

# WGS 4028 Gender and American Politics

## Fall 2011

### **Basic Information**

Class meets: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:10-10:30, 112 Prescott Hall

Instructor: Dr. Ondercin

Office: 235 Stubbs Hall

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Office Phone: 578-2535.

Office hours: Tuesday 1:30-4:00 pm and by appointment.

E-mail is an effective way to reach me, I check my messages several times a day. If my office hours don't work for you, talk to me and we can make an appointment. Never hesitate to talk to me if you have a problem, comment, or concern.

**Prerequisites:** There are no formal prerequisites set by the university for this class. I try to keep my assumptions about background knowledge to a minimum and design the class accordingly. However, I assume a basic understanding of the United States political system. If at any point you are having difficulty understanding the material in class please see me immediately, it is much easier for us to solve problems early on than waiting until the end of the semester.

### **Course Description**

Gender is a social and historical construction loosely tied to the biological categories male and female. Gender can be an identity possessed by an individual. Gender also acts as an institution structuring individual experiences and political outcomes. Additionally, gender is not limited to only the study of women. It applies to men as well.

This class is designed as an overview of the field of gender and politics, specifically American politics. We will examine critically the role gender plays in shaping U.S. politics at the individual level and how gender shapes the institutions of the U.S. political system.

The class begins by introducing some fundamentals of feminist theory; providing the critical lenses we will use throughout the semester. We move on to examine how gender structures the political status of individuals in the United States. We will discuss the three waves of the women's movement to understand how the relationship between gender, citizenship, and law has changed over time. In the second section of the class we explore how gender structures the political participation of both men and women. In this section we ask how and why women's political participation differs from men's. The third section of the class addresses how gender shapes who runs and wins elective office in the United States. In this section we also explore the impact of gender on the various institutions of government: Executive, Legislative, Judicial, and the federal bureaucracy.

## Class Policies

The format of this class is a mixture of lecture, class discussion, small group projects and individual projects. Two things are very important to the success of this class: 1) your participation in class; and 2) that you have completed the readings **before** the class in which we will discuss them. Not having completed the reading adversely affects your ability to participate in class and, subsequently, your grade. You cannot learn from each other, and I cannot learn from you, if you are not prepared for class. I encourage you to ask questions you may have about lectures, class discussions, readings, and things you see in the news. Do not be passive; class will be much more interesting, and you will learn the material better, if you are an active participant.

Class attendance is the responsibility of the student. The student is expected to attend all classes. A student who finds it necessary to miss class assumes responsibility for making up examinations, obtaining lecture notes, and otherwise compensating for what may have been missed. I will not take attendance in the class; however, it will be hard to do well in the class if you do not regularly attend. It goes without saying that attending class will prove very useful; **a great deal** of the material for which you will be responsible for can only be learned in class. Participation is graded and you can not participate if you are not present. If doing the readings and attending class will be too difficult, please give serious thought to dropping this class.

Students are expected to show up on time and stay for the entire class period. It is distracting to me and your fellow students to have people coming and going throughout the class period. If you need to leave early please position yourself near a door and exit discreetly. I will let you know when the class period has ended, so you do not need to pack up your notes, books, etc, until I dismiss you. Additionally, I will be summarizing the main points of class discussion and giving important announcements for future classes. If at the end of class you pack up early you are likely to miss important information.

If you are experiencing problems of any sort please talk to me as early as possible. Everyone learns in different ways and has different strengths and weaknesses. I try to develop class activities and ways to assess your progress that accommodate these various learning styles. With that said there may be parts of this class you find challenging. If you come and talk with me we can work on those issues to ensure your success in the class. However, if you wait until the day before the exam or an assignment is due it will be too late. So please talk to me as soon as you begin to experience problems.

