GSWS 4460G Special topics in women’s studies: gender, pandemics and social equality

Middlesex College (MC) 17

Tuesdays 10:30-1:30

Prerequisites: GSWS 2220E, or permission from the Department.

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

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Office Hours:

# Course Description

Despite the devastating effects of the most recent COVID-19 pandemic, the potential for learning about social, economic, and political inequality from COVID-19 is tremendous. This course offers students a dynamic opportunity to engage with the timeliness of this topic; evaluate policy, programming, activism, and patterns of inequality through a feminist lens; and explore how issues of gender equality, social justice, and crisis response and policy interact with pandemics. We will build a foundation of feminist theory establishing that gender affects how people experience public health crises, and then explore how factors such as race, Indigeneity, sexuality, class, disability, incarceration, vocation, family status, immigration status, housing, and experiences of violence shape those experiences further. We will focus on emerging literature and examples from the most recent COVID-19 pandemic and the Canadian experience, but students are encouraged to bring knowledge and examples from different historical and cultural contexts to the table. Course content will be interdisciplinary and appeal to students across the humanities, social sciences, and health sciences.

## Learning Objectives

* To gain a broad understanding of how pandemics influence gender relations and gender equality.
* To relate concepts of equity, intersectionality, vulnerability, and policy response to recent collective experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic.
* To grasp how feminist interventions in economics, international relations, political sciences, and sociology produce narratives that complicate normative understandings of pandemics and their impact on societies.
* To understand that pandemics affect people differently based on their social location, and this has resounding and lasting effects on equality.
* To evaluate the gender-responsiveness of policy decisions.
* To provide students with the opportunity to relate course content to their daily lives,
* future studies, and careers.
* Assignments are designed to help students:
  + Engage in-depth with course readings to promote understanding of nuances within the literature.
  + Cultivate research, analytical, and critical thinking skills.
  + Develop good written and oral skills.
  + Foster individual and collaborative learning among students.

# Methods of Evaluation

### Class Participation – 10%

Participation will be assessed based on attendance in class (5%) and quality in-class contributions to discussion (5%). This mode of assessment is meant to encourage students to strengthen critical thinking and oral communication skills. It will also encourage students to develop their own perspectives on course material and learn from their peers.

### Short Reading Responses – 15% each (x2 = 30%)

Two short, three-to-four page response papers on course readings of the students’ choosing throughout the semester. Students are expected to submit one response paper by February 14th, and one by April 4th. This assessment will give students an opportunity to engage closely with two of the course readings (one course reading for each response paper), developing critical thinking and written communication skills. Reading responses are not summaries of the chosen readings but are critical engagements with the main themes and concepts. Reading responses will be due the day that the chosen reading is discussed in class.

### Final Essay – 40%

10% half draft (due February 28th), 30% final essay (due April 3rd)

Students will write a final essay on a topic of their choice (approved by the instructor) relating to gender and pandemics. This method of assessment will require students to use external sources (peer-reviewed and non-academic) to write a 4000-word research essay, complete with an introduction, thesis, body, conclusion, and references list. A half draft is due halfway through the semester. This assignment will assess students’ application of course themes, and will develop their research, writing, editing, and organizational skills.

### Roundtable Group Exercise and Report – 20%

10% roundtable discussion, 10% presentation

Final assessment will be through small-group roundtables, where groups work collaboratively throughout the last class to answer an assigned, focused question relating to gender equality and pandemics. Students will take turns giving insight, making connections, and building on their peers’ responses to slowly work towards a comprehensive solution to the posed question. Responses should consider specific risk and vulnerability, specific readings and concepts from class, the role of policy, and target populations. Students will be required to concisely present their roundtable results for the class at the end. This exercise will assess students’ comprehension of course themes and insights, application of these themes and insights, ability to work alongside their peers towards a common goal, oral presentation skills, and organizational skills.

