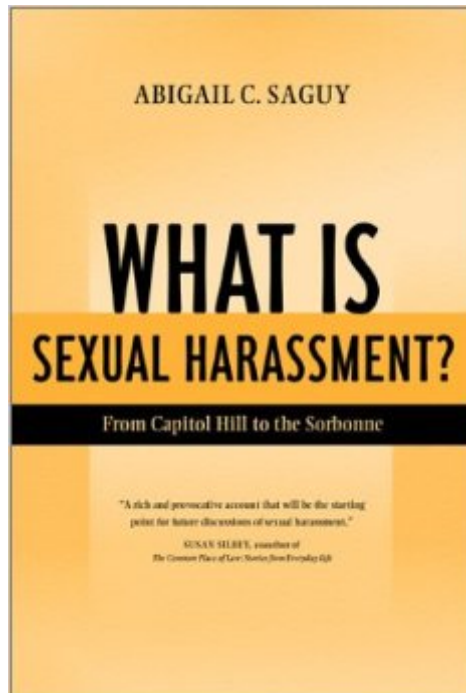


The book was found

What Is Sexual Harassment?: From Capitol Hill To The Sorbonne



Synopsis

In France, a common notion is that the shared interests of graduate students and their professors could lead to intimate sexual relations, and that regulations curtailing those relationships would be both futile and counterproductive. By contrast, many universities and corporations in the United States prohibit sexual relationships across hierarchical lines and sometimes among coworkers, arguing that these liaisons should have no place in the workplace. In this age of globalization, how do cultural and legal nuances translate? And when they differ, how are their subtleties and complexities understood? In comparing how sexual harassment—a concept that first emerged in 1975—has been defined differently in France and the United States, Abigail Saguy explores not only the social problem of sexual harassment but also the broader cultural concerns of cross-national differences and similarities.

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Customer Reviews

For more than 100 years, starting with Oliver Wendell Holmes' famous essay "The Path of the Law," American legal scholars have bemoaned the lack of a serious sociological jurisprudence, that would treat law as a social phenomenon, rather than as a conceptual game or an opportunity to indulge in covert advocacy disguised as scholarship. Holmes was merely the first in a long line of legal thinkers to ignore his own advice (in his 30-year judicial career, he did basically nothing to advance any serious interdisciplinary study of law). In her new book, Abigail Saguy demonstrates how a rigorous sociological investigation of a now-common legal concept from a comparative perspective can yield all sorts of insights into the nature of the politics of law. Saguy compares the concepts of sexual

harrasment as they have been developed by the American and French legal systems. Part of the book's value is how it reminds us that what now seems like a central concept of American, and to a much lesser extent, French, law, was something that literally did not even exist 30 years ago. She traces the genesis of the concept in the feminist movements of the 1960s and 1970s, and describes how the concept has taken significantly different forms in France and America. Her interviews with numerous prominent legal and political actors in both countries are fascinating, as is her analysis of the factors that have led to sexual harrasment being framed as a form of sex discrimination in America, and a crime of violence (albeit a widely ignored one) in France. While Saguy's methods are markedly empirical, she does not overwhelm the reader with statistics.

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