The meaning and value of motherhood/mothering has been a topic of passionate personal and political debate for centuries. In keeping with women’s historical exclusion from the public sphere, politics and education, the topic of motherhood and mothering has only recently gained scholarly attention. In this course we will examine emergent feminist scholarship on motherhood, with particular attention paid to the distinction between motherhood as a social imperative, or patriarchal “institution” (as described by Adrianne Rich), and the agential practice of mothering, as defined by feminist scholars (Andrea O’Reilly, Fiona Green and others). From this theoretical grounding, we will explore constructions of the good vs bad mother, conceptual and legal definitions of personhood, childless/child free women, nationalism, neoliberalism, technology and the future of mothering. In this course, we take as a given our collective relationship to motherhood/mothering (as mothers, daughters, sons, partners, humans) and seek to explore our own positionality with greater depth and analysis.

**Required Texts:** All Readings will be made available to students through our course D2L page.

**Assignments:**
- Participation 25% Evaluated throughout the semester
- Discussion Facilitation 15% To be scheduled in class
- Moot Court Presentation 15% Due in class February 28th/March 2nd
- Moot Court Reflection Paper 15% Due March 16th
- Final Essay 30% Due April 7th

**Learning Outcomes**
At the end of this course you should be able to:

* distinguish between theoretical conceptions of motherhood and mothering
* demonstrate an understanding of the social construction of the good mother/bad mother dichotomy
* analyze the influence of patriarchy, neoliberalism, capitalism, nationalism and intersectionality on our understanding of motherhood/mothering
* develop a nuanced understanding of legal conceptions and arguments relating to fetal personhood and child welfare

**Skills Outcomes**
At the end of this course you should be able to:

* written and oral communication
* analytical skills and self reflection
* developing sound arguments for debate

**A note on participation and discussions:**
Discussions require that everyone participates (speaks and listens) in a meaningful and civil way. Please be aware that some of the material we are reading is of a sensitive nature. Some readings may be upsetting or disturbing. I ask that we all use respectful language and be sensitive of one another during our discussions. Personal attacks, gender and racial slurs, disrespectful comments on ability or able-bodiness, or other such disrespectful behaviour will not be tolerated. Please keep in mind that this is a scholarly environment and professionalism is expected at all times. In this course we will deal with many sensitive issues and may encounter historical language no longer appropriate. Please be reminded that respect for the people we study and other students is essential to a productive discussion. Disrespectful behaviour and/or comments about people in class or being studied will not be tolerated.

**On Campus Help 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 - HYPERLINK "http://academicadvising.lakeheadu.ca/" 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 - HYPERLINK "http://learningassistance.lakeheadu.ca/" http://learningassistance.lakeheadu.ca/

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 - HYPERLINK "http://healthservices.lakeheadu.ca/" http://healthservices.lakeheadu.ca/
Assignment Guidelines - General

Note: Assignments will also be discussed in class.

A Note on Submitting Assignments: All assignments must be submitted in hard copy, in class, on the due date. If you require alternate arrangements, please contact Dr. Chisholm in advance of the due date to work out an alternative.

Late Policy: Assignments received after the due date 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 documentation (e.g. a doctor’s note). Extensions will not be granted where good time management skills could have avoided the problem; i.e. extensions will not be granted for students who have a number of assignments due at the same time during the semester or for students who have decided to take an overload of classes this semester.

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 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. 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/univeregsIXacadishon.html" or the professor.

All cases of plagiarism will be dealt with in accordance with the Code of Student Behaviour 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 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. Please do your own work.
Specific Assignment Guidelines

Participation (25%):

Your voice is important!

Seminar classes require a significant amount of class discussion and participation. This is a time for you to work through your ideas and questions in a group setting, with the insights of your classmates. Participation from all members of the group is crucial if a discussion is to be both interesting and instructive. Discussion requires preparation which includes reading the articles and thinking critically about them before attending class. It is necessary that students critically read the materials in advance so they are fully prepared to speak about and ask questions about the readings. Participation marks are based on active involvement in the discussion and on the content of the student's comments.

Participation marks are broken down into two categories: attendance and active engagement. Attendance accounts for only 10% of the cumulative 25%, meaning if you attend class but do not participate (discuss, ask questions, respond) you are only able to receive up to 10% for your effort. The remaining 15% of the participation grade is reserved for active engagement - coming to class prepared to discuss the readings, ask questions, respond to your peers, make connections with other material or experiences. A seminar class only works when we are all participating!

Discussion Facilitation (15%)
Due throughout term

Each student will be assigned (through their choosing) a class in which they are responsible for an explanation of the reading(s) and facilitation of discussion. This will involve:
* preparing a bit of background about the readings (a summary and analysis of author’s main points)
* questions for class discussion (thoughtful questions that engage with the key points of the week’s readings and/or questions that take up topics/readings/speakers we looked at previous points throughout the term)
* optional: related materials, relevant to the topic/discussion such as newspaper articles/websites/blog posts/video/etc.

Students will present their summaries and facilitate class discussion on the date they are assigned.

