

Topics in International Politics: Gender and Intersectionality in Global Politics

POL380 H1(F)

Professor: Abigail Bakan

Fall term, 2025

Time: Monday 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM ET

In-person Course: TBA

Office hours: Tuesdays 3:00-5:00 PM by appointment; or other times as available by appointment

Please send email to confirm appointments

All appointments by Zoom videoconference

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Course Description:

This course will consider international politics, and gender and politics, from the standpoint of ‘intersections’ with issues such as race and class. Intersectional feminism has emerged as a highly influential approach in Political Science and other social science disciplines. It is also increasingly relevant in policy formulation, from the global to the local. Various approaches in the literature that have addressed intersectionality and its impacts will be addressed, as well as relevant debates within national, international, and UN policies and politics. The course will consider topics such as: history of the concept of intersectionality; intersectionality and state power; intersectionality in Political Science; and intersectionality and identities. Some case studies will also be considered, and relevant documents will be reviewed. Specific United Nations world conferences and declarations addressing intersectionality and human rights, gender, race and Indigeneity will also be addressed.

Learning Objectives:

There are three distinct, but related, learning objectives for this course. These are, to develop:

- 1) ***Comprehension skills:*** to understand the contributions, multiple dimensions and debates regarding gender and intersectionality in varied political contexts – at the local, national and international levels – demonstrated through course engagement and posted reading comments;
- 2) ***Research and communication skills:*** to formulate questions, synthesize multiple and varied approaches, accurately identify sources, and to write clear, sound, focused and

persuasive scholarly arguments regarding gender, intersectionality and global politics, demonstrated through the completion of course written assignments;

- 3) **Analytical skills:** to critically address the complexities, nuances and challenges regarding gender and intersectionality in global politics, demonstrated through course engagement, posted reading comments and written assignments.

Course materials:

There are two course texts that are required for the course. They are available for purchase on line, or from the University of Toronto Bookstore, or the University of Toronto library.

These required texts are:

Intersectionality, by Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge (Second edition, Polity Press, 2020).
[Intersectionality 2nd edition | 9781509539673, 9781509539697 | University of Toronto \(vitalsource.com\)](#)

Also available from the U of T Bookstore, and Library at:

https://librarysearch.library.utoronto.ca/permalink/01UTORONTO_INST/14bjeso/alma991106909797406196

AND

Framing Intersectionality: Debates on a Multi-faceted Concept in Gender Studies, edited by Helma Lutz, Maria Teresa Herrera and Linda Supik (Routledge edition, 2011; 2016)
[Framing Intersectionality 1st edition | 9781409418986, 9781317133568 | University of Toronto \(vitalsource.com\)](#)

Also available from the U of T Bookstore, and the University of Toronto Library.

<https://books-scholarsportal-info.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/en/read?id=/ebooks/ebooks4/taylorandfrancis4/2018-06-07/5/9781317133575>

Additional selected readings – such as journal articles, book chapters, and documents (including investigative and policy documents) – are available on the course webpage (Quercus), or through U of T Library access.

Structure and Evaluation:

Weekly Class Attendance and Engagement:

The course will meet weekly in person, on Mondays, 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM (Eastern time) throughout the term. This is a lecture/seminar course. Formats for class discussion will include brief lectures, followed by student participation in weekly discussions. Format for discussions will vary, including for example: “roundtable”, “ask the Prof”, “reflective/reflexive exchange”, “pair and share”, “keywords”, debates on specific quotes or issues, small group guided questions, and/or open discussion of the texts. Some class discussion periods may also be devoted to addressing course preparation of assignments, including essay research and writing skills.

It is essential that students read the required readings for each class. Students are expected to attend and participate in all classes, and to be well-prepared for commentary, questions, and discussion related to the literature. **Class engagement – including attendance at weekly classes throughout the term and participation – is considered a key aspect of the course, and will be valued at 10% of the final course mark.**

Posted Reading Comments:

Also, regular, weekly reading comments, posted through the Quercus course page in preparation for each class is required. Each student is expected to post reading comments, related to the readings for the forthcoming week's class, for a minimum of 9 classes over the course of the 12 week term.

The reading comments will engage a question or comment posted by the instructor. Students are expected to contribute weekly posts to course discussions, prior to each class (to be posted Tuesday-Sunday before the class). Comments should be posted in a timely manner to allow time for replies.

