Gender in Domestic Politics  
Women’s Studies and Political Science 597A  
Fall 2009  
Thursday 2:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.  
136 Burrowes Building  

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232 Pond Laboratory  
Phone: 865-6573  
Office Hours: T 1-3 p.m. and by appointment  
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COURSE DESCRIPTION.  

This course will examine issues of gender in the contemporary domestic politics of the United States, and other countries around the world. We will explore a number of topics in this course including: the role that gender has played in traditional electoral politics, from the selection of candidates to the political campaigns and their reception in the media, and from sex and gender differences in political participation to the role that electoral institutions play in getting women elected. We will also examine the development of women’s movements and women’s organizational advocacy in different political contexts including countries undergoing transitions to democracy. Finally we will look at how gender influences citizenship and political regimes as well as the creation of public policy, focusing both on theoretical conceptions of citizenship as well as empirical studies of policy outcomes.

Students may choose to do either an American politics or a comparative politics for the course. All students will read a core set of readings. On occasion separate additional readings will be designated for each option. Students will write research proposals designed for the particular option they choose.

GRADES:  

Grades will be determined using the following criteria:

a) class participation is worth 20% of your total grade. It is important for all members of the seminar to participate not just to indicate what you know but also because as academics we benefit when there is a wide range of perspectives and ideas generated in the class. This is even more important in an interdisciplinary class like this where people may have widely different understandings of the material and how to generate future knowledge. All of these perspectives will be needed. Therefore, in order to get above a B grade in class participation, you must participate regularly in the class discussions.

b) 4 papers coordinated with the weekly readings (for a total of 40% of your grade). Three papers will be a discussion paper, which should analyze the week’s readings. I expect that students will be prepared to explain their ideas in class to the others as a basis for starting discussion. The other will require you to read one of the supplementary readings for the week and discuss how it fits with the week’s readings. Each will be due by 9 a.m. the day the class meets. I will also expect the person who reads a supplementary reading to spend 10-15 minutes in class briefing their fellow classmates on the reading, its connections to the other readings of the day, and its contribution to the literature. For more information, see the description below.
c) one research proposal paper and proposal presentation worth 35% of your grade. These papers are due Friday, April 27th by noon. Because papers will be distributed to fellow students, late papers will be penalized!!

d) written comments on other students’ research proposals. You will be graded on the care and clarity of your reviews. Your job as a proposal evaluator is worth 5% of your grade.

**SEMINAR DISCUSSIONS**

The point of seminar discussions is to allow us to work through difficult readings, to connect them to both literatures in women’s studies and political science. I also believe it is fruitful to brainstorm on how and whether and where we could turn these questions into future research. Below are some questions that I believe can be taken from either a women’s studies or political science perspective in order to analyze the readings. Important for our class will be bringing both perspectives to bear on the questions.

1. What are the major theoretical concepts? How does the author(s) definition differ from those used by other authors? How do the authors make those concepts concrete in their analysis/discussion?
2. What is the major question or puzzle is the author trying to address? How does it fit in with the other literature that we have read? Why/how is the question important?
3. What methodologies does the author(s) employ to address the major question? Why are they appropriate? Are there ways the author(s) could have realistically improved on them? How would changing the methodology have changed the article?
4. What conclusions does the author(s) draw about the puzzle or question s/he is trying to address? Which conclusions are particularly surprising given the literature?
5. What possibilities for future research are raised by the piece? Where are the theoretical or empirical questions that are left to be answered? What new evidence might be brought to the question?

**SEMINAR PAPERS**

On the days you choose to write discussion paper, you must turn in a 4-6 page paper analyzing the day’s readings. These papers should analyze the works, which means you may critique the works, agree or disagree with the main arguments (giving some argument to support your opinion), or interpret them in light of other works you have read in the course. A good paper will provide some insight into the readings by showing how they are connected to the other literature in political science or women’s studies, by discussing theoretical or methodological flaws and achievements that might lead to future research, or by analyzing the usefulness of the theoretical or methodological approach in understanding other political phenomena. This paper may also serve as a place to begin to develop ideas for your own further research.

On the days you are designated to write the supplementary readings paper, you must turn in a 4-6 page paper on one of the supplementary readings for the day. You should consult with me prior to the class about which supplementary reading you will analyze. The paper should discuss how this particular work fits in with the other readings for the week, and should also analyze the work in light of the other readings. This means you may critique the work, agree or disagree with the main arguments (giving some argument to support your opinion), or interpret it in light of other works you have read in the course.

**THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL**

Research proposals are an important part of our work as scholars. In an interdisciplinary class like this, the research proposals may vary considerably depending on your initial training, and the sort of research that you want to do in the future. Nonetheless, there are generally common elements, especially since there are a limited number of places
that fund research. Thus, when scholars seek funding for a research project, we are often asked to provide a description of our research plans that explains its significance and the methods we plan to use to a wide audience of scholars. Research proposals typically include an explanation of the research question (or hypothesis), the significance of this question to the larger subfield, and a plan of how you will study this question. That plan should include discussions of what sort of information you will use, how you will gather that information, and how exactly you will examine the important concepts involved in answering your research question. The topic of the research must in some way relate to the material or subjects covered in class.

The research assignment in this class is to write such a proposal. You are limited to twenty double-spaced pages of text (not including bibliography). Your research proposals should be written AS IF you were going to complete the research. That means you must be able to carry out the research you propose, and you must provide significant detail about how you will conduct the research.

Your written proposal will be judged as would grants on the relevance of the basic question to the field, and the soundness and quality of the argument and research design. As part of the research proposal you must present your proposal to the class and answer questions from your fellow students. Your presentation and "defense" of your proposal is part of your grade on the research proposal.

On October 29th, we will meet to discuss this paper (although you are always welcome to come and talk about possible topics before that date). I will ask you to send me a short (1 page) memo before our meeting explaining your ideas about the research proposal.

Tentative Schedule and Readings

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Theme and Readings</th>
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<tr>
<td>8/27</td>
<td>Introduction: Studying Gender in Domestic Politics from a Cross-Disciplinary Perspective</td>
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Core Readings:

Conceptions of Gender and Women:


Gender in the Discipline of Political Science:


Other Readings:


9/3 American Political Science Association Annual Meetings – no class

9/10 Gender and Political Institutions

Core Readings:
6. Htun, Mala. What It Means to Study Gender and the State,” Politics and Gender 1, no. 1 (Fall 2005).

Supplemental Readings:


9/17 Participation in Politics: Where does Gender Come In?

Core Readings:

**American Core Readings:**


**Comparative Core Readings:**


**Supplemental Readings:**


9/24  Gender and what we think about politics

**Core Readings:**


**American Core Readings:**


**Comparative Core Readings:**


**Supplemental Readings:**


10/1 Gender and running for Political Office

**Core Readings:**


American Core Readings:

Comparative Core Readings:

Supplemental Readings:
OR See me for a series of articles on gender in the media, the gender gap, or gender stereotypes and running for office

10/8 Political Leadership and Gender

Core Readings:


Supplemental Readings:


10/15 Issues of Women’s Representation

Core Readings:


Supplemental Readings:


OR see me for a group of articles on women’s proportion of legislatures or quota laws
Women’s Movements

Core Readings:

American Core Readings:

Comparative Core Readings:

Supplemental Readings:

10/29 Individual meetings about papers and Viewing of A Film in Progress on the Women’s Movement

11/05 Women in Other Social Movements and Lesbian/Gay/Transgender Movements

Core Readings:


Supplemental Readings:


11/12 Public policy: Family Policy and The Welfare State

Core Readings:


Supplemental Readings:


11/19 Public Policy: TBA based on interest in the class (Possible subjects and readings below):


3. Weldon, Laurel. On women’s movements and Violence against Women.”


11/26 No Class – Thanksgiving Break

12/3 ****No Class: Papers due****

Core Readings:

12/10 ****Class Presentations of Research Work****

**We will use finals week to finish class presentations**
**Academic Dishonesty**

The Department of Political Science, along with the College of the Liberal Arts and the University, takes violations of academic dishonesty seriously. Observing basic honesty in one's work, words, ideas, and actions is a principle to which all members of the community are required to subscribe.

All course work by students is to be done on an individual basis unless an instructor clearly states that an alternative is acceptable. Any reference materials used in the preparation of any assignment must be explicitly cited. In an examination setting, unless the instructor gives explicit prior instructions to the contrary, whether the examination is in-class or take-home, violations of academic integrity shall consist of any attempt to receive assistance from written or printed aids, or from any person or papers or electronic devices, or of any attempt to give assistance, whether the one so doing has completed his or her own work or not.

Other violations include, but are not limited to, any attempt to gain an unfair advantage in regard to an examination, such as tampering with a graded exam or claiming another's work to be one's own. Violations shall also consist of obtaining or attempting to obtain, previous to any examinations, copies of the examination papers or the questions to appear thereon, or to obtain any illegal knowledge of these questions. Lying to the instructor or purposely misleading any Penn State administrator shall also constitute a violation of academic integrity.

In cases of a violation of academic integrity it is the policy of the Department of Political Science to impose appropriate penalties that are consistent with University guidelines.

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**Disabilities**

The Pennsylvania State University encourages qualified people with disabilities to participate in its programs and activities and is committed to the policy that all people shall have equal access to programs, facilities, and admissions without regard to personal characteristics not related to ability, performance, or qualifications as determined by University policy or by state or federal authorities. 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. 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.