

POLI 4028 and WGS 4028 Gender and American Politics

Spring 2010

Basic Information

Class meets: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12:10-1:30 Lockett Hall

Instructor: Dr. Ondercin

Office: 118 F Himes Hall

E-mail: ondercin@lsu.edu

Office Phone: If calling during office hours 578-4804. If calling some other time 578-2550.

Office hours: Tuesday 2:00-5:00 pm and by appointment.

E-mail is an effective way to reach me, I check my messages several times a day. If these times don't work, 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. Because this is a cross-listed class there is likely considerable variance in background knowledge. 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. Additionally we

examine how leadership is gendered. 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 having 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 this information.

There will be no make-up exams. You have plenty of warning in advance of when exams are and you should plan accordingly. The only exception to this policy is in the case of emergency. It is completely up to the instructor's discretion if you will be allowed to make up the exam and the validity of the emergency will be determined by the instructor in accordance with LSU policy (PS 22). Under these circumstances, you need to contact me as soon as physically possible and when physically possible before the scheduled exam date. We will schedule a make-up exam to take place within the same calendar week that the original exam was scheduled. You will also have to provide appropriate proof of said emergency.

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 accommodates these various learning styles. With that said there may be parts of this class that you will 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 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, 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

Table 1: Assignments and Due Dates

	Points Available	Due Dates
Participation	15	everyday
Reading Summaries	15	randomly throughout semester
Exam 1	35	March 9 th
Exam 2	35	May 14 th
Total	100	

Grades for the class will be based on participation, brief reading summaries, 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 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.

Brief Reading Summaries The readings for this class vary considerably. Some of them are theoretical in nature and others are more technical empirical articles. To help you understand the readings and prepare for the exams, I expect you to write brief summaries of the readings. Starting on Tuesday January 26th I will select several (8-10) students to submit their brief reading summaries for a grade. There will be no make-ups. However, at the end of the semester, I will drop your lowest grade.

The reading summaries should demonstrate that you have read and thought about the readings. The reading summaries should be approximately one to two pages in length. I expect them to be typed; however, I will pick them up at the end of class so you will be able to make notes on them throughout class. The summaries will be graded on and should contain the following points:

- Topic or research question.
- How they addressed the topic or research question.
- Findings, highlighting what the one big take away point from the article is.
- What did you learn from the article.

Writing counts. I expect them 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.

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

One book is required for this class and is listed below. Any additional readings can be found on Moodle. When readings are on Moodle it is indicated with a **Moodle** in the course outline.

- *Political Women and American Democracy* 2008. ed. Christina Wolbrecht, Karen Beckwith, and Lisa Baldez. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tentative Course Outline¹

Tuesday, January 19th Class Overview.

Thursday, January 21st The Study of Gender and Politics

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

Tuesday, January 26th The Social Construction of Gender

- “The Social Construction of Gender” Judith Lorber. **Moodle**

Thursday, January 28th Socially Constructing Masculinity and Politics

- “The Masculinity of the Governor Muscle and Compassion in American Politics.” **Moodle**

Tuesday, February 2nd Socially Constructing Femininity and Politics

- “Hillary Clinton as Rorschach Test” Kathleen Hall Jamison. *Beyond the Double Bind*. **Moodle**

Thursday, February 4th The Politics of the Women’s Movement: Introduction

- “Women’s Movements and Women in Movements: Influencing American Democracy from the ‘Outside’?” by Lee Ann Banazack in *Political Women and American Democracy* ed. Christina Wolbrecht, Karen Beckwith, and Lisa Baldez.

Tuesday, February 9th 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**

[Summaries should cover all of today’s readings]

Thursday, February 11th The Politics of the Women’s Movement: 1st Wave Continued

- Constitution Activity Due in Class on Feb 10th

¹Any 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, February 16th – Mardi Gras Break

Thursday, February 18th The Politics of the Women’s Movement: Second Wave

- “The Origins of the Women’s Liberation Movement.” Freeman, Jo. **Moodle**

Tuesday, February 23rd The Politics of the Women’s Movement: Second Wave

- Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 in *Righting Feminism* by Ronnee Schreiber **Moodle**

[Summaries should cover all readings today]

Thursday, February 25th The Politics of the Women’s Movement: Second Wave

- Expert from *Why We Lost the ERA* by Jane Mansbridge **Moodle**

Tuesday, March 2nd The Politics of the Women’s Movement: Third Wave

- “We Are Using This Power to Resist” Rebecca Walker **Moodle**
- “Manifesta: Young Women, Feminism, and the Future.” Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richards, **Moodle**

[Summaries should cover all readings today]

Thursday, March 4th The Politics of the Women’s Movement – Overview

Tuesday, March 9th – Exam 1

Thursday, March 11th What are women’s interests?

