DEPARTMENT OF
POLITICAL SCIENCE

POLS*4060 Advanced Lecture in Law and Politics (Sentencing and Penal Policy)

Credit Weighting: 0.50

Pre-/Co-Requisites: 1 of POLS*2350, POLS*3130, POLS*3140, POLS*3300

Restrictions: POLS*4050

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Name: Kate Puddister

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GENERAL DETAILS

The sentencing of the criminally convicted 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.

Delivery: synchronous Wednesdays 2:30-5:20, some activities will be asynchronous

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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
- Communicate effectively in oral and written forms

METHOD OF ASSESSMENT

Reading quizzes 10%
Midterm 20%
Response paper 20%
Group assignment 15%
Discussion participation 5%
Take-home Final Exam 30%

REQUIRED READING

All readings available electronically.