

# LA3G4-15 Law in the Culture Wars

**26/27**

**Department**

School of Law

**Level**

Undergraduate Level 3

**Module leader**

Alex Powell

**Credit value**

15

**Module duration**

10 weeks

**Assessment**

100% coursework

**Study location**

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

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## Description

### Introductory description

This module explores the phenomenon commonly referred to as the "Culture wars" and their implication for the operation of the UK legal system. The idea of a "culture war" is increasingly deployed to capture a range of political disputes, often centring around the legal and political treatment of institutions such as the nation or the family. Indeed, among a vast range of topics described as being part of the culture war, we can find gender, migration, disability, children's rights, and online safety and security amongst others. In this module, we explore the implications of these disputes for both the development and day-to-day operation of law. Specifically, we will consider a series of case studies relating to: Immigration and Asylum Law since 2022; The presentation of trans rights as being in conflict with women's rights and the effect of this on the functioning of UK equality law and shifting conceptions of law within public imaginaries, including the phenomenon of pseudo law. Through these case studies, we will critically consider not only the effects of culture war dynamics on the operation of legal frameworks, but also the effects on the horizons of conceivable law reform. The module will be taught across 9 workshops which encourage students to be active co-creators in the learning, including by bringing in their own examples of how "culture war" disputes are shifting the operation of legal institutions.

### Module aims

This module aims to provide students with greater understanding of the contemporary

interrelations of law and politics. In this sense, it fits in to the School's broader aim of teaching law in context. Students taking the module will benefit from an enriched understanding of the relationship between law and politics and will be supported to understand how political narratives can re-shape legal institutions beyond the force of legislation.

## Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

This module will address the implications for contemporary political disputes which have, in broad terms, come to be known as part of the "Culture War" for the of the UK legal system. In order to support student understanding of this, the module will cover the following topics:

- 1- Law and Politics in Context
- 2- Understanding "Culture"
- 3- Defining the Culture War
- 4- "Culture War" in Focus: Immigration and Asylum
- 5- Shaping Legal Lives: Immigration and Asylum Practice in the "Culture War" (Assessment topics released this week)
- 6- Gender, Sexuality and Law in a "Culture War"
- 7- Trans Rights and Women's Rights: "Culture Wars" over gender in the UK
- 8- Pseudo Law, Myth Making and Public Conceptions of Law in a "Culture War"
- 9- Legal Futures: Law after the Culture War .

These topics are given as an example syllabus and minor changes in the subject matter may be made to allow the module to keep pace with the highly contemporary nature of "culture war" topics. Weeks 1 and 9 will also foreground matters relating to assessment supporting students to link what they have learned to the assessment task.

## Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Identify the relationship between law and contemporary politics
- Evaluate how political narratives shape legal realities
- Articulate how each case study topic has been shaped by the culture war context and the implications of this for the operation of law
- Demonstrate an ability to critically consider how political narratives and speech shape legal realities
- Critically analyse the implications of "Culture War" narratives for the development of the UK legal system

## Indicative reading list

[Reading lists can be found in Talis](#)

[Specific reading list for the module](#)

## Interdisciplinary

The module encourages students to engage with a vast range of disciplinary tools. For example, the focus on culture which is central to the module encourages students to engage in anthropological methods and their relevance to law. Indeed, anthropological, political science, sociological, and philosophical accounts of the nature of law and culture will be explicitly included within the first two weeks of the module and embedded within the readings. In this sense, the module will encourage to think of law in the terms and languages of other disciplines and to recognise the valuable perspectives that other disciplines have to contribute to our understanding of law.

## Subject specific skills

Appreciation of the importance of context to understanding Law; Appreciation of Law reform dynamics, including the substantive ways in which political discourse shapes the law.

## Transferable skills

Critical thinking; Close reading; Cultural understanding and cross-cultural communication.

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## Study

### Study time

Type	Required
Seminars	9 sessions of 2 hours (12%)
Private study	92 hours (61%)
Assessment	40 hours (27%)
Total	150 hours

### Private study description

Private study will involve preparation for seminars, including reading and completion of pre-seminar tasks.

### Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

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## Assessment

You do not need to pass all assessment components to pass the module.

## Assessment group A

	<b>Weighting</b>	<b>Study time</b>	<b>Eligible for self-certification</b>
<b>Assessment component</b>			
Video Essay	85%	30 hours	Yes (extension)
Students will submit a video essay of 15 minutes in duration. The essay will respond to one of the set questions. The essay should be structured in a way that ensures effective communication of the argument and references will be expected in the same way as they would be for a written essay.			
In preparing for their presentation, each student will have the opportunity to undertake an in-person discussion of their essay plan with the module leader.			

Reassessment component is the same

**Assessment component**

Reflective Essay	15%	10 hours	Yes (extension)
Students will submit a written piece reflecting on the essay that they recorded and explaining the decisions that they made within that essay.			

Reassessment component is the same

## Feedback on assessment

Individual written feedback and generic cohort feedback will be shared with students for each element of the assessment in accordance with school policy.

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## Availability

### Courses

This module is Optional for:

- ULAA-M130 Undergraduate Law
  - Year 2 of M130 Law

- Year 2 of M130 Law
- Year 3 of M130 Law
- Year 3 of M130 Law
- ULAA-M131 Undergraduate Law (4 Year)
  - Year 2 of M131 Law (4 year)
  - Year 3 of M131 Law (4 year)
  - Year 4 of M131 Law (4 year)
- ULAA-M132 Undergraduate Law (Year Abroad)
  - Year 2 of M132 Law (Year Abroad)
  - Year 4 of M132 Law (Year Abroad)
- ULAA-M135 Undergraduate Law and Sociology
  - Year 3 of M135 Law and Sociology
  - Year 4 of M135 Law and Sociology
- ULAA-MR00 Undergraduate Law with French
  - Year 2 of MR00 Law with French
  - Year 4 of MR00 Law with French
- ULAA-MR01 Undergraduate Law with German
  - Year 2 of MR01 Law with German
  - Year 4 of MR01 Law with German
- ULAA-M136 Undergraduate Law with Humanities (3 Year)
  - Year 2 of M136 Law with Humanities (3 year)
  - Year 3 of M136 Law with Humanities (3 year)
- UPHA-V7MW Undergraduate Politics, Philosophy and Law
  - Year 2 of V7MW Politics, Philosophy and Law
  - Year 2 of V7MW Politics, Philosophy and Law
  - Year 3 of V7MW Politics, Philosophy and Law
  - Year 3 of V7MW Politics, Philosophy and Law