- “When Are Interests Interesting? The Problem of Political Representation of Women” Sapiro, Virginia. 1981. *American Political Science Review* 75:701-713. **Moodle**

Tuesday, March 16th Intersectionality

- “What Revolution? Incorporating Intersectionality in Women and Politics” by Jane Junn and Nadia Brown in *Political Women and American Democracy* ed. Christina Wolbrecht, Karen Beckwith, and Lisa Baldez.

Thursday, March 18th Political Participation

- “Women as Political Animals? A Test of Some Explanations for Male-Female Political Participation Differences” Welch, Susan. 1977. *American Journal of Political Science*. 21(4): 711-730. **Moodle**

Tuesday, March 23rd Public Opinion

- “Gender, Public Opinion, and Political Reasoning” by Leonie Huddy, Erin Cassese, and Mary-Kate Lizotte in *Political Women and American Democracy* ed. Christina Wolbrecht, Karen Beckwith, and Lisa Baldez.

Thursday, March 25th Voting and Partisanship

- “Voting Choices Meet You at the Gender Gap” Carroll, Susan J. in *Gender and Elections* ed. Susan J. Carroll and Richard L. Fox. **Moodle**

Tuesday, March 30th Other forms of political activism

- “The Post-Katrina, Semiseparate World of Gender and Politics” by Pamela Tyler in *The Journal of American History*. December 2007.

Thursday, April 1st Gender and Political Parties

- “Representation by Gender and Parties” by Kira Sanbonmatsu in *Political Women and American Democracy* ed. Christina Wolbrecht, Karen Beckwith, and Lisa Baldez.

Tuesday, April 6th – Spring Break

Thursday, April 9th – Spring Break

Tuesday, April 12th Representation of Women in Institutions of Government

- “Theorizing Women’s Representation in the United States” by Suzzanne Dovi in *Political Women and American Democracy* ed. Christina Wolbrecht, Karen Beckwith, and Lisa Baldez.

Thursday, April 15th

- “Women as Officeholders: Linking Descriptive and Substantive Representation” by Beth Reingold in *Political Women and American Democracy* ed. Christina Wolbrecht, Karen Beckwith, and Lisa Baldez.

Tuesday, April 20th Women’s Impact in other Branches of Government

- “Gender and Judicial Decisions: Do Female Judges Decide Cases Differently Than Male Judges?” Coontz, Phylliss. 2000. *Gender Issues* 18(4):59-73. **Moodle**

Thursday, April 22nd

- “Women as Candidates in American Politics: The Continuing Impact of Sex and Gender” by Kathleen Dolan in *Political Women and American Democracy* ed. Christina Wolbrecht, Karen Beckwith, and Lisa Baldez.

Tuesday, April 27th

- “How the Public Views Women Candidates” Dolan, Kathleen in *Women and Elective Office: Past, Present, and Future* ed. Sue Thomas and Clyde Wilcox.

[Last day to turn in extra credit.]

Thursday, April 29th

- “Different Portraits, Different Leaders? Gender Differences in U.S. Senators’ Presentation of Self.” Fridkin, Kim L. and Gina Sergnese Woodall in *Women and Elective Office: Past, Present, and Future* ed. Sue Thomas and Clyde Wilcox.

Thursday, May 4th

- “Changing the Climate of Expectations.” Falk, Erika and Kathleen Hall Jamieson in *Anticipating Madam President* ed. Robert P. Watson and Ann Gordan, Boulder Co.: Lynne Rienner. **Moodle**

Tuesday, May 6th Qualifications? or Gender? Women and the Courts

- *Why Harriet Miers Matter* **Moodle**

[No Summaries Due Today]

Friday, May 14th, 5:30-7:30 p.m. Final Exam