Consider your reflections on specific readings, and ensure your comments are brief, clear and relevant to the text(s) you identify. Express your ideas with care and be generous and open minded when reading other students' comments. Strive to be precise to avoid miscommunication, but ideas do not have to be fully formulated. Students are asked to be mindful of "netiquette" (etiquette related to the internet) when contributing to online conversations. Consider that experiences vary greatly and attend to issues of equity, diversity and inclusion. Please consider language, tone and accuracy. Note that it is important to re-read your draft comments and proofread before posting.

Posted reading comments are an essential element of the course, assessed at the end of the term, and valued at 10% of the final mark.

Written Assignments:

There are also **three written assignments** for the course: (i) a Single Article Essay (SAE); (ii) a research essay précis; and (iii) a final research essay.

(i) Single Article Essay (SAE):

All students are required to prepare a brief essay, based on ONE article, chapter or policy document selected from the course readings. Any one article, chapter or policy document from the required readings from any week in the course may be selected for the SAE. **The SAE is to be 3-5 typed pages (double spaced), and is valued at 20% of the course mark.**

The SAE should be focussed, and structured as an analytical essay, even though it is based only on the one selected text as a source. A "single article" may be an article, chapter or policy document that is selected from the required reading for the course. No additional sources are required or expected. If additional materials are used, for clarity to support the SAE's core argument, however, a maximum of three additional sources may be used.

The SAE should include: (i) a thesis statement as part of the introduction, stating a clear argument based on an analytical assessment of the selected article, and addressing how the selected reading relates to the politics of intersectionality; (ii) approximately three key points to support the argument throughout the body of the essay, drawing on examples taken from the selected text, which demonstrate comprehension as well as analytical clarity; and (iii) a brief conclusion.

The single reference format for the SAE should be cited using one of the standard and recognized academic writing styles. See U of T Library for resources on scholarly citation guides: <https://guides.library.utoronto.ca/c.php?g=251103&p=5248740>

The SAE should also include a bibliography, even with just the single source.

The SAE is due on Monday, October 20 (Week 7). The SAE must be submitted to the instructor through the Quercus course dropbox, by selecting “Assignments”, then “Submit” and uploading your file.

(ii) Research Essay:

A scholarly research essay of approximately 10 typed pages (double spaced), not including bibliography, is also required. **The research essay is valued at 50% of the course mark.**

Topics for research are to be chosen by the student, subject to the written approval of the instructor (see précis assignment below).

The research essay may focus on any topic of interest relevant to the focus of the course – either related to, or different from, topics addressed in course readings. This is an opportunity for students to advance research related to gender, intersectionality and global politics in more depth, on a topic either directly related to course material or one that is related to their own research interests beyond topics covered in the course.

Research sources for the course must be drawn mainly from scholarly books, journal articles and/or United Nations or other government documents. The research essay must include 8-10 scholarly sources in total. Of these, at least 2 and no more than 5 sources must be drawn from the required course material.

Spelling for course assignments should, preferably, follow Canadian English. See <https://proofreadingpal.com/proofreading-pulse/proofreading-and-editing/rules-of-canadian-english/>

References (citations) should according to any one of the standard and recognized academic writing styles, as long as it is used consistently throughout the essay. See U of T Library for resources on scholarly citation guides:

<https://guides.library.utoronto.ca/c.php?g=251103&p=5248740>

The research essay is due on Monday, December 1 (Week 12). It is to be submitted to the instructor through the Quercus course dropbox, by selecting “Assignments”, then “submit” and uploading your file.

(iii) Essay Précis:

To facilitate research essay preparation, all students are required to submit a brief written précis – or summary of the main thesis and outline – of their proposed research paper. The précis should be approximately 2-3 pages in length. **The essay précis is valued at 10% of the course mark.**

The précis should consist of: (i) a title of the essay; (ii) an identified thesis, presented in the form of an argument rather than simply the statement of a topic for research; (iii) a preliminary outline of the central points to be developed in the argument; and (iv) a preliminary bibliography of sources.

The précis is due on Monday, November 3 (Week 8). It is to be submitted to the instructor through the Quercus course dropbox, by selecting “Assignments”, then “submit” and uploading your file.

NOTE: All written assignments are expected to be submitted by the due dates. Exceptions will be granted only if a request for an extension is presented in writing prior to the due date, stating the reason for the request with a suggested alternate due date, and this is approved by the instructor in writing. Non-submission of work without an approved extension from the instructor will be assigned a mark of “0”.

Incomplete work at the end of the term may be eligible for a coursework extension (unexpected challenges, illness, etc.) subject to approval of the instructor and following a process approved by the department.