This is a class about gender and American politics. It is not a class about politics. However, in this class we will engage in discussions about politics and policies. During our discussion I want everyone to feel free to share their opinions with each other. Each of us brings a unique perspective to the class and we can all learn from this diversity. In order to make this possible you need to be respectful of other people's opinions, even if they are the direct

opposite of your own beliefs. I will not tolerate personal attacks on each other or the use of disrespectful language. There is no room for an atmosphere of intimidation, and I will not tolerate it in this class. If there are any issues that you feel uncomfortable with please feel free to talk to me.

**Shut your cell phones off before coming to class.** It is disturbing to me and your fellow students. I reserve the right to confiscate phones if this becomes a problem. Please leave the newspaper, cross word puzzles, and other work at home. **NO LAPTOPS ALLOWED.**

All students are expected to work independently on all assignments. Group and collaborative work is not permitted unless specific instructions are given. Proper citations must be used to acknowledge any ideas, concepts, theories, organizational formats, and writing that is not your own. If you are not clear on how to properly give credit to others, please see me before turning in any assignment. All students are required to read and be familiar with the Code of Student Conduct found at [www.lsu.edu/judicialaffairs](http://www.lsu.edu/judicialaffairs) as well as all other university policies and procedures. If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism see: <http://www.lib.lsu.edu/instruction/plagiarism/html>. I take this issue very seriously and will check all things turned into me for signs of plagiarism.

If you are a graduate student enrolled in this course for graduate credit please see me. You will be required to complete additional readings and assignments to receive graduate credit.

Students with disabilities: Reasonable accommodations will be made for any student with documented disabilities to ensure that the student is able to participate in class to the best of their abilities. If you anticipate needing any type of accommodation in this course or have questions about physical access, please tell the instructor as soon as possible. Reasonable accommodations will be made for all students with disabilities, but it is the student's responsibility to inform the instructor early in the term. It is also the student's responsibility to register with the disability service office on campus. Do not wait until just before an exam to decide you want to inform the instructor of a learning disability; any accommodations for disabilities must be arranged well in advance.

If you did not attend the first day of class and/or added the class late, all class policies apply equally to you. It is your responsible to find out any information gone over during the class periods you missed. Deadlines **will not** be adjusted on an individual basis.

### **Grading**

Grades for the class will be based on participation, brief writing assignments, and two exams. A total of 100 points are available. Below you will find a description of each of the factors that go into the final grade, the due dates, and the grade distribution.

**Participation.** Participation in class discussions and other classroom activities is extremely important; as a result participation is worth 15% of your final grade. This means if you fail

Table 1: Assignments and Due Dates

	Points Available	Due Dates
Participation	15	everyday
Writing Assignments	25	See outline below
Exam 1	30	October 11 <sup>th</sup>
Exam 2	30	December 10 <sup>th</sup>
Total	100	

to participate the highest grade you will be able to receive in this class is a B. Participation will be assessed in two different ways. First, there will be a variety of in class and out of class assignments throughout the semester, these will count for participation. Second, your in-class contributions will also count towards participation. You are expected to be engaged in class discussions, ask questions, and contribute to group work. Participation is not simply about quantity or quality. You should participate on a regular basis in a meaningful way.

**Writing Assignments** There are five short writing assignments that are designed to apply what we are learning in the class room to contemporary U.S. politics. For each assignment you will write 3-5 pages, double spaced in 12 point Times New Roman font or equivalent and with standard 1 inch margins. All assignments are due on the date listed in the tentative course schedule. Descriptions of each writing assignment can be found at the end of the syllabus.

Assignments should be e-mailed to me as a single PDF file. If you do not know how to create a PDF file please see the help desk in the library and they can explain the process to you. Assignments need to be time stamped by 9:00 a.m. on the day that they are due. Assignments turned in late, but time stamped after 9:00 a.m. will receive a penalty of a a full letter grade for every 10 minutes the assignment is late. For example, your paper was turned in at 9:10 and the grade on the paper was an 90, but because the paper was 10 minutes late your grade will be reduced to a 80. I do not accept assignments slipped under my office door or put in my mail box. Assignments turned in after the regularly scheduled class period **will not** be accepted. All assignments are to be typed.

