

Political Science 4340/6340

In-class Assignment: Politicizing Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV)

May 21 (online): 5% of final grade

Scenario: You and a small group of upper-year undergraduate and graduate students are asked to sit on a committee to review Memorial University's Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault Policy (<https://www.mun.ca/policy/browse-or-search/browse-policies/university-policy/?policy=321>). This seems to be an opportunity to apply your learning from POSC 4340/6340, contribute to the university community, and advocate for policy from a student perspective. You agree to join the committee made up of university administrators, support staff, faculty members and students. At the first meeting of the committee, you point out that the policy's reference to 'online' sexual harassment is very vague and there does not seem to be much detail in the current policy in terms of defining and responding to the problems of TFGBV on and off campus. The committee requests that you circulate some information on TFGBV to read before the next monthly meeting; you circulate them today's readings from POSC 4340/6340.

At the second meeting of the committee, all of the students arrive ready to discuss TFGBV; however, it is apparent that most of the other members of the committee did not review the materials. The committee devolves into debates regarding whether policy should be vague to be inclusive of all potential scenarios or more specific to be both a decision-making and teaching tool. "Is there really any difference between online and offline forms of harassment?" asks one faculty member. There is also a disagreement about the role of the unions with regard to policy on campus that seems like a tangent to you, but there is suddenly a motion on the table to create a subcommittee to address this issue that will meet twice in the next year. You and the students on the committee are becoming frustrated; one student comments to the committee that the students present are volunteers and that the committee is wasting their unpaid time—at this work rate you will all have graduated before the review is completed! An administrator then proposes that the committee recommend the original text of the policy and make no changes and everyone (except you and the other students) seems to think this is a great idea. Then the chair of the committee announces that the meeting time is up, announces the next meeting date and time, and everyone gets up to leave.

You and the rest of the students on the committee go for coffee after the meeting: everyone is dissatisfied. You decide as a group that you will put together a proposed university policy on TFGBV and request that it be put on the agenda for the third meeting.

Task: Drawing from the assigned readings for today, building on the existing Memorial policy, and incorporating your group's discussion, compose the proposed university policy on TFGBV for the students to take to the next review committee meeting.

Steps:

1. You will be placed in a webex breakout group with three other class members.
2. A) Create a shared Google document amongst yourselves. B) Copy and paste the existing Memorial policy into your shared Google document. C) Turn on Suggesting mode (under the little pencil icon).
3. Review the policy together and complete a gap analysis: what does the policy document need in order to be in harmony with the readings? This could be language changes, content changes, and/or procedural/reporting changes.
4. Discuss and draft changes that respond to your gap analysis (reference source documents in parentheses wherever you make changes).
5. Consider whether there may be gaps in the readings from today as well, and address those in the policy (reference these changes in parentheses as 'group analysis').
6. Submit your final draft to Dr Bittner via email at 1 pm.