Evaluation in sum:

Class engagement: 10%
Posted reading comments: 10%
Single Article Essay (SAE): 20%
Précis for Research Essay: 10%
Final Research Essay: 50%

Due dates in sum:

Class Engagement: Weekly
Posted Reading Comments: Weekly (at least 8 posts)
Single Article Essay (SAE): Week 7 – Monday, October 20
Précis for Research Essay: Week 8 – Monday, November 3
Research Essay: Week 12 – Monday, December 1

Weekly Schedule:

Week One – September 8 – Welcome and Introduction to the Course

Week Two – September 15 – What is Intersectionality? I: History and Origins

READINGS:

Framing Intersectionality, Introduction and chapters 1-3:1-68.

“Framing Intersectionality: An Introduction”, Helma Lutz, Maria Teresa Herrera Vivar and Linda Supik.

“Demarginalising the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Anti-Discrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Anti-Racist Politics”, Kimberlé Crenshaw

“Intersectionality as Buzzword: A Sociology of Science Perspective on What Makes a Feminist Theory Successful”, Kathy Davis.

“The Discursive Politics of Feminist Intersectionality”, Myra Marx Ferree.

Week Three – September 22 – What is Intersectionality? II: Going Global

READINGS:

Intersectionality, Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge, chapters 3-4: 72-138

“Getting the History of Intersectionality Straight?”

“Intersectionality’s Global Reach”.

“Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics and Violence Against Women of Color”, Kimberlé Crenshaw. *Stanford Law Review*, vol. 43, no. 6 (July, 1991): 1241-1299.

“Intersectionality and the United Nations World Conference Against Racism”, Abigail B. Bakan and Yasmeen Abu-Laban. *Atlantis: Critical Studies in Gender, Culture and Social Justice*, vol. 38, no. 1, 2017: 220-235.

“Background Paper for the Expert Meeting on the Gender-Related Aspects of Race Discrimination”, Kimberlé Crenshaw (November 21-24, 2000). Zagreb, Croatia.

Week Four – September 29 – Intersectionality and State Power I: Knowledge Production and Political Science

READINGS:

Intersectionality, Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge, chapter 2: 37-71

“Intersectionality as Critical Inquiry and Praxis”.

“Narrating Canadian Political Science: History Revisited”, Yasmeen Abu-Laban, Presidential Address to CPSA, May 30, 2017. *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 50, no. 4 (December, 2017): 895-919.

“Are We There Yet?: Addressing Diversity in Political Science Subfields”, Rebecca A. Reid and Todd A. Curry, *PS: Political Science and Politics*, vol. 52, no.2, April 2019: 281-286.

“Diasporic Researcher: An Autoethnographic Analysis of Gender and Race in Political Science”, Natasha Behl. *Politics, Groups, and Identities*, vol. 5, no. 4: 580-598.

IPSA Gender and Diversity Monitoring Report 2017, Yasmeen Abu-Laban, Marian Sawyer and Mathieu St-Lauren (Montreal: IPSA (International Political Science Association) 2018): 5-25.

Available at: <https://www.ipso.org/publications/ipso-gender-diversity-monitoring-report>

Weeks Five/Six – October 6 – Intersectionality and State Power II: US Politics, Intersectionality and Politics of Backlash

READINGS:

***Intersectionality*, Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge, chapter 5: 139-165**

“Intersectionality, Social Protest, and Neoliberalism”.

“Popular Culture as an Educative Site Regarding the January 6, 2021 Insurrection: Grappling with Complexity Through intersectional Analyses”, Erica B. Edwards and Jennifer Esposito, *Cultural Studies/Critical Methodologies* (2022), vol. 22, no. 5: 435-442.

“Race, Gender and Politics: Is the United States Ready for a Black Woman President?”, Terri Givens, *The Conversation*, July 24, 2024.

<https://theconversation.com/race-gender-and-politics-is-the-united-states-ready-for-a-black-woman-president-235406>

“Backlash, Intersectionality, and Trumpism”, Zein Murib, *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 2020, vol. 45, no. 2: 295-302.

October 13 – THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY NO CLASS THIS WEEK

Week Seven – October 20 – Intersectionality and Identities

NOTE: SAE due date

READINGS:

***Intersectionality*, Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge, chapter 6: 166-188**

“Intersectionality and Identity”

***Framing Intersectionality*, chapters 4, 5 and 7: 69-104; 121-136**

“Marginalised Masculinity, Precarisation and the Gender Order”, Mechthild Bereswill and Anke Neuber.

“Sexuality and Migration Studies: The Invisible, the Oxymoronic and Heteronormative Othering”, Kira Kosnick.

