

Title IX for a New Generation

WGST 150-01

Spring 2020

Lead Instructor:	Sara Collina, JD
Peer Mentors/Curriculum Designers:	Michael Blank, Kayla Edwards-Friedland, Olivia Horton, Matt Hua, Adam Leader-Smith, Caitlin Panarella, Julia Pinney, Lily Rubinstein, Fiona Singer
Meeting Times:	Monday/Wednesday 2:00-3:15 pm
Location:	206 White Gravenor Hall

Course Overview

The rules about gender and sex are changing and it will take a new generation of leaders to make Title IX work for everyone. This course is an invitation to those future leaders, and a unique opportunity to apply academic rigor to one of the most contentious issues of our time.

This student-created, project-based course on sex discrimination in education will explore the law's impact, analyze the national conversations about sex and gender in education, and take a deep dive into how Title IX impacts our own Georgetown community.

Working with both a professor and trained peer mentors, students will conduct independent research, practice navigating the social dynamics underlying these issues, and use their creativity and compassion to help the larger community.

Absolutely no previous knowledge is required, but you will be expected to be active learners. Everyone interested in learning is welcome.

Course Purpose

A note from student course designers: This class was created by Georgetown students, for Georgetown students. Our goal is to empower you to understand and help improve Title IX policies and programs so that it works for our generation. So far as we know, this is the first student-created undergraduate course devoted to transforming Title IX in the nation. We are gratified that there has been so much interest in this project and encourage you to learn everything you can about this important topic. We believe this course has the potential to create positive change on Georgetown's campus and beyond. We hope you will join us in envisioning what a better and more equitable Title IX policy, and culture, could look like.

It is our hope that by the end of this class students will be able to:

- Explain the purpose, interpretations, and challenges to implementing Title IX
- Develop a working knowledge of the Georgetown Title IX process
- Use that knowledge to serve as a resource for other students
- Envision what Title IX would look like if we “did it right”
- Develop evidence-based recommendations for Title IX policy
- Speak and listen to people with whom they disagree about Title IX policy
- Collaborate to create cultural change through community-based projects

Course Structure and Self-Care

Classes will be led by Professor Collina as well as by Peer Mentors. Students will spend about half of class time in small working groups that involve discussion, activities, and project design. Within each unit, students will work on projects of their choice so everyone is able to explore the issues that matter most to them.

This class will cover Title IX generally, but there will be a particular focus on sexual violence, and how it is perceived/addressed within our society and our campus. It is likely that students will have divergent views about Title IX policy; we hope so because a diversity of perspectives can help us tackle the deep, cultural norms at the root of these problems. Open and honest discussions about deeply contentious issues can be a profound learning experience, but it creates a risk that individuals— especially those who have already experienced trauma— will be exposed to hurtful and/or incendiary remarks. Given the prevalence of sexual violence, it is extremely likely that some individuals in the class will have personal experiences of sexual violence.

We will be encouraging self-care throughout the course and invite you to take breaks as needed. There may be entire classes that will not be a conducive learning environment for you—that is completely fine, we will work with you to create a different learning experience.

We will do our best to create a space where we all can engage bravely, thoughtfully and with kindness, and ask that you do everything in your power to do the same.

Course Learning Objectives and Outline

UNIT ONE: ORIENTATION

In this unit, students will learn about the unique design and goals of the class and how the class will be structured and graded. We will get to know each other and establish ground rules for engaging in discussions productively.

By the end of this unit, students will be able to:

- A. Explain the unique purpose and goals of this student-created course
- B. Describe some best practices for respectful group dialogue
- C. Envision how Title IX could work for everyone
- D. Describe the purpose and content of Title IX
- E. Distinguish among Title IX laws, regulations, guidelines, etc.
- F. Explain how and why the law has evolved over the years

UNIT TWO: PROCESS AND PROTECTIONS

In this unit, students will analyze the Title IX law, regulations and guidance, and explore the current controversies around President Trump's new regulations. We will also discuss the common fears and assumptions that drive so much of Title IX controversies and practice engaging in emotionally complex discussions productively.

By the end of this unit, students will be able to:

- A. Explain how criminal and civil law relates to Title IX
- B. Describe the legal and cultural meaning of due process as it relates to Title IX
- C. Explain the steps required to pursue a Title IX case here at Georgetown
- D. Delineate the rights and responsibilities of both accusers and accused
- E. Analyze key differences between Obama and Trump's vision of Title IX
- F. Respectfully articulate common fears and perceptions about "the problem" (false accusations, victim-blaming, vigilantism, the role of alcohol, etc)

UNIT THREE: PREVENTION

By the end of this unit, students will be able to::

- A. Describe national prevention efforts and related legal requirements
- B. Evaluate relevant data and scholarship on the efficacy of prevention efforts
- C. Critique prevention efforts here at Georgetown
- D. Explain cultural barriers to effective prevention
- E. Analyze the evolving concept of consent as it relates to sex
- F. Provide evidence-based recommendations to improve campus resources

UNIT FOUR: POWER AND PRIVILEGE

By the end of this unit, students will be able to:

