

Gender, Violence, Law and Justice

Pinki Mathur Anurag

Associate Professor, JGLS

Violence is not a new phenomenon; neither is its depiction. In contemporary times, however, violence has metamorphosized considerably in the variety of forms and the nature of intrenchment in our everyday lives. The course explores violence and its varied manifestations within private and public spaces. Each module will highlight the normalization of violence beyond disciplinary and topic boundaries from a range of methodologies, to understand the complexity of violence and its legitimization through institutions that intrenches violence in public and intimate spaces, exposing the role violence plays in preserving status quo and gendered hierarchies in society and its institutions; family, marriage, community and the courts.

Inter alia, the following questions will be addressed: where does violence emanate? where does 'private' end and 'public' begin? what role does law and its implementation play in addressing violence? How, if at all, is violence against women different from other types of violence? what shifts in thinking about gender-motivated violence are necessary in addressing and eradicate it? How has the #MeToo movement reshaped the possibility of legal reform? What is the role played by toleration of sexual violence in shape people's expectations and sense of entitlements? What are the implications of gender-based violence for the constitutional guarantee of equal protection of the laws? Does equal protection itself have a gendered meaning and reality?

The course is structured to ensure the following **learning outcomes**:

1. Understanding the different forms of violence through critically engaging and correlating 'types' with theories of violence and its application in distinct circumstances
2. Examine the evolving understanding of violence and its conceptualization through different waves of 'feminisms'
3. Provide clarity and depth of perspective and understanding of the spaces within which violence is located, the blurred lines between public and private that allow the state to evade responsibility for violence

4. Developing skills in reading violence through different genres of writings – fiction, non-fiction, journalistic reporting
5. Understanding the significance and criticality of identifying, exploring and invisibilizing the most insidious forms of violence that have hitherto not been addressed adequately by law
6. In-depth understanding of sexual violence and coercion
7. Examination of the phenomenon of gender-motivated violence and the effectiveness (or not!) of legal strategies in address violence in intimate and ‘not so’ private settings

Pedagogical material will be drawn from books (fiction and non-fiction) and popular television shows to examine the wider frames of inequality beyond individual perpetrators and victims and locate violence within the ecosystem that sustains it. Each module examines a distinct ‘violent space’ and a specific type of violence, centering discussion on a book, book chapter or a television show/film. This will be supplemented by one critical article based on the book/ TV show to encourage discussion, critical thinking in class and facilitate a deeper understanding of the several contexts, complexities of relationship between perpetrator and victim and the ecosystem of violence that normalizes and sustains it.

We will read excerpts from books and watch select sections from TV shows to generate discussion around violence, sexual violence and gender. At the start of the course, we begins with examining violence through Arendt and Sen readings. Both readings provide a theoretical and historic understanding of violence in society.

Readings /Texts:

1. Arendt, Hannah, *On Violence* (1969), Penguin Random House, UK, 2023 edition
2. Sen, Amartya, Chapter 2, *Making Sense of Identity in Identity and Violence, The Illusion of Destiny*, (A. Sen) Penguin Group, USA, 2006,
3. Kandasamy, Meena *When I Hit You, Or, a Portrait of the Writer as a Young Wife*, Juggernaut, India, 2017 (select extracts)
4. Mathur Anurag, Pinki, Dwivedy, Santwana, *Violence in Intimate Spaces : Law and beyond*, SDG Series, Springer, Singapore, 2024
5. Rachel L. Snyder, *Watching Violence in a fishbowl*, in *No Visible Bruises*, Scribe Publications, Australia, 2020
6. Menon, Nivedita, *Sexual Violence in Seeing Like a Feminist*, Zubaan/Penguin, 2012

7. Tewari, Devyani, Blurred Lines: Sexual Abuse (or not) in 'Big Little Lies', in (Mathur Anurag, Dwivedy ed.) *Violence in Intimate Spaces: Law and beyond* (pg. 43-57)
8. Iyamam, Chap.5, *Saar*, in *If There is a God*, (Translated from Tamil by Prabha Sridevan), pg. 81-95
9. Rajkotia, Malvika, Intimacy Undone, Marriage, Divorce and family Law in India, Speaking Tree, 2017, Pg. 48-57
10. Lamb, Christina, *Our Bodies Their Battlefield, What War Does to Women*, William Collins, 2020 (select extracts)

Weekly Plan (tentative, to be refined further)

Week 1 & 2: Module 1: Theorizing Violence

Week 3 & 4: Module 2: Defining the Public and the Private

Week 5 & 6: Module 2: Violence and Intimacy

Week 7 & 8: Module 3: Patriarchy, dominance and gender

Week 9 & 10: Module 4: Sexual Violence in public and private space

Week 11: Module 5: Religion, Culture, gender-based violence

Week 12: Module 6: Responses to Sexual harassment, gender neutrality and #Me Too Movement

Week 13: Module 7: Law's limitations in addressing Psychological Tactics as Violence