

Deborah White
Professor, Sociology

Classes I teach at Trent:

SOCI 1001H - *Introduction to Sociology* (A & B)

SOCI 3460H - *Culture & Society*

SOCI 4410H – *Sociology of Culture & Knowledge*

My research interests include:

Working from a feminist perspective at the intersection of science, medicine and law, I focus on the institutional and technological responses to sexual violence, particularly medico-legal interventions including the role and nature of forensic technologies, evidence and experts in criminal justice systems (e.g., forensic medical examinations, rape kits) and anti-rape technologies.

How does your research translate into your teaching, both through courses and supervision?

My passion for and training in Sociology permeates all my teaching. My research interests are most evident in the “Sociology of Culture & Knowledge” course I teach in which we examine the social construction of science, expertise and technologies, as well as the coming together of medicine/science and the criminal justice system. Supervision has been wide-ranging, but typically focused on a topic related to gender-based and sexual violence, and social justice and inequality.

My current or recent projects include:

Technologies and sexual violence: Prevention, intervention and victimization: In collaboration with a colleague in Scotland, I am involved in several projects examining technologies related to rape prevention, state interventions and the perpetration of acts of sexual violence.

Sexual violence and forensic medical provision in rural and remote areas: I am working with colleagues in Canada and the U.K. on an international comparative study of institutional challenges in underserved areas for both medical professionals and victims of sexual assault with respect to forensic medical evidence collection and health care.

Technological innovations in the prevention of sexual violence: Exploring women’s perceptions of anti-rape technologies: This on-going project investigates how women respond to the growing array of digital and wearable anti-rape technologies.

Police, rape kits and forensic evidence: I am currently finishing up a collaborative comparative project exploring how police in Scotland and Canada understand and utilize forensic evidence in sexual assault case processing.

Forensic expert marginalisation: Post-controversy science in the courtroom: This project, undertaken with a colleague in England, is a study of the nature and effects of scientific conflict carried over to the legal arena (specifically with respect to scientific expert witnesses in the courtroom).

Five publications that exemplify my work:

White, D. & McMillan, L. (2020). "Innovating the problem away? A critical study of anti-rape technologies". *Violence Against Women*, 26(10): 1120-1140.

McMillan, L. & White, D. (2019). "Boundary-making in the medico-legal context: Examining doctor-nurse dynamics in post-sexual assault forensic medical interventions". *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 41(1), 36-51.

Du Mont, J. & White, D. (2013). "Sexual violence: What does it take for the world to care about women?". *Journal of Public Health*, 35(2), 182-184.

White, D. & Du Mont, J. (2009). "Visualizing sexual assault: Forensic technologies and the culture of medicolegal expertise". *Social Science & Medicine*, 68(1), 1-8.

Du Mont, J. & White, D. (2007). The Uses and Impacts of Medico-Legal Evidence in Sexual Assault Cases: A Global Review. Commissioned by the World Health Organization/Global Health Forum, for the Sexual Violence Research Initiative.

What achievements and/or contributions in research are you most proud of?

My work has been central to the development of critical and interdisciplinary approaches to understanding the forensic technologies, processes, professionals and evidence of state interventions in relation to sexual violence. More specifically, I am proud of my role in co-authoring the World Health Organization-commissioned global study examining the uses and impacts of medico-legal evidence in sexual assault cases, as well as its uptake in various government protocols. I have also made scholarly contributions to the study of gender-based violence through recent research on 'anti-rape technologies'. A blog co-written with a colleague summarizing that work won a 'Write to End Violence Against Women - Excellence in Journalism' award in Scotland, which I believe is indicative of how scholarship can be translated in valuable ways to non-scholarly fields.

Accepting new UG and Graduate student supervisions:

Please contact me to discuss opportunities.