Writing counts. I expect assignments to be clearly written with complete sentences and proper grammar. I highly recommend that you read them over before you turn them in.

**Exams.** There will be two exams. Both exams will be essay format. The second exam is not cumulative. You will be expected to bring a blank blue book to class.

If you are absent for the midterm exam you will have the option to take a cumulative final exam. The cumulative final exam will be essay format. Your grade for the cumulative final will serve as your grade for both the midterm and the final exam. If you missed the midterm

exam and would like to take the cumulative final you will need to inform me of this decision by e-mail no later than November 22<sup>nd</sup>. Do not assume I will remember that you missed the first exam, you must send an e-mail.

Table 2: Grade Distribution

A	100 – 90
B	89 – 80
C	79 – 70
D	69 – 60
F	59 and below

**Grade Appeal.** I will not discuss changes in grades on exams for 24 hours after the paper or exam has been handed back. If you feel that I missed an important point that you made or there is some other problem with your grade after 24 hours you may submit a grade appeal. Your appeal should be a typed argument for why your grade should be changed. It should be no longer than 1 page. You will need to hand the appeal and the original exam back into me for review. I will then ask you to schedule a time to meet with me to discuss the appeal. Appealing the grade does not mean that I will automatically increase your grade.

**Extra Credit.** Extra credit will not be given on an individual basis. Everyone in the class has the opportunity to earn extra credit by completing the extra credit assignment. You can earn up to 3 points of extra credit. Simply completing the extra credit does not guarantee that you will receive a full 3 points. The extra credit assignment will be posted on Moodle.

### Required Books

Three books are required for this class and are listed below. All the books should be available in the book stores around campus and on Amazon.com. Any additional readings can be found on Moodle.

- Mansbridge, Jane J. 1986. *Why We Lost the ERA*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Kahn, Kim Fridkin. 1996. *The Political Consequences of Being a Woman*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Traister, Rebecca. 2010. *Big Girls Don't Cry* New York: Free Press.

### Tentative Course Outline<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Any changes to this schedule will be announced verbally in class. It is the student's responsibility to note changes and adhere to the new schedule.

**Tuesday, August 23<sup>rd</sup>** Class Overview.

**Thursday, August 25<sup>th</sup>** The Study of Gender and Politics

- Syllabus.
- Ritter, Gretchen. 2008 “Gender as a Category of Analysis in American Political Development.” in *Political Women and American Democracy* ed. Christina Wolbrecht, Karen Beckwith, and Lisa Baldez. **Moodle**

**Tuesday, August 30<sup>th</sup>** The Social Construction of Gender and Masculinity in Politics

- Lorber, Judith. 2009. “The Social Construction of Gender” in *The Social Constructions of Difference and Inequality 4<sup>th</sup> Edition* ed. Tracy E. Ore. Boston, MA: McGraw Hill. **Moodle**
- Messner, Michael A. 2007. “The Masculinity of the Governorator Muscle and Compassion in American Politics.” *Gender & Society* 21(4): 461-480. **Moodle**

**Thursday, September 1<sup>st</sup>** Constructing Women in Politics

- No reading for today.

**Tuesday, September 6<sup>th</sup>** Socially Constructing Women in Politics: Double Binds

- Jamison, Kathleen Hall. 1997. “Hillary Clinton as Rorschach Test” in *Beyond the Double Bind* Oxford University Press. **Moodle**

**Thursday, September 8<sup>th</sup>** The Politics of the Women’s Movement: Introduction

- Ellen Carol Dubois. 1987. “Outgrowing the Compact of the Fathers: Equal Rights, Women Suffrage, and the United States Constitution, 1820-1887” *The Journal of American History* 74(3): 836-862. **Moodle**

**Tuesday, September 13<sup>th</sup>** First Wave of the Women’s Movement

- “Declaration of Sentiments” **Moodle**
- “Constitutional Argument” Susan B. Anthony. **Moodle**
- “Ain’t I a Woman?” Sojourner Truth, **Moodle**

