

POLI 360, Sections 1&1F – Fall 2023
Gender and Politics in Comparative Perspective

Mondays & Wednesdays, 5:00-6:15 PM, SCI A201 & Virtually Via Zoom

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Student Hours: Tuesdays 2:00-3:00 PM & Wednesdays 12:00-1:00 PM, and by appointment

Course Description

This comparative politics course examines the role of gender in politics both in the United States and globally. Much of the course focuses on women's participation in formal politics, but during the second half we will also examine struggles of LGBTQ+ communities for recognition, civil rights, and full participation in politics, as well as social movements related to gender and gender-based issues. We will analyze explanations for women's underrepresentation in politics and consider remedies to this global pattern. Other questions we will analyze include: What is gender? What best explains variation in women's representation across countries? Do women who hold political office prioritize women's issues or govern differently from men? What is the current state of LGBTQ+ rights globally? How have women's and LGBTQ+ movements organized to protect rights and win political victories? At the very end of the course, we will discuss the current battles in the U.S. over reproductive and LGBTQ+ rights in comparative perspective. Students will also engage in research on policy issues related to women and LGBTQ+ communities around the world.

Required Texts

- Pamela Paxton, Melanie M. Hughes, and Tiffany D. Barnes. 2021. *Women, Politics, and Power: A Global Perspective, Fourth Edition*. Rowman & Littlefield. (Available through UWSP Text Rental)
Note: Hereafter referred to as "WPP".
- Other assigned readings will be made available on Canvas under the e-Reserves module.

Course Learning Outcomes

After successful completion of this course students will:

- Be able to apply social scientific concepts and theories to key debates in comparative politics related to gender and politics.
- Be able to identify and discuss differences across regions and countries in terms of women's political representation, policy, and power.
- Be able to explain how political institutions impact representation.
- Possess a greater ability to comprehend and analyze challenging readings.
- Have sharpened and more clearly defined their own thinking on issues related to women's and LGBTQ+ issues and participation in politics.
- Have developed expertise on a policy area related to women or LGBTQ+ people in a specific country or region.
- Be able to communicate research findings both orally and in written form using professional prose supported by scholarly evidence.

Course Requirements and Grading

Your grade will be based on your performance in the following areas:

Attendance & Participation	10%
Current Events Presentation	2%
Homework Assignments (4)	16%
Online Reading Response Discussion Board (8)	16%
Midterm Exam	22%
Regional or Country Research Paper	25%
Regional Panel Participation & Research Sharing	9%
TOTAL	100%

Grading Scale

Course grades will be calculated on a straight percentage scale. An A equals 93 or above, A- 90-92.99, B+ 87-89.99, B 83-86.99, B- 80-82.99, C+ 77-79.99, C 73-76.99, C- 70-72.99, D+ 67-69.99, D 60-66.99, F 59.99 and below.

Attendance and Participation

This class will meet simultaneously in-person and via Zoom on Mondays and Wednesdays from 5:00-6:15 PM. Class sessions will combine lecture, discussion, and various activities. Attendance and participation are ***crucial*** to success in this course and will count towards 10% of your grade. You are expected to attend all class sessions and come prepared to engage in that day's activities having completed all assigned readings and tasks.

Each student will be allowed 2 unexcused absences with no penalty. Points will be deducted starting with the third unexcused absence. **More than 6 unexcused absences (3 weeks) will result in a failing grade for Attendance and Participation.** which means you will earn anywhere from 0-60% of the total possible 10 points. Excused absences will not count towards these limits, but you should provide documentation, such as a note from a doctor or coach if you request an excused absence. In addition to regular attendance, active participation in class is expected. I will keep a record of student participation and will refer to it when I calculate this portion of your grade.

For those students attending via Zoom, we will use the same Zoom link for every class session. This link is also provided in Canvas:

Topic: POLI 360 Gender and Politics in Comparative Perspective - Fall 2023

Time: This is a recurring meeting Meet anytime

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://wisconsin-edu.zoom.us/j/6943628745?pwd=TzFtMEpIbkZBSXF0V0ZVc1NRMVZOUT09>

