

## Political Science 4340/6340

### In-class Assignment: State as Responder to GBV

May 23, 2025 (in person): 5% of final grade

**Scenario:** You have just arrived as a new Master's student at Trent University, where you are being supervised by Dr. Lisa Boucher in the Gender and Social Justice department. Dr. Boucher has invited you to join her Gender-Based Violence and Social Movements lab as a graduate assistant. This year the lab team is working on producing some advocacy guides for feminist anti-violence organizations. At the first meeting of the year, you learn more about Dr. Boucher's hopes for the lab this year. The overarching goal is that this year's lab team will provide feminist anti-violence organizations with documentation they can use to build new relationships with other movement organizations and to apply for government grants. She says this year's projects will be examples of knowledge translation and knowledge mobilization, the bridge between academic knowledge production and community action.

Dr. Boucher also reviews some terminology that you already are familiar with from reading her publications before applying to the Trent program:

- She reviews Tarrow's (2012) definition of **political opportunities** as "signals to social and political actors that either encourage or discourage them to use their internal resources to form social movements." She talks about how these signals are not solely "from state and/or formal institutions, but are also received from informal structures and forces which can offer resources or present opportunities or threats." She says the advocacy guides are a mechanism to "offer resources or present opportunities."
- She also discusses how feminist antiviolence organizations are **social movement actors** and the key role they have played in shaping domestic violence legislation and programming in Canada and other countries. She says, "Social movement actors are envisioned as not only responding to political opportunities in their environment but also as playing a key role in shaping and opening opportunities for collective action... I am also interested in examining how feminist activists operate in relation to existing opportunities and threats and in exploring how they can carve out new spaces for their social justice work."
- She also discusses some of the impacts of **funding regimes** on feminist antiviolence organizations in Ontario.
- She says a key challenge is to help organizations think about and implement new ways to politicize domestic violence without negating, undermining or abandoning prior and existing work in this area.

After this brief introduction, she provides you and the other members of the lab with a mind-blowing chapter entitled "Is Domestic Violence Politicized Too Narrowly?" by Jamie R. Abrams in the book **The Politicization of Safety: Critical Perspectives on Domestic Violence** (2019) (see attached). She asks you to read/scan the article and then create two infographics as a group based on the article. You busily set to work with the rest of the lab team.

**Task:** Create Dr. Boucher's two infographics. The first infographic needs to compare first generation political framings of domestic violence with next generation political framings of domestic violence and the second infographic needs to provide a comparative list of potential ideas for local (i.e., Canadian context) coalition-building projects for feminist anti-violence organizations within both first generation political framings and next generation political framings.

**Steps:**

1. You have been assigned to a group of four students.
2. After the break, you can use any area on campus to complete this assignment. If your group has someone with a laptop on hand, you can complete this assignment here in the class or elsewhere. If your group does not have someone with a laptop on hand, please go to the Commons area in the library and gather around a computer there.
3. Read/scan the Abrams chapter (spend no more than 25-30 minutes on this).
4. Create the first infographic (25-30 minutes) and use it as the basis for generating ideas for the second infographic (25-30 minutes). You can use any data visualization app(s) that you all or some members of the group are comfortable using. If no one in your group has data visualization experience, I recommend using Piktochart (<https://piktochart.com/infographic-maker/>) and searching for comparison templates.
5. Ensure all team members are listed somewhere on the infographics and then ask one team member to submit the infographics to Dr Bittner via email at 1 pm today.