**Thursday, September 15<sup>th</sup>** The Politics of the Women’s Movement: 1st Wave Continued

- Locke, Mamie E. “From Three-fifths to Zero Implications of the Constitution for African American Women, 1787-1870.” in *Women Transforming Politics* ed. Cathy J. Cohen, Kathleen B. Jones, and Joan C. Tronto. **Moodle**

**Tuesday, September 20<sup>th</sup>** The Politics of the Women’s Movement: Second Wave

- Freeman, Jo. 1973 “The Origins of the Women’s Liberation Movement.” *American Journal of Sociology* 78(4): 792-811. **Moodle**

**Thursday, September 22<sup>nd</sup>** The Politics of the Women’s Movement: Second Wave

- Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 in Schreiber, Ronnee. 2008. *Righting Feminism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. **Moodle**

**Tuesday, September 27<sup>th</sup>** The Politics of the Women’s Movement: Second Wave

- Chapters 1, 2, 3 , 9 and 10 *Why We Lost the ERA* by Jane Mansbridge

### **Assignment 1 Due Today**

**Thursday, September 29<sup>th</sup>** The Politics of the Women’s Movement: Third Wave

- Baumgardner, Jennifer and Amy Richards. 2008 “Manifesta: Young Women, Feminism, and the Future.” in *Women Images and Realities 4<sup>th</sup> Edition* ed. Amy Kesselman, Lily D. McNair, Nancy Schniedewin with Suzanne Kelly. Boston: McGraw Hill, **Moodle**
- Whitter, Nancy 2005. “From the Second to Third Wave: Continuity and Change in Grassroots Feminism” *U.S. Women’s Movements in a Dynamic and Global Perspective* ed. Lee Ann Banasxak. Rowman and Littlefield Publishers. **Moodle**

**Tuesday, October 4<sup>th</sup>** Political Participation

- Chapter 3 and 10 in Burns, Nancy, Kay Lehman Scholozman and Sidney Verba. 2001. *The Private Roots of Public Action* Cambridge: Harvard University Pres. **Moodle**

**Thursday, October 6<sup>th</sup>** Men’s and Women’s Psychological Orientation to Politics

- Chapter 4 in Burns, Nancy, Kay Lehman Scholozman and Sidney Verba. 2001. *The Private Roots of Public Action* Cambridge: Harvard University Pres. **Moodle**

### **Assignment 2 Due Today**

**Tuesday, October 11<sup>th</sup>** – Exam 1

**Thursday, October 13<sup>th</sup>** Fall Break

**Tuesday, October 18<sup>th</sup>** Political Parties and Issues Women’s Issue Alignment / Realignment.

- Chapter 2 and 5 in Wolbrecht, Christina. 2000. *The Politics of Women’s Rights* Princeton: Princeton University Press. **Moodle**

**Thursday, October 20<sup>th</sup>** Voting and Partisanship

- Carroll, Susan J. “Voting Choices Meet You at the Gender Gap” in *Gender and Elections* ed. Susan J. Carroll and Richard L. Fox. **Moodle**
- Chapter 5 *Women, Work and Politics The Political Economy of Gender Inequality* by Torben Iversen and Frances Rosenbluth. 2010. Yale University Press. **Moodle**

**Tuesday, October 25<sup>th</sup>** Representation of Women

- Mansbridge, Jane. “Should Blacks Represent Blacks and Women Represent Women? A Contingent ‘Yes’” *The Journal of Politics* 61(3): 628-657. **Moodle**

### **Assignment 3 Due Today**

**Thursday, October 27<sup>th</sup>** Representation of Women: an International Perspective

- Rule, Wilma. 1994. “Election Systems and Representative Democracy: Women’s Underrepresentation and Electoral Systems.” *PS: Political Science and Politics* 27(4):689-692. **Moodle**
- Mansbridge, Jane. 2005. “Quota Problems: Combating the Dangers of Essentialism” *Politics & Gender* 1(4):622-637
  - Caul Kittilson, Miki. “In Support of Gender Quotas: Setting New Standards, Bridging Visible Gains” *Politics & Gender* 1(4):622-637. **Moodle**
  - Jones, Mark P. “The Desirability of Gender Quotas: Considering Context and Design” *Politics & Gender* 1(4):622-637. **Moodle**