# Class Policies

## Medical Policy

[Accommodation for Medical Illness](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical%2015JUN.pdf)

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Please do not submit medical notes to the instructor. Contact your academic counsellor and we will work to develop an appropriate solution.

## Student Absence policy

[Accommodation for Religious Holidays Policy](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_religious.pdf)

More information on [Academic Considerations](https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/academic_considerations/index.html#:~:text=Academic%20Considerations%20for%20Student%20Absences,-The%20Academic%20Consideration&text=As%20a%20result%2C%20academic%20consideration,Affiliate%20Academic%20Counselling%2FAdvising%20Office.)

## Class Conduct

I acknowledge that I cannot guarantee a safe space for everyone as I do not control who decides to register for this class and welcome students from all backgrounds and experiences; however, I will require a policy of mutual respect, care, compassion, understanding, supportive listening, and encouragement in class that I expect students to follow as we engage in course themes, readings, shared experiences, and personal opinions. Students are not required to agree with all of the readings – I do not agree with all of the readings – but are expected to treat the material and their peers with respect as we learn from each other.

Please also see Western’s [Code of Student Conduct](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/board/code.pdf)

More information can be found [here](https://studentexperience.uwo.ca/student_experience/studentconduct.html).

## Late Assignments

Late assignments will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

## Academic Offences

Academic dishonesty is not tolerated in this course. Students should refrain from presenting someone’s work/opinions/ideas/writing as their own and referencing insufficiently. Ignorance of plagiarism is not an excuse for presenting someone’s work as your own.

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf>.

All required papers are subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com ( <http://www.turnitin.com> ).

## COPYRIGHT AND AUDIO/VIDEO RECORDING STATEMENT

Course material produced by faculty is copyrighted and to reproduce this material for any purposes other than your own educational use contravenes Canadian Copyright Laws. You must always ask permission to record another individual and you should never share or distribute recordings.

## Mental Health Resources

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

[Western Health and Wellness Resources](https://www.uwo.ca/health/)

This course includes themes of gender-based violence, sexual violence, racism, anti- Indigenous sentiment, elder abuse, ableism, sexism, misogyny, and structural violence. I, as the instructor of this course, commit to sharing week-specific content warnings throughout the course outline, withholding judgement or penalty towards those who need to take breaks from class discussion, and encouraging a safer, supportive learning environment for everyone in class.

## Support Services

[Registrarial Services](https://www.registrar.uwo.ca/)

[Student Support Services](http://westernusc.ca/services/)

[Student Development and Success](https://learning.uwo.ca/)

# Weekly Schedule

## Introduction

### WEEK 1 (January 10): Introduction to Gender and Pandemics, Economic Recession, and Differential Impacts

*Required Readings:*

Ro, C. (2020, October 26). *Why this recession disproportionately affects women*. BBC Worklife. https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20201021-why-this-recession-disproportionatelyaffects- women.

Viswanath, S. & Mullins, L.B. (2020). Gender responsive budgeting and the COVID-19 pandemic response: a feminist standpoint. *Administrative Theory & Praxis*, *(43)*2, 230-244. https://doi.org/10.1080/10841806.2020.1814080

## UNIT 1: Theoretical Foundations

### WEEK 2 (January 17): Feminist Economics and Care

*Required Readings:*

Fraser, N. (2016). Contradictions of capital and care. *New Left Review, 100*, 99-117.

Canadian Women’s Foundation, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, Ontario Nonprofit Network, & Faraday, F. (July 2020). *Resetting normal: Women, decent work and Canada’s fractured care economy*. Canadian Women’s Foundation.

Raghuram, P. (2019). Race and feminist care ethics: intersectionality as method. *Gender, Place & Culture, 26*(5), 613-637. https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2019.1567471.

*Supplementary Readings:*

van Barneveld, K, et al. (2020). The COVID-19 pandemic: Lessons on building more equal and sustainable societies. *The Economic and Labour Relations Review, 31*(2), 133-157. https://doi.org/10.1177/1035304620927107

SSHRC-CHRSH. (2020, November 24). *Bipasha Baruah: Degrowth in a post-COVID economy* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vQqmRso0Bfk.

