

POLS*4050(01)/POLS*6200(01)
ADVANCED TOPICS IN LAW AND POLITICS:
SENTENCING AND PENAL POLICY

University of Guelph
Department of Political Science
Fall 2019

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Tuesdays 11:30 to 2:20

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

The sentencing of the criminally accused is one of the most scrutinized, but least understood aspects of the criminal justice system. Beyond simply punishing an offender for committing a criminal offence, sentencing brings together public policy choices set by elected officials, the discretion of judges, *Charter* protected legal rights, public perception and scrutiny by the media. This course will consider these themes along with the related issues of penal policy and law, parole and victims' rights. Sentencing theory, current practices and trends in sentencing policy will also be considered. The central focus of this course will be Canada, however frequent comparisons will be made to the United States and occasionally to other jurisdictions when appropriate.

By the end of this course you should be able to:

- Analyze and evaluate the relationship between law and politics in Canada, and its effect on criminal justice policy
- Explain and assess the role the Constitution, courts, policymakers, and the public play in shaping sentencing and penal policy
- Recognize and define principles and theories of sentencing
- Conduct basic legal and public policy research, including reading and analyzing judicial decisions

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

	Due Date	Submission	Weight
Analysis papers (3)	Week of assigned readings, 11:00 am	Submit to courselink dropbox	(10% each) 30%
Presentation		In class	15%
Participation	On going	In class	15%
Paper proposal	TBA	Submit to courselink dropbox	10%
Term paper	TBA	Submit to courselink dropbox	30%

REQUIRED TEXT: All readings will be available electronically.