

WOME 2711 FA/FAO: Women's Action for Social Change  
*Department of Gender & Women's Studies, Lakehead University*  
**Fall 2025**

**Instruction:** In-Person  
**Location:** AT 5041 & OA2020  
**Day/Time:** Mondays & Wednesdays @ 10:00-11:30am

**Instructor:** Dr. Jen Chisholm  
**Office:** Ryan Building, Room 2011

**Office Hours:** In- person OR Virtual – Wednesdays, 12-2pm

PLEASE NOTE: My in-person office hours may be converted to virtual at times. I will always communicate any changes to office hours with students via email.

**Virtual Office Hours:**

Jen Chisholm is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://lakeheadu.zoom.us/j/92574184629?pwd=ebMN6iEMGJFjOOgbJJ4e3b467yArkH.1>

Meeting ID: 925 7418 4629

Passcode: 171055

I encourage you to log on, or come and see me if you have any questions or concerns, about course material, assignments, topics or discussions.

**Email:** [jen.chisholm@lakeheadu.ca](mailto:jen.chisholm@lakeheadu.ca)

**Course Description**

In this course, students will be introduced to the legacy of women's leadership and activism in both historical and contemporary social movements. In particular, this course will focus on women's activism as it relates to reproductive rights and reproductive justice. Drawing on feminist theories of bodily autonomy, reproductive justice and abolition, we will examine the evolution of reproductive rights in Canada and situate current debates regarding abortion, right to privacy, birth control, reproductive care and access, within their historical and geographical context. Students will learn about key moments in the fight for reproductive justice in Canada and gain an understanding of the socio-cultural and legal distinctions between regional, national and global reproductive rights discourse. Discussion topics will include bodily autonomy, reproductive choice, social, political and legal contexts for reproduction in Canada and an exploration of distinctions between reproductive rights and reproductive justice.

**Required Course Material**

*Abortion to Abolition: Reproductive Health and Justice in Canada*, by Martha Paynter  
Price: \$34 CAD

Course text can be found through the Lakehead University Bookstore (including digital copies upon request).

Any other assigned readings will be posted as pdfs on our course D2L site.

## **Learning Objectives**

This course will enable students to:

- Recognize and understand key moments in the reproductive rights movement in Canada
- Identify current and historical debates regarding bodily autonomy and reproductive justice
- Evaluate and develop political, ethical and feminist arguments regarding reproductive justice, bodily autonomy and human rights
- Contextualize current reproductive rights challenges

## **Assignment Structure**

Provincial Profile	15%	DUE October 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2025
In-Class Assignments	60% (6x10%)	DUE throughout term
Final Project & Presentation	25%	DUE November 24 <sup>th</sup> & 26 <sup>th</sup> , 2025

## **GENERAL INFORMATION AND RESOURCES**

### **Class Structure**

Our class will meet in person, on Mondays and Wednesdays between 10am and 11:30am.

Generally, Monday classes will be lecture-based and offer background, context and discussion related to the topic and readings assigned for each week. Students are encouraged to complete the week's readings in advance of Monday classes, so that you are able to participate actively in class discussions.

Wednesday classes will mainly consist of in-class assignments and small group work. I know that we all lead full and busy lives, which means that it can be very difficult to find time to work as a group outside of class time. For this reason, I have set aside ample class time to facilitate small group work and assignments that can be completed in class. As we will discover throughout the term, collective organizing is critical to movements for reproductive rights and justice, so we will borrow from the history of feminist activism and engage in collective imagining and "world-building".

### **Best Practice for Success**

I recognize that some of you might be juggling working and learning from home, as well as helping children, siblings or others in your family complete their own schooling. This can be very challenging, and we can't always anticipate what might come up. Your best practice for success is to be honest with yourself about what you need and what you can handle, and then to reach out and communicate with Dr. Chisholm. More than anything, I want you to learn, and be successful in this course, so I am open to working with you to find the best path for success.

Below is a list of available (free) resources for students who would benefit from more sustained support or accommodations.

### **Resources Available to Students:**

Student Success Centre: Additional help regarding academic matters can be found at the Student Success Centre located in SC 0008 or phone 343-8018 or online at - <http://academicadvising.lakeheadu.ca/>

Student Accessibility Services: For assistance with accommodations for a disability, please visit Student Accessibility Services located in SC 0003 or phone 343-8047 or online at - <http://learningassistance.lakeheadu.ca/>.

Some students may benefit from receiving academic accommodation, due to a disability (physical, learning or otherwise), illness or disruption. Please reach out to Student Accessibility Services and speak with an advisor. Your SAS advisor will work with you to develop a plan, which will then be communicated to Dr. Chisholm. You need not disclose any personal or medical information to Dr. Chisholm, or any of your professors. SAS will work with you to maintain privacy and confidentiality.