Each student must submit a written copy of their discussion notes, including article summaries/analysis, discussion questions (with responses to those questions by the author) and any related materials used (optional). The written summary is to be submitted in class, the day of the discussion facilitation. The length of these summaries will vary, though with each component accounted for, papers will likely be between 6-10pgs.

A schedule will be decided on in class with student input. A finalized schedule of facilitators will be posted on D2L for reference. I will lead the first discussion facilitation on Thursday, January 12th as a model for students on how to approach the assignment.
Class Moot - 15%
February 28th or March 2nd, 2017

This activity is adopted from the practice of mooting in law schools, which is designed to engage the class with the myriad legal difficulties in hearing cases involving fetal personhood and child welfare. A moot is a mock court exercise where students argue the sides of actual Canadian legal cases. The class will be split into pairs, assigned a specific case and the side they will argue for - the Crown or the Defense. The cases and sides will be assigned at random. Students will receive a description of their case, including all the information and details provided when the case was originally heard in court. It is expected that students will develop an argument based on course material and class discussion to date. The rest of the class will hear both sides of the case, and be given an opportunity to consider their points, after which the class will issue a “ruling”. Because each decision will be highly personal, each student or “judge” will be given one vote. The side with the most votes will be ruled in favour of.

After each case is heard, and a ruling is made, there will be space for discussion and a description of the actual findings of the legal case within the Canadian court system.

Students will be graded on the strength of their argument, and how well you tie the details of the case to course materials and discussion. Given that the cases and sides will be assigned at random, it is likely that some students will be in a position where they must argue for a side they do not necessarily agree with. This presents us with the opportunity to better understand the complexities of such cases, and hopefully develop a greater sense of empathy for the ethical, personal and legal difficulties present for women as mothers.

In the spirit of mooting at the law school level, at the end of the “court proceedings” I will ask students to vote anonymously for two “Distinguished Speaker” awards, to be given to students who provide the best/most challenging/most innovative/well articulated argument. Those students will receive a certificate, a small prize and the great distinction of being voted “Distinguished Speaker”! We will discuss this assignment in more detail in class.

Each student will submit a written version of their argument, via email, on the day of their presentation (Feb 28/Mar 2). Each summary will be posted on D2L for other students’ reference, in order to complete the reflection assignment described below.

Moot Court Reflection - 15%
Due in class March 16th, 2017

Each student will choose a case from the moot court exercise (excluding the case argued by the student) and write a short reflection on their own “ruling” for the case. To do this, you will be provided with a written version of the arguments offered by your classmates, to review and engage with in your written description. Drawing on specific points within the arguments presented, students will explain their agreement/disagreement with Crown or Defence, and relate your understanding to course concepts and course material.

Reflection papers should be about 1500 words (4-6 double spaced pages), written in full sentence, using formal, academic language (though essay style is not required), including proper citations.
Final Essay - 30%
Due April 7th, 2017

Students will submit a 12-15 page paper on a course-related topic of your choice. The final essay is intended for students to critically engage with course concepts, offer critique and analysis, and develop an argument or standpoint. Papers must integrate at least two (2) course readings and four (4) or more outside sources. You are welcome to reference news media, films and television, or current events, however this does not take the place of the four (4) academic sources required. You may take this opportunity to examine a topic we’ve covered in more depth, or you may choose to write about a related topic that we did not cover in class.

Students are strongly encouraged to discuss their topics with the professor. Papers will be evaluated based on quality of argument, originality and use of sources. Students should not be concerned with whether the instructor agrees with their standpoint, argument or position, but rather that their arguments are well-articulated and properly supported by source material and citation.

Weekly Reading Schedule

Week 1: Introduction to Course; Motherhood (as Institution) vs Mothering (as Practice)

Tues. Jan 10th:

Thurs. Jan 12th:


Week 2: Motherhood (as Institution) vs Mothering (as Practice)

Tues. Jan 17th:

Thurs. Jan 19th:

Week 3: Reproductive Labour

Tues. Jan 24th:


Thurs. Jan 26th:

Week 4: Concepts of Personhood

Tues. Jan 31st:

Thurs. Feb 2nd:


Week 5: Legal Constructions of Personhood

Tues. Feb 7th:

Thurs. Feb 9th:

Week 6: Colonizing Motherhood: Value, Control and Consequence

Tues. Feb 14th:

Thurs. Feb 16th:
*Angela Davis

Feb 22-24 READING WEEK NO CLASSES

Feb 28-Mar 2 Week 7: Class Moot Court

Week 8: Choice(?): Constructions of Non-motherhood

Tues. Mar 7th:


Thurs. Mar 9th:

Week 9: “Good Motherhood”: Mothering, Materiality and The Myth of White, Middle-class Motherhood

Tues. Mar 14th:


Thurs. Mar 16th:

Week 10: Mother of the Nation: Nationalism and the Maternal Patriot

Tues. Mar 21st:

Thurs. Mar 23rd:

**Week 11: “Bad Motherhood” - Mothering on the margins**

Tues. Mar 28th:


Thurs. Mar 30th:

**Week 12: Future Mothering: Technology and Reproductive Justice**

Tues. Apr 4th:


Thurs. Apr 6th:

*Final Papers Due April 7th, 2017*