DEPARTMENT OF
POLITICAL SCIENCE

POLS*4050/POLS*6200: Advanced Topics in Law and Politics (Sentencing and Penal Policy)

Credit Weighting: 1.00 (UG), .50 (G) **Pre-/Co-Requisites:** POLS*3130, (.50 cred **Restrictions:** Priority Access Course

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

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GENERAL DETAILS

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.

Format: synchronous weekly seminar.

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 written and oral forms

METHOD OF ASSESSMENT

Analysis Papers x3 (10% each) 30%
Presentation 15%
Participation 10%
Paper proposal 10%
Research paper 35%

REQUIRED READING

All readings available electronically.