**Tuesday, November 1<sup>st</sup>** Women as Candidates: Running for Office

- Fox, Richard and Jennifer Lawless “Entering the Arena? Gender and the Decision to Run for Office” *American Journal of Political Science* 48(2): 264-280. **Moodle**
- Sanbonmatsu, Kira 2002. “Political Parties and the Recruitment of Women to the State Legislatures” *Journal of Politics* 64(3):791-809 **Moodle**

**Thursday, November 5<sup>rd</sup>** Women as Candidates: Running for Office

- Dolan, Kathleen. 2001. “Electoral Contexts, Issues, & Voting for Women in the 1990” *Women & Politics* 23, 21-36 **Moodle**
- Chapter 3 *The Political Consequences of Being a Woman*

**Tuesday, November 8<sup>th</sup>** Media

- Chapters 4 & 5 *The Political Consequences of Being a Woman*
- Beasley, Maurine H. 1997. “How Can Media Coverage of Women be Improved” in *Women, Media, and Politics* ed. Pippa Norris. Oxford University Press. **Moodle**

**Thursday, November 10<sup>th</sup>**

- Huddy, Leonie and Nayda Terkildsen. 1993 “Gender Stereotypes and the Perception of Male and Female Candidates” *American Journal of Political Science* 37(1):119-147. **Moodle**
- Chapter 9 *The Political Consequences of Being a Woman*

**Tuesday, November 15<sup>th</sup>** Women in the Executive

- Duerst-Lahti, Georgia. 1997 “Reconceiving Theories of Power: Consequences of Masculinism in the Executive Branch” **Moodle**
- O’Connor, Karen, Bernadette Nye, and Laura van Assendelft 1996. “Wives in the White House: The Political Influence of First Ladies.” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 5(1):171-197. **Moodle**

**Thursday, November 17<sup>th</sup>** Impact of Women in Government

- Swers, Michelle and Carin Larson “Women in Congress: Do They Act as Advocates for Women’s Issues?” in *Women and Elective Office: Past, Present, and Future* ed. Sue Thomas and Clyde Wilcox. **Moodle**

- Bedolla, Lisa Garcia, Katherine Tate and Janelle Wong “Indelible Effects: The Impact of Women of Color in the U.S. Congress” in *Women and Elective Office: Past, Present, and Future* ed. Sue Thomas and Clyde Wilcox. **Moodle**

### **Assignment 4 Due Today**

**Tuesday, November 22<sup>nd</sup>** Impact of Women in Government

- Atkeson, Lonna Rae, and Nancy Carrillo. 2007. “More is Better: The Influence of Collective Female Descriptive Representation on External Efficacy.” *Politics & Gender* 3(1): 79-103. **Moodle**
- Coontz, Phylliss. 2000. “Gender and Judicial Decisions: Do Female Judges Decide Cases Differently Than Male Judges?” *Gender Issues* 18(4):59-73. **Moodle**

### **Last Day to Turn in Extra Credit**

**Thursday, November 24<sup>th</sup>** Thanksgiving Break

- No assigned reading but you may want to get a head start on *Big Girls Don't Cry*

**Tuesday, November 29<sup>th</sup>** Women and Politics Today: How Far Have We Come?

- Chapters 1-6 *Big Girls Don't Cry*

**Thursday, December 1<sup>st</sup>** Women and Politics Today: Where are We Going?

- Chapter 7-12 *Big Girls Don't Cry*

### **Assignment 5 Due Today**

**Saturday, December 10<sup>th</sup>, 12:30-2:30** Final Exam

## Writing Assignments

**Assignment 1: Do We Need the ERA?** You are one of the nation's leading legal minds and are faced with the task of assessing the legal and political rights of women in the United States. Since the Constitution of the United States is the supreme law of the land you know that it will contain the answer to your question. Since the last time you read the Constitution was back in your Con Law class in law school you feel that it is best to re-read the Constitution keeping the following questions in mind: 1) Are there references to sex or gender in these documents? If so what are they and what rights or actions do these references refer to? 2) Since this documents apply to citizen's of the United States, how is citizenship defined?

