What does equality mean? To quote Catherine MacKinnon, “What is an equality question a question of? Is it a question of sameness and difference, of dominance or subordination, of advantage and disadvantage, or something else? Do we have to choose only one version of equality and use it in all cases or can feminists argue for equality using whichever kind of equality argument suits the particular context? Can we sometimes argue that equality requires the law to treat women and men the same, and at other times say that thecreate equality we must treat the sexes differently? Do we risk our credibility when we do this?

In this class we will examine the different political and legal arguments for equality and analyse the results achieved by the various approaches. We will also discuss the strategic value of choosing one or more of the approaches. The last half of the course will look at the Supreme Court of Canada and its responses to the equality arguments it hears. We will consider whether the Court has significantly changed the way it views women focussing on developments in criminal, family and employment law.

**Required readings:**
T. Brettel Dawson, ed., *Women, Law and Social Change: Core Readings and Current Issues*, 3rd Ed.
Toronto: Captus Press. ISBN 1-896692-34-X


**Suggested readings:**
Carol Smart, *Feminism and the Power of Law*
Law Society of B.C., *Gender Equality and the Justice System*
Sherene Razack, *Canadian Feminism and the Law*
Sherene Razack, *Looking White People in the Eye: Gender, Race and Culture in Courtrooms and Classrooms*

**Other readings may be distributed in class.**

**Course requirements and Grading Structure:**
- In class midterm exam 20%
- Oral presentation, 20 minutes maximum 25%
- Classroom participation, including attendance 10%
- Paper, 10 typed pages, or equivalent 20%
- Final exam (scheduled) 25%

**Prerequisites:**
6 credit hours in Women’s Studies including WS 101 and/or 102