“In Pursuit of Self-Determination: Indigenous Women’s Challenge to Traditional Diplomatic Spaces”, Laura Parisi and Jeff Corntassel, *Canadian Foreign Policy*, 2007, vol. 13, no. 3: 81-98.

“What Does Queer Theory Teach Us About Intersectionality”, Kevin Duong, *Politics and Gender*, September 2012, vol. 8, no. 3, September 2012: 370-86

**October 27- FALL READING WEEK
NO CLASS THIS WEEK**

**Week Eight – November 3 – Intersectionalities and Knowledge Production: Case Study,
University of Toronto**

NOTE: Précis due date

READINGS:

“Policy on Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment”, University of Toronto Governing Council (January 2020).

“Report of the University of Toronto Anti-Black Racism Task Force” (March 2021).

“Answering the Call: Wecheehetowin, Final Report of the Steering Committee of the University of Toronto Response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada” (January 2017).

Week Nine – November 10 - Intersectionality and the United Nations I: Women’s Rights and Human Rights

READINGS:

Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action, and Beijing+5 Political Declaration and Outcome, UN Women (1995; 2014), 270 pp. (passim)

“Women’s Human Rights: An Introduction”, Charlotte Bunch and Samantha Frost, *Routledge International Encyclopedia of Women: Global Issues and Knowledge* (Routledge: 2000): 1-6

“Progressive Struggles Against Insidious Capitalist Individualism”, and “Ferguson Reminds Us of the Importance of a Global Context”, Angela Y. Davis, in *Freedom is a Constant Struggle: Ferguson, Palestine and the Foundations of a Movement*. Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2016: 1-30.

Week Ten – November 17 – Intersectionality and the United Nations II: Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA) and UN Report of the Working Group on People of African Descent and Its Mission to Canada

READINGS:

World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance: Declaration and Programme of Action, United Nations High Commission for Human Rights, (Durban Declaration) (2002), 145 pp. (passim)

Report of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent on Its Mission to Canada (2016). Human Rights Council, Agenda item 9: Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Forms of Intolerance, Follow-up to and Implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (11-29 September 2017), 20 pp.

Week Eleven – November 24– Intersectionality and the United Nations III: United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)

READINGS:

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, United Nations (September 2007), 15 pp.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015), “Preface”, “Introduction”, and “The History”, *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*, pp. v-23 and 37-134 (*passim*).

Available at:

https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Executive_Summary_English_Web.pdf

Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, volume 1a (June 3, 2019). (“An Intersectional Approach to Encounters”, pp. 102-110)

https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Final_Report_Vol_1a-1.pdf

Week Twelve – December 1 - Summary and Review

Note: Research Essay due date

NOTE: Information on Respiratory Illnesses (Flu, RSV, COVID-19, etc.)

We all have an interest in keeping ourselves and others well and healthy. Students who are feeling unwell are encouraged to stay home. Please review the university guidelines if you experience symptoms regarding communicable diseases such as COVID-19

<https://ehs.utoronto.ca/symptomatic-or-confirmed/#:~:text=COVID%2D19%2FRespiratory%20Illness%20Procedures&text=Individuals%20with%20symptoms%20are%20recommended,48%20hours%20for%20gastrointestinal%20symptoms>)

See: <https://ehs.utoronto.ca/covid-19-information/>

The University continues to encourage all U of T community members to stay up to date on all applicable vaccinations. For additional information, please visit the [UofT Discovery Pharmacy Immunization and Vaccination](#) webpage. If you have any specific concerns, talk to your health care provider about treatment options in case you get sick.

NOTE: On Access and Accommodation

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. If you have a disability or health consideration that may require accommodation, the University of Toronto recommends that students immediately register with Accessibility Services

<http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca/>. Also, if you have any concerns, please approach the instructor and the Accessibility Services Office as soon as possible. This course works with the

assumption that access is always an issue and needs to be negotiated by all those involved in the course. This negotiation includes considering the consequences of our many conceptions of 'disability', as these relate to the classroom at the level of individual rights and needs, and as they relate to scholarly inquiry and research.

NOTE: Absence Declaration

If you miss class time due to illness or other reasons, please send an email directly to the professor (abigail.bakan@utoronto.ca). For extended class absences, you may be asked for documentation. This documentation can be an Absence Declaration (via ACORN) or the University's Verification of Illness or Injury (VOI) form. The VOI indicates the impact and severity of the illness, while protecting your privacy about the details of the nature of the illness. For more information, see <http://www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca>. For information on the Absence Declaration Tool for students, see <https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/absence>. If you experience a serious or acute injury, please register with Accessibility Services as soon as possible. If you may require consideration for missed academic work, you can formally declare an absence on ACORN. Please see:

<https://registrar.utoronto.ca/policies-and-guidelines/absence-declaration/>

For extended absence and for absence due to non-medical reasons, please contact your College Registrar's Office for guidance.