### WEEK 3 (January 24): Crisis Response and Gender Responsiveness

*Required Readings:*

Smith, J. (2019). Overcoming the ‘tyranny of the urgent’: integrating gender into disease outbreak preparedness and response. *Gender & Development, 27*(2), 355-369. https://doi.org/10.1080/13552074.2019.1615288

Branicki, L.J. (2020). COVID-19, ethics of care and feminist crisis management. *Gender, Work & Organization, 27*(5), 872-883. https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12491

*Supplementary Readings:*

Heintz, J., Staab, S., & Turquet, L. (2021). Don’t let another crisis go to waste: The COVID- 19 pandemic and the imperative of the paradigm shift. *Feminist Economics, 27*(1-2)*,* 470-485. https://doi.org/10.1080/13545701.2020.1867762.

## UNIT 2: Intersecting Vulnerabilities

### WEEK 4 (January 31): Youth, sexuality, Race, Indigeneity

CW: Homophobia, Racism, Anti-Indigeneity

*Required Readings:*

Paceley, M.S. et al. (2021). Beyond a shared experience: Queer and trans youth navigating COVID-19. *Qualitative Social Work, 20*(1-2), 97-104. https://doi.org/ 10.1177/1473325020973329

Palmater, P., Day, S., Yeo, L.K., & Philpott, A. (2020). *Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Indigenous women and girls in Canada.* Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action (FAFIA). https://pampalmater.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/P.-Palmater- FAFIA-Submission-COVID19-Impacts-on-Indigenous-Women-and-Girls-in-Canada- June-19-2020-final.pdf.

Liew, J.C.Y. (2020). Spread of anti-Asian racism: Prevention and critical race analysis in pandemic planning. In Colleen M. Flood et al. (Eds.), *Vulnerable: The Law, Policy and Ethics of COVID-19* (pp. 393-405). University of Ottawa Press.

*Supplementary Readings:*

Jones, C., Monchalin, R., Bourgeois, C., & Smylie, J. (2020). *Kokums* to the *Iskwêsisisak*: COVID-19 and urban Métis girls and young women. *Girlhood Studies, 13*(3), 116-132.

Lim, J. (2021, January 8). *Canadian youth may suffer the economic toll of COVID for years to come*. iPolitics. ipolitics.ca/news/canadian-youth-may-suffer-the-economic-toll-of-covid-for-years-to-come.

### WEEK 5 (February 7): Ageism, Ability, Criminality, Institutions

CW: Ageism, Ableism

*Required Readings:*

Béland, D. & Marier, P. (2020). COVID-19 and long-term care policy for older people in Canada. *Journal of Aging & Social Policy, 32*(4-5), 358-364. https://doi.org/10.1080/08959420.2020.1764319

Sheldon, T. & Malhotra, R. (2020). Not all in this together: Disability rights and COVID-19. In Colleen M. Flood et al. (Eds.), *Vulnerable: The Law, Policy and Ethics of COVID-19* (pp. 419-431). University of Ottawa Press.

Mussell, L., Paynter, M., & Bariteau, W. (2020, October 18). *Worsening conditions in prisons during COVID-19 further marginalize criminalized women*. The Conversation*.* https://theconversation.com/worsening-conditions-in-prisons-during-covid-19-further- marginalize-criminalized-women-147454.

*Supplementary Readings:*

Armstrong, P. et al. (2020). *Re-imagining long-term residential care in the COVID-19 crisis.* Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/National%20Of fice/2020/04/Reimagining%20residential%20care%20COVID%20crisis.pdf.

## UNIT 3: Gendered Economies

### WEEK 6 (February 14): Gendered Employment, Job Loss, Frontline Work

CW: Racism

*Required Readings:*

Alook, A., Block, S., & Galabuzi, G.E. (2021). A disproportionate burden: COVID-19 labour market impacts on Indigenous and racialized workers in Canada. *Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.*

Scott, K. (2021). *Women, work and COVID-19: Priorities for supporting women and the economy*. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/National%20Of fice/.