Everyone has the right to an accessible education, and all approved accommodations will be honoured, no questions asked.

Student Health and Counselling Centre: For help with personal and/or medical issues, please visit the Student Health and Counselling Centre located in the University Centre 1007 (across from Security) or phone 343-8361 or online at - <http://healthservices.lakeheadu.ca/>.

Office of Human Rights and Equity: For students experiencing sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), discrimination or who feel their rights have been violated. Feel free to connect with the OHRE in person, via email or by phone. <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/faculty-and-staff/departments/services/human-rights-and-equity>

## **GENERAL COURSE GUIDELINES**

### **Email Etiquette:**

All correspondence should be polite, respectful and professional. Email inquiries must include:

- a salutation, (i.e. "hello", "dear", "To", etc.)
- a detailed question, or polite request
- a signature (i.e. your name).

*Emails that do not follow this format will not be answered.*

Every effort will be made to respond to emails within 72 hours (excluding weekends). If you have not received a response after 72 hours, please send a polite reminder as sometimes emails can get lost in the shuffle!

I will answer emails during working hours (typically 8am -5pm). I do not check emails in the evenings or on weekends – if you have sent me an email during off hours, please be mindful that I will not see it until the next workday. I encourage you all to find time in your schedule to “log off” from email and allow yourself space to relax.

#### Submitting Assignments:

All assignments must be submitted electronically, under the “Assignment” tab on our course D2L site. Each assignment will have its own designated folder, and students are asked to submit in the appropriate folder. The best format to submit your assignments is as a .doc (Word) or .pdf file.

You should receive confirmation that your assignment has successfully uploaded. If you do not receive confirmation, it is a sign that something may have gone wrong with the submission. If this happens, please try again to submit, or contact Dr. Chisholm to ensure that your assignment properly uploaded. Improper uploading will not be accepted as an excuse for late papers.

#### Late Policy:

Assignments received after the due date (where the student does **not** have an approved accommodation or extension) will be **penalized 5% per day**. Requests for extensions **MUST** be made prior to the due date and will **ONLY** be given in extenuating circumstances and may require approval through Student Accessibility Services.

#### Style and grammar:

Marks are not directly deducted for poor writing style and grammar. However, you simply cannot achieve a good grade if the paper is difficult to read and the argument difficult to discern. It is essential to proofread.

#### Referencing:

Assignments must be **entirely your own work**. If the exact words or phrases of another author are used, they must be in quotation marks with an accompanying citation (reference). Material that is paraphrased – that is, an idea from another author but put into your own words – must also be accompanied by a properly formatted citation.

Please use appropriate style (either MLA, APA or Chicago) in a consistent manner throughout the paper. Because Gender and Women’s Studies is an interdisciplinary subject, MLA, APA and Chicago are all acceptable citation styles for papers in this course. Ensure you are consistent with one citation style throughout.

References are essential and have four purposes: (1) they indicate the source of the “quotations,” (2) acknowledge the interpretations and ideas of others, (3) provide authority for facts which might be challenged or result from the research of others, and (4) point to other sources or interpretations of the same topic. In general, references acknowledge the use of another person’s ideas and are essential in avoiding plagiarism. Failure to provide adequate references constitutes plagiarism.

### Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty:

Plagiarism is a serious academic offence. Presenting an idea, words or an exact phrase of another author as your own work constitutes plagiarism. All students are required to know what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it.

If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism you can consult the Lakehead University calendar available online:

<http://calendar.lakeheadu.ca/current/contents/regulations/univeregsIXacdishon.html>

All cases of plagiarism will be dealt with in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures approved by Senate and the Board of Governors. Other instances of Academic Dishonesty, including but not limited to double submission, purchasing of assignments (either online or from another student on campus), or copying of assignments will also be dealt with in accordance to the University regulations on Academic Dishonesty. Students may obtain a copy of the “Code of Student Behaviour and Disciplinary Procedures” from the Office of the Registrar for more information.

### Use of Chat GPT and AI

Please do your own work. Your ideas and contributions are valuable. See each assignment as an opportunity to build your writing and analysis skills. In this course, you are being assessed on your ability to understand and integrate knowledge with your own experiences, and to communicate this understanding in writing. AI does not have this capability. You are not expected to be perfect; you are expected to be engaged. Using Chat GPT/AI is a form of disengagement and is easily detectable when used for the assignments in this course.

Using Chat GPT or AI to write or construct papers and assignments constitutes academic dishonesty under the Student Code of Conduct. Students found to have been using Chat GPT or AI will receive a grade of zero on the assignment, without an opportunity to rewrite.