<https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/academic-advising-and-support/college-registrars-offices>

For the University of Toronto, Faculty of Arts and Science policy on absence declaration see:

<https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/academics/student-absences>

NOTE: On Web Platform for the Course:

We will be using the University of Toronto web-based course platform, Quercus, for our class. All students enrolled in the course will have access through their Quercus account. If you have any questions or challenges please see Quercus Support Resources: <http://qstudents.utoronto.ca/>

NOTE: On Equity and Respect

As we continue to adjust to various forms of learning environments, students are reminded of the expectation that we all demonstrate respect for one another. As outlined in the Student Code of Conduct, the University of Toronto does not tolerate discrimination or harassment against any persons or communities especially when based on grounds protected under the Ontario Human Rights Code. Students are reminded of the U of T Code of Student Conduct

<https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-student-conduct-december-13-2019>

And, in accordance with the Ontario Human Rights Code, no person shall engage in a course of vexatious conduct that is directed at one or more specific individual, and that is based on race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital status, family status or disability. This includes:

- Racial slurs or "jokes"
- Insults due to racial identity
- Online posts of cartoons or pictures, in a workplace or school that degrade persons of a particular racial group

- Name-calling due to race, colour, citizenship, place of origin, ancestry, ethnic background or creed
- Pseudonyms or handles that are inappropriate about ancestry, colour, citizenship, ethnicity, place of origin, race, or religion
- For more prohibited grounds for discrimination please visit:

<http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/ontario-human-rights-code>

NOTE: On Privacy and Copyright

Lectures and course materials prepared by the instructor are considered by the University to be an instructor’s intellectual property covered by the Copyright Act. Course materials such as PowerPoint slides and lecture materials are made available to students registered in the course for their own study purposes, and specifically only for the duration of the course. These materials cannot be shared outside of the class or “published” in any way, including emails and social media. Posting recordings or slides to other websites without the express permission of the instructor will constitute copyright infringement. Readings on the course webpage are for the sole purpose of instruction in this course.

NOTE: On Writing Scholarly Essays

Everyone can always use some assistance with learning how to express their ideas clearly in scholarly writing. There are many valuable supports for this, so please take the opportunity to access them.

Writing centres: <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/writing-centres>
<https://writing.utoronto.ca/writing-centres/arts-and-science/>

There is also a wide selection of advice files on all aspects of academic writing available at <http://advice.writing.utoronto.ca>. Printable PDF versions are listed at <http://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/student-pdfs>.

NOTE: On Academic Integrity

It is important to be aware of issues of academic integrity. Note that plagiarism, whether intentional or not, is a serious academic offence that carries major penalties. Please see further clarification and information on plagiarism at University of Toronto

<https://www.academicintegrity.utoronto.ca>

It is important to acknowledge the scholarly work of others who share valuable knowledge through their research. Students must keep in mind that instructors can easily identify pieces of literature which may not belong to a student, especially if it does not seem to align with written work previously submitted in the course. Instructors can identify their students’ different styles of writing when grading academic work.

<https://www.academicintegrity.utoronto.ca/perils-and-pitfalls/failing-to-appropriately-cite-information/>

<https://www.academicintegrity.utoronto.ca/perils-and-pitfalls/>

Also see: “How Not to Plagiarize” and other advice on documentation format and methods of integrating sources. Visit <https://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize/>

NOTE: On Generative AI (eg., ChatGBT, etc.)

In order to meet the learning objectives for this course, students will need to practice learning skills, and improvement is expected to be demonstrated throughout the course. These skills advance over time, and are based on creative development, original reading, reflective thinking, research, active engagement in the class and on the course web page, and scholarly writing. These skills cannot be developed if there is an over-reliance on artificial intelligence (AI), with tools such as ChatGBT. However, students may use ChatGBT or similar tools for creating an outline for an assignment, with the clear understanding that the final submitted assignment must be original work produced by the individual student alone. If ChatGBT or similar tools are used, an attachment must be added as an appendix indicating the AI text, as well as the student's own final assignment so that they can be clearly compared and distinguished for the purpose of marking. Failure to disclose reliance on AI when submitting final course materials, if used, will be considered a violation of academic integrity, as noted above.