any student who misses more than three classes will receive 0 class attendance/participation points.

Final Course Average	Grade	Points
97 - 100%	A+	436 – 450
92 – 96%	A	414 – 435
90 - 91%	A-	405 – 413
87 - 89%	B+	391 – 404
82 - 86 %	B	369 – 390
80 - 81%	B-	360 – 368
77 - 79%	C+	346 – 359
72 – 76%	C	324 – 345
70 – 71%	C-	315 – 323
67 - 69%	D+	301 – 314
62 – 66%	D	279 – 300
60 – 61%	D-	270 – 278
Below 60%	F	Below 270

GRADING CRITERIA FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS:

Three exams (50 points each)	150 points
Three writing assignments (50 points each)	150 points
Three highest scores of 4 case briefs (20 points each)	60 points
Eight highest scores of 10 quizzes	64 points
Class attendance/participation	26 points
Research paper	200 points
TOTAL POINTS	650 points

Notes: Late writing assignments or exams will be penalized 10 points for every day past the due date. No late exams will be accepted for the third exam, as it is due during finals week. No late case briefs or quizzes will be accepted. Any student who misses more than three classes will receive 0 class attendance/participation points.

Final Course Average	Grade	Points
97 - 100%	A+	630 – 650
92 – 96%	A	598 – 629
90 - 91%	A-	585 – 597
87 - 89%	B+	565 – 584
82 - 86 %	B	533 – 564
80 - 81%	B-	520 – 532
77 - 79%	C+	500 – 519
72 – 76%	C	468 – 499
70 – 71%	C-	455 – 467
Below 70%	F	Below 455

NOTIFICATION ABOUT CANCELLED CLASS SESSIONS OR CHANGES TO SYLLABUS: This syllabus does not constitute a contract. If I find it necessary to cancel a class session, or if I make any changes to the syllabus or course schedule, I will e-mail a message to that effect using the Blackboard e-mail system. In the event class is cancelled *due to inclement weather*, class **MAY** be held at the normally scheduled time using Blackboard Collaborate Ultra (a web conferencing program that allows us to engage in a virtual classroom through the Blackboard website). If this occurs, I will send an announcement through the Blackboard e-mail system. Students can find assistance about how to get started and how to join a Collaborate session here: <https://en-us.help.blackboard.com/Collaborate/Ultra/Participant>

Please check GMU email regularly. If you are emailing the instructor with an administrative question, please review the syllabus before emailing. Most administrative questions are answered in the syllabus.

Schedule (subject to change)

January 22:	<u>Overview of Legal System</u> Structure of Courts
January 24:	<u>Fight for Constitutional Equality</u> Read: pp. 1 – 11 (up to Privileges and Immunities Clause); and supplemental readings posted on Blackboard (U.S. Constitution) <i>Due by 9:30 a.m.: Quiz 1</i>
January 29:	Read: pp. 23 - 45

January 31: Read: pp. 46 – 59 and 77 (Official Intermediate Scrutiny) – 85 (Statutory Rape)

February 5: Read pp. 97 (Systematic Exclusion from Juries) – 104 (up to Serving in the Military; and 116 (Conferring Citizenship) – 134 (up to Rights in Conflict); also read supplemental readings posted on Blackboard (*Sessions v Morales-Santana*)
Due by 9:30 a.m.: Quiz 2

February 7: Gender and Employment
Read: pp. 139 – 151 (*Ellison*) and 157 (*Harris*) - 159

February 12: Read: pp. 159 - 183
Assign: First Writing Assignment
Due by 9:30 a.m.: Quiz 3

February 14: Read: pp. 183 – 209 (Preg. Discrim Act)

February 19: Read: pp. 209 – 238
Due by 9:30 a.m.: Quiz 4

February 21: Sexual Orientation and Title VII
Read: supplemental readings posted on Blackboard (*Hively v. Ivy Tech Community College of Indiana*)

February 26: Gender and Family Law
Read: pp. 264 - 280
Assign: First Test
Due: First Writing Assignment

February 28: Read: pp. 280 - 297
Due by 9:30 a.m.: Quiz 5

March 5: Read: pp. 241 – 264 and supplemental reading posted on Blackboard (*Obergefell v. Hodges*)
Due: First Test

March 7: Read: 297 (Rights of Unmarried Fathers) – 317 and 328 (Parents vs. Grandparents) – 330
Due by 9:30 a.m.: Quiz 6

March 12/14: *Spring Break*

Gender and Reproductive Freedom

March 19: Read: pp. 343 – 367
Due by 9:30 a.m.: Quiz 7

March 21: Read: pp. 368 – 396
Assign: Second Writing Assignment

March 26: Read: pp. 396 - 431

March 28: Read: pp. 431 – 464
Due by 9:30 a.m.: Quiz 8

April 2: Read: pp. 480 (Reproductive Technology) – 494 and supplemental reading posted on Blackboard (*Whole Woman's Health v. Hellerstedt*)
Assign: Second Test

April 4: Gender and Crime
Read: pp. 566 – 592
Due: Second Writing Assignment

April 9: Read: pp. 592 – 636
Due: Second Test

April 11: Human Trafficking
Read supplemental readings posted on Blackboard

April 16: Gender and Education
Read: pp. 498 – 517
Assign: Third Writing Assignment
Due by 9:30 a.m.: Quiz 9

April 18: Read: pp. 517 – 543

April 23: Read: pp. 543 (Title IX and Sexual Harassment) – 564
Assign Third Test
Due by 9:30 a.m.: Quiz 10

April 25: Current issues in Education
Read: supplemental readings posted on Blackboard

April 30: International Perspective
Due: Third Writing Assignment

May 2: Graduate Student Research Presentations

**Third Test Due at *beginning* of final exam period: Wednesday, May 9 at 10:30 a.m.
(submitted via Blackboard)**