## **ASSIGNMENT INSTRUCTIONS**

*Note: Assignments will also be discussed in class.*

### Provincial Profile (15%)

*DUE October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025*

Students will choose one Canadian province and research the current medical and legal context of reproductive rights in that province. Key pieces of information include, but are not limited to: infant and maternal mortality rates, gestational limits on abortion, abortion providers and services, rural vs. urban populations, rates of teenage pregnancy, availability of contraceptives, sexual health education, unemployment rates, average household income, rates of child poverty, etc.

Your provincial profile should be between 750-1000 words and contain a description of why the information included is relevant to reproductive rights and justice. For example, including the rates of maternal and infant mortality speaks to the state of reproductive health care in a specific region, which provides important context for understanding individual's reproductive decision making. You should conclude your profile by identifying key areas for change (for example,

increased funding for family doctors, or incentives to provide reproductive care in underserved areas).

In-Class Assignments (6 x 10% = 60%)

*DUE: Throughout term*

Throughout the term, students will complete a series of 6 in-class assignments based on course material, discussions and debates. The structure of the assignments will vary, but typically involve an activity, creative exercise or film clip analysis, and a series of reflection questions asking students to link the assigned activity to course readings and concepts. For these assignments, students will be divided into smaller groups (of 4 or 5). Each group will submit one assignment at the end of the designated class. The dates for the in-class assignments are as follows:

Wednesday, September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Wednesday, September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Wednesday, October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025

Wednesday, October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Wednesday, October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2025

Wednesday, October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2025

\*Please note that in order to receive a mark for the in-class assignments, you MUST attend class on the dates listed above. Due to the small group nature of in-class work, there will be no opportunities to make up missed in-class assignments. Alternative arrangements will only be made for students who can provide proof of accommodation (from Student Accessibility Services) \*

Final Project & Presentation (25%)

*DUE November 24<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup>, 2025*

The final project will contain two related components – a presentation and a written summary. The presentation will count for 15% of the grade, while the written submission will count for 10%.

In small groups (3-5) students will create a case study, profiling a key moment, movement or person whose work focuses on reproductive rights, reproductive justice and/or bodily autonomy in Canada. Students will be directed to the Rise Up! Feminist digital archive to locate source material and are encouraged to seek out external sources such as newspaper articles, websites, academic books and journal articles, to find out more about their chosen moment/movement/person.

Case studies should include: a description of the key moment/movement/person, a discussion of the basis for the action (for example, abortion rights, custody, access to health care, etc.), a discussion of the outcomes, challenges, successes and/or legacy of the moment/movement/person.

Students will be given class time to work on this assignment on the following dates:

Wednesday, November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Wednesday, November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Wednesday, November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2025

During this time, groups will decide which key moment, movement or person they will profile, and a format for the presentation. Presentations could take the form of a powerpoint or slide deck presentation, a video, website, social media account, podcast, creative work or any other format through which this information can be conveyed. As a class, we will decide how to structure the presentations in the final two classes of the term.

Each group will submit a written component that will vary slightly depending on how you choose to present your case study. The written component might include notes, text for slides, transcripts, background research and information. All written components should also include a full bibliography of sources consulted.

### **WEEKLY READING SCHEDULE**

**Week 1 – September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2025: An Introduction to Reproductive Rights in Canada**

**Week 2 – September 8<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup>, 2025: Beyond Abortion: Reproductive Justice**

Paynter, pgs. 1-10

Ross et. Al, Reproductive Justice: An Introduction, pgs. 1-17 (posted on D2L)

**Week 3 – September 15<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup>, 2025: Bodily Autonomy**

Paynter, pgs. 11-28

**Week 4 – September 22<sup>nd</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup>, 2025: Bodily Autonomy**

Paynter, pgs. 29-45

**Week 5 – September 29<sup>th</sup> & October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025: Not Having Children**

Paynter, pgs. 46-62

**Week 6 – October 6<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025: Not Having Children**

Paynter, pgs. 63-77

**READING WEEK: NO CLASSES**

**Week 7 – October 20<sup>th</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2025: Having Children**

Paynter, pgs. 78-96

**Week 8 – October 27<sup>th</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup>, 2025: Parenting in Safety**

Paynter, pgs. 97-110

**Week 9 – November 3<sup>rd</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup>, 2025: Parenting in Safety**

Paynter, pgs. 111-126

**Week 10 – November 10<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup>, 2025: Parenting in Prison**

Paynter, pgs. 127-144

**Week 11: November 17<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup>, 2025: Parenting in Prison**

Paynter, pgs. 145-159

**Week 12 – November 24<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup>, 2025: Reproductive Justice in Canada**

Class Presentations, \*No Readings\*

Looking forward to a great term together!