Bahn, K., Cohen, J., & van der Meulen Rodgers, Y. (2020). A feminist perspective on COVID- 19 and the value of care work globally. *Gender, Work, Organization, 27,* 695-699. https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12459

*Supplementary Readings:*

Das Gupta, T. (2020, May 25). *Inquiry into coronavirus nursing home deaths to include discussion of workers and race*. The Conversation*.* https://theconversation.com/inquiry- into-coronavirus-nursing-home-deaths-needs-to-include-discussion-of-workers-and-race- 139017.

Frye, J. (April 23, 2020). On the frontlines at work and at home: The disproportionate economic effects of the coronavirus pandemic on women of color. *Center for American Progress*. https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/women/reports/2020/04/23/483846/frontlines- workhome/.

### WEEK 7 (February 28): Precarity, Migrant Work, Informal Sectors

CW: Xenophobia

*Required Readings:*

Lessels, C. & Maher, J. (2017). *“Start from zero”: Immigrant women’s experiences of the gender wage gap*. Toronto: Ontario Women’s Health Network. payequity.gov.on.ca/en/DocsEN/Immigrant%20Women%20and%20Wage%20Gap\_OWHN%20Final.pdf#search=start%20from%20zero.

Hari, A. & Nardon, L. (2020, November 2). *Immigrant women are falling behind during the COVID-19 pandemic*. The Conversation*.* https://theconversation.com/immigrant-women- are-falling-behind-during-the-covid-19-pandemic-147821.

Benoit, C. (2020, October 16). *COVID-19 benefits exclude sex workers in Canada.* Policy Options*.* https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/october-2020/covid-19-benefits- exclude-sex-workers-in-canada%20/.

*Supplementary Readings:*

Hira-Friesen, P. (2018). Immigrants and precarious work in Canada: Trends, 2006–2012. *Journal of International Migration and Integration, 19*(1), 35-57. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-017-0518-0

### WEEK 8 (March 7): Flexible Work Arrangements (FWAs), Benefits, Unionization

*Required Readings:*

de Laat, K. (2020). *Remote work and gender equality throughout and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic.* Institute for Gender and the Economy. https://cdn.gendereconomy.org/wp- content/uploads/2020/04/COVID-and-gender-GATE-policy-brief-.pdf.

Savage, L. & Black, S. (2020, April 5). *Coronavirus crisis poses risk and opportunities for unions*. The Conversation*.* https://theconversation.com/coronavirus-crisis-poses-risks- and-opportunities-for-unions-134345.

Ruppanner, L. & Meekes, J. (2021, March 7). *Flexible work arrangements help women, but only if they are also offered to men*. The Conversation*.* https://theconversation.com/flexible- work-arrangements-help-women-but-only-if-they-are-also-offered-to-men-155882.

*Supplementary Readings:*

Chung, H. & van der Lippe, T. (2018). Flexible working, work-life balance, and gender equality: introduction. *Social Indicators Research, 151,* 365-381. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-018-2025-x

Macdonald, D. (2020, April 2). *Which unemployed Canadians will get support?* The Monitor. https://monitormag.ca/articles/which-unemployed-canadians-will-get-support/.

## UNIT 4: Gendered Pandemic Experiences

### WEEK 9 (March 14): Gender Based Violence

CW: GBV

*Required Readings:*

Moffitt, P., Aujla, W., Giesbrecht, C.J. (2022). Intimate partner violence and COVID-19 in rural, remote, and Northern Canada: Relationship, vulnerability and risk. *Journal of Family Violence, 37*, 775–786. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-020-00212-x

John, N., Casey, S.E., Carino, G., & McGovern, T. (2020). Lessons never learned: Crisis and gender-based violence. *Developing World Bioethics, 20,* 65-68. https://doi.org/10.1111/dewb.12261

