WS 303-4: Special Topic - Women & the Law – Core Issues in Feminist Jurisprudence

Laura Wood

- What is “consent” in the context of sexual relationships and sexual assault?
- What does it mean in law when we say that someone has been “reasonable”?
- What is “truth”?
- Does “equality” mean we must treat everyone the same, or is it more complex than that? Should it even be one of our goals?
- What is the point of having more women and minority judges? Does a desire for different points of view mean we have given up believing that judges can or should be impartial? What is “impartiality” anyway?

Feminism has changed the way the law answers all of these questions. The legal system’s response to the challenges of feminism has been significant, uneven, refracted and even contradictory. In this course we will examine feminist inspired changes in some important legal concepts and doctrines including equality, reason, consent, impartiality, truth and justice. Understanding what the law is and how it has changed lets us measure how far we have come and in what direction.

Required readings:

Recommended readings:

Other readings will 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, 12 typed pages, or equivalent 35%
Summary of assigned article, 2 pages. 10%

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

THE DEPARTMENT OF WOMEN'S STUDIES ENCOURAGES CLARITY OF THOUGHT AND EXPRESSION AND GOOD WRITING. STUDENTS WILL BE EVALUATED ON THESE SKILLS IN ALL COURSES GIVEN BY THE DEPARTMENT