- A. Explain the ways social privilege permeates all aspects of Title IX policy
- B. Identify unique characteristics of our campus culture that impact Title IX
- C. Critique Title IX implementation as it relates to cultural differences

UNIT FIVE: NEW GENERATION SOLUTIONS

In this culminating unit, students will demonstrate real-world problem-solving skills by developing a community-based project that has a meaningful impact on our community (defined narrowly or broadly). By the end of this unit students will be able to:

- A. Identify and evaluate community needs and opportunities related to Title IX
- B. Develop evidence-based policy recommendations related to Title IX
- C. Communicate their vision and advocacy effectively
- D. Carry lessons of this course out of the academic sphere and into social spaces
- E. Apply their creativity and compassion to help the larger community

Mon, April 27 (Last Class)- Title IX New Generation Colloquium

Some final projects will be selected to participate in the first annual Title IX for a New Generation Colloquium, which will be open to the public.

Assignments and Grading

Please read this carefully.

The student creators of the course struggled to create a framework for grading. We want this class to be academically rigorous and intellectually exciting. We want students to participate enthusiastically. And most of all, we want students to become effective advocates for social change. But it's not clear how any of that can actually be graded in any meaningful way. We know that an equitable and transparent system of grading is really important. So we decided on the following approach, which we think will reward you for making a significant investment in this class, as well as provide you clarity about how to succeed.

There are 100 engagement points to earn throughout the semester. There is no curve; we hope that everyone is wildly successful. Here are the details:

Attendance (28 engagement points)

We will not be excusing some absences and not others; if you are sick, no "proof" is needed (we believe you!) and if you have something happening in your life that you feel is actually more important than attending this amazing class, we respect that decision. (But do let us know if you will not be in class; we consider that to be good manners, and if we don't hear from you, we will worry about you.)

Each class you attend will be counted as an "engagement" point. If you miss a class (for whatever reason) you may make up that missed engagement point by completing one of the optional assignments and submitting an additional reflection (these will be posted on Canvas). You may make-up a maximum of four points. Note that, to the extent that your lack of attendance or participation detracts from any of your classmates' educational experience, we reserve the right to deny opportunities to make-up missed points.

What about class contributions?

Class discussion will be a primary learning tool; both sharing ideas and actively listening are equally valued. Your full and authentic engagement not only improves your learning experience, but it also energizes your classmates. But not all important aspects of learning can be measured effectively. Rather than create an imperfect participation rubric and make this a percentage of your grade, we will factor in your participation at the end of the semester, should your final grade be at the edge of a letter grade (in other words, participation may raise or lower in either direction a half letter grade).

Reading Reflections (10 engagement points)

Each week (for ten weeks of the course) you will be expected to submit a short reflection to Canvas. The purpose of these reflections is to improve the quality of our class discussions and activities, so please take the time to gather your thoughts before you write.

These reflections will be graded for completion. A reflection will be considered complete if it reflects some meaningful engagement with the material (that is, could not have been written without completing the weekly assignment). A completed reflection is worth 1 point. All responses must be turned in by 11:59 on Sunday evening. Because these reflections will be used for class planning purposes, late responses cannot be accepted.

Community Event (5 engagement points)

Our community (here on campus as well as beyond) is a constant source of exciting events related to our course. Each student will be asked to identify one Title IX-related event at some point in the semester, attend the event, develop a natural next question, conduct research on that question, then submit a short reflection/report. You may also be asked to provide an informal report to the class. If you are not sure if a particular event fits this assignment, please check with your peer mentors.

Respectful and Empathetic Arguing (5 engagement points)

At one point in the semester, each student will be asked to engage in an argument with either the professor, a peer mentor or a classmate. The purpose of this exercise is to practice actively listening and respectfully responding to a person articulating positions with which you strongly disagree. More details will be provided during the semester.

Unit Projects (12 points each = 36 engagement points)

Units Two, Three and Four include a final project that is due at the end of each unit. The Unit Two project involves analyzing and making recommendations about the Title IX adjudication process. Unit Three will culminate in a group project exploring ways to promote culture change around gender and sex. Unit Four will ask students to evaluate and make recommendations about campus resources related to Title IX. More information about each project will be available on Canvas.

Final Project (16 engagement points)

This final assignment will actually begin mid-semester. We will be providing project topic suggestions but the most important thing is for each student to find a topic that truly interests them. We will hold an event at the end of the semester to showcase some of these projects.

SUPPORT

We want you to succeed in this class. If you have special needs that will optimize your learning, please let us know. We also want you to be healthy—and your emotional health is as important as your physical health. If you are struggling, please let one of us know. You do not have to wait for a problem to become “serious” before asking for help. And you do not have to have a problem at all to reach out to any of us.

This course will touch on complicated and sensitive issues. Because of the nature of the course material, in an effort to not stifle conversation, **Professor Collina** has been approved as a “**semi-confidential**” resource. That means that if there is a disclosure of sexual misconduct, she is required to report only non-identifying information to the Office of Title IX Compliance. **Please note that peer mentors are not mandated to report any information.**

If you want to speak to someone confidentially, we recommend that you contact one of the confidential counselors in the Health Education Services at sarp@georgetown.edu. **If you do not receive a prompt response, let one of us know** so we can advocate on your behalf.