Rauhaus, B.M., Sibila, D., & Johnson, A.F. (2020). Addressing the increase of domestic volence and abuse during the COVID-19 pandemic: A need for empathy, care, and social equity in collaborative planning and responses. *American Review of Public Administration, 50*(6-7), 668-674. https://doi.org/10.1177/0275074020942079

*Supplementary Readings:*

Burke, A. (forthcoming). A will and a way: An analysis of social media outreach for domestic violence prevention during the initial COVID-19 lockdown in London, Ontario, Canada. In Fikresus Amahazion (Ed.), *Hidden Toll: A Multidisciplinary Exploration of How COVID-19 Has Impacted Women and Girls Around the World.* Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

### WEEK 10 (March 21): Housing and Property Ownership

CW: GBV, Houselessness, Dispossession, Anti-Indigeneity

*Required Readings:*

Farha, L. & Schwan, K. (2020). The front line defence: Housing and human rights in the time of COVID-19. In Colleen M. Flood et al. (Eds.), *Vulnerable: The Law, Policy and Ethics of COVID-19* (pp. 355-366). University of Ottawa Press.

*Supplementary Readings – these readings will be divided among students:*

Schwan, K., Dej, E., & Versteegh, A. (2020). Girls, homelessness, and COVID-19: The urgent need for research and action. *Girlhood Studies, 13*(3), 151-168. https://doi.org/ 10.3167/ghs.2020.130311

Stewart, A. & Cloutier, D. (2021). More than a roof; challenges for older women renters in British Columbia, Canada. *Journal of Women & Aging.* https://doi.org/10.1080/08952841.2021.1948791.

Karabanow, J. et al. (2022). Homelessness during a pandemic: Learning lessons for disaster preparedness in Nova Scotia. *Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.*

Bernauer, W. & Slowey, G. (2020). COVID-19, extractive industries, and indigenous communities in Canada: Notes towards a political economy research agenda. *The Extractive Industries and Society*, 7, 844-846. https://doi.org/10.1016%2Fj.exis.2020.05.012

MISC McGill. (2021, March 11). *Resistance in the time of a pandemic* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k4zvsRzqfXc.

### WEEK 11 (March 28): Pandemic Parenting

*Required Readings:*

Qian, Y. & Fuller, S. (2020). COVID-19 and the gender employment gap among parents of young children. *Canadian Public Policy, 46*(Supplement II), S89-S101. https://doi.org/10.3138%2Fcpp.2020-077

Chung, H. (2020, March 30). *Return of the 1950s housewife? How to stop coronavirus lockdown reinforcing sexist gender roles*. The Conversation*.* https://theconversation.com/return-of- the-1950s-housewife-how-to-stop-coronavirus-lockdown-reinforcing-sexist-gender-roles- 134851.

Macdonald, D. & Friendly, M. (2021). *Sounding the alarm: COVID-19’s impact on Canada’s precarious child care sector*. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/National%20Of fice/2021/03/Sounding%20the%20alarm.pdf.

*Supplementary Readings:*

Shafer, K., Scheibling, C., & Milkie, M.A. (2020). The division of domestic labor before and during the COVID-19 pandemic in Canada: Stagnation versus shifts in fathers' contributions. *The Canadian Review of Sociology, 57*(4), 523-549. https://doi.org/10.1111/cars.12315

### WEEK 12 (April 4): Gender Equality, Policy Solutions, and Application Roundtables and Presentations

The roundtable and oral presentation component of the final assessment will occur this week. The group report, summarizing what was discussed during the roundtable and giving the group’s concluding recommendations, will be due within a week of the last class.

*Supplementary Readings:*

Baruah, B. (2020). *What does degrowth say about gender equality and social justice?* [Draft] SSHRC-ICRSH.

Sultana, A. & Ravanera, C. (2020). *A feminist economic recovery plan for Canada: Making the economy work for everyone*. The Institute for Gender and the Economy (GATE) and YWCA Canada. www.feministrecovery.ca.