Based on your reading of the Constitution you need to form an argument about what rights apply to women in the United States and why.

Some tips for writing a good brief:

- Clearly state your argument at the beginning of the brief. This argument will serve as the central thesis of your brief, so you need to let the reader know early on what position you are arguing.
- Provide reasons to support your argument.
- Support those reasons with evidence drawn from the U.S. Constitution.
- Your opinion does matter; however, your opinion should be the basis of your argument and backed up by the reasoning and evidence presented in the brief.

**Assignment 2: Organized Women's Interests.** The byproduct of many social movements are interest groups. In this assignment you will perform a critical analysis of an organized interest group that claims to represent women. This can be an organization we have talked about in class or one of your choosing. If you have questions about whether the organization you would like to analyze is appropriate, please come talk to me. You should provide a brief overview of the organization. This should include information about what the organization stands for, a brief history of the organization, and what activities the organization engages in. The majority of your paper should be devoted to analyzing the organization's claim to represent women. Who are they representing? And how are they representing them? What are their ties to social movements in the United States? Make sure to include the website's address for the organization.

This should not be simply a report about the organization; rather, you are to critically analyze the organization's claim to represent women. The paper also is not simply your opinion. Rather, you need to develop an argument and use evidence from the organization's website as support for the argument. Additionally, the readings and class discussion should inform your critical analysis.

**Assignment 3: Gender and the Political Parties.** For this paper you will need to visit both the Republican Party's and Democratic Party's websites. The appropriate address are listed below. You are to critically analyze both the text and images on these websites for gender based appeals. Based on these websites what role do women play in the parties? What role do men play in the parties? How are women and men targeted? What issues are associated with men and women? Are the two parties similar or different in their appeals? Some of the appeals are not obvious on the web site, so make sure you look around on each site.

- Republican Party: <http://www.gop.com/>
- Democratic Party: <http://www.democrats.com/>

In a critical analysis you should not simply state your opinion. Rather, in a critical analysis you should form an argument about what text and images are saying about the Democratic and Republican Parties. Your argument should be supported by a lot of detail from the websites. Additionally, the readings and class discussion should inform your critical analysis.

**Assignment 4: Member of Congress Profile.** In this paper you are to evaluate how different members of Congress present themselves to their constituency. You are to select two members of Congress, one man and one woman, who have web sites for this assignment. Make sure to select members of Congress that are serving in the same chamber, for instance a male and female member of the House of Representatives. Do not select one member from the House and one member from the Senate. In this paper you should provide a brief summary of each member's background. The majority of your paper should be spent conducting a comparison between of the two members' websites. What images do the members provide of themselves? What is the content of the sites? Are these sites similar or different? What do you attribute these similarities and differences to: Gender? Committee Assignments? Constituency? Make sure to include the web address to the Members of Congress's websites.

**Assignment 5: Critical Response to *Big Girls Don't Cry*.** Throughout the semester we study a multitude of academic theories and empirical findings regarding gender and politics. The last book we read is considerably different because it takes a more journalistic account of the role of women in politics, specifically in the 2010 Presidential Election. In this assignment you are to preform a critical analysis of the book *Big Girls Don't Cry* with respect to the material we have covered throughout the semester. How does this journalistic account fit with the works we have covered this semester? We have covered a lot of material this semester and *Big Girls Don't Cry* also covers a lot material, so your critical analysis will not be able to cover everything. Rather, a good critical analysis should focus on one or two points. You should form an argument and use material from both class and the book to

support your argument.