Meeting ID: 694 362 8745

Passcode: 360

Current Events Presentations

Each student will sign up for one day during the semester to make a brief (5 min.) presentation at the start of class on an article of interest related to gender and politics. Current event presentations will not be graded; if you complete the assignment, you will earn full credit. This presentation counts for 2% of your course grade. Recommended news sources for the Current Event assignment include: *The Atlantic*, *The New York Times*, *Al Jazeera*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, and *The Guardian* (London). Many of these and many other reputable news sources can be accessed for free on the web. I encourage all students to get in the habit of following the news. A wonderful way to do this, even when you do not have much time, is to listen to the daily newscasts on National Public Radio (NPR). NPR coverage and reporting will keep you up to date on current events and important issues, both domestic and international. You can hear NPR news on Wisconsin Public Radio, which has two local radio stations: The Ideas Network and News and Classical. You can also listen live and access podcasts of previous shows at www.wpr.org. Along these same lines, I also recommend the daily news program, Democracy Now! for excellent and critical coverage of national and world events from a progressive, non-mainstream perspective. This television news program is broadcast weekday mornings and can be streamed online at: www.democracynow.org. There are a lot of terrific podcasts out there that can help you learn about and keep up with the news, both domestic and international. One that I recommend for delving deeper into top news stories is “The Daily”, which is produced by the *New York Times* and is available for free on Apple Podcasts and other platforms.

Homework Assignments

There are five brief homework assignments listed on the syllabus that are designed to help you prepare for that day’s discussion. Students are required to complete 4 out of 5. Students who complete all 5 will earn extra credit. Homework assignments will be graded loosely on a 10-point scale. Don’t stress about these, just make sure to complete them on time. Come to class ready to share what you did on the homework assignment. If you know that you will miss class on the day a homework assignment is due, consider doing an assignment for a different day. The descriptions of the homework assignments are on the syllabus and on Canvas, where you will submit them. Please have access to your homework assignment in class so you can refer to it in our discussion.

Online Reading Response Discussion Board

There are 13 classes marked in the class schedule as opportunities for students to participate in the Online Reading Response Discussion Board. Students will contribute to these online discussions on the assigned readings and other materials before coming to class. Students must participate in at least 8 discussions before the end of the semester. I will provide specific guidelines, deadlines, and expectations for these online discussions.

Regional/Country Research Papers and Presentations

To develop a better understanding of women’s and LGBTQ+ issues around the world, students will choose a region to focus on over the course of the semester and eventually a specific issue related either to women or LGBTQ+ communities in a country in that region. There will be two assignments based on this research: a research paper on a specific policy or issue and participation in a panel discussion on your region. Your participation in the regional panel will focus on your research paper topic. The research paper and panel presentations will be due at the end of the semester. Students will decide on a region, and I will provide more specific guidelines for the panel presentations and the research paper early in the semester.

Midterm Exam

The midterm exam will be an in-class exam and will count for 22% of the final course grade. Flex students will be required to attend class in person on exam day. A study guide will be provided.

Communications and Technology

There is a **Canvas** page set up for this class, which you should access regularly and get accustomed to using. There you will find the syllabus, e-Reserve readings, the discussion boards, assignment drop boxes, gradebook, and other materials you will need as they become available. I will also use Canvas to post announcements and reminders. Lecture power points will be posted on Canvas, in most cases sometime after class. Finally, you will turn in all written assignments to Canvas.

Communicate with your instructor!

If you find yourself having trouble keeping up with assignments or other aspects of the course, make sure you let me know as soon as possible. As you will find, building rapport and effective relationships are key to becoming an effective professional. Make sure you are proactive in informing me along with your other instructors when difficulties arise during the semester so we can help you find a solution. The best ways to contact me are through email, approaching me in the classroom, or visiting me during office hours. If you would like to meet with me via Zoom, just let me know and I will be happy to set up a meeting with you.

An Inclusive Classroom

It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well-served by this course, that students' learning needs are addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that the students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit. It is my intent to create a classroom environment that is respectful of diversity: gender identity, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, nationality, political viewpoint, religion, and culture. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students or student groups. If there is a dynamic in the classroom that impedes your learning in any way, please come and talk to me about it. If you have experienced a bias incident (an act of conduct, speech, or expression to which a bias motive is evident as a contributing factor regardless of whether the act is criminal) at UWSP, you have the right to report it. The [Dean of Students webpage](#) has links where students can report several types of incidents, including bias, sexual assault, and academic misconduct.

Equal Access and Disability Accommodations

If you have a condition that may impact your learning and/or participation in course activities, please contact the [Disability Resource Center](#) (DRC). The DRC will engage in an interactive process with students and identify appropriate academic accommodations and auxiliary services in accordance with the University's legal obligations. Instructors, students, and DRC staff work collaboratively to establish any necessary adjustments or supports. Accommodations are rarely applied retroactively so it is vital that students make timely requests.

Please let me know if you have questions. The DRC is located in 108 Collins Classroom Center and can be reached at 715/346-3365 and drc@uwsp.edu.

Academic Integrity and Turnitin

At UW-Stevens Point we place great emphasis on academic integrity and honesty. Plagiarism, fabrication, cheating, helping others commit these acts, and any form of dishonesty compromise the educational process and devalue the achievements of all students. All work you submit to this, and all your classes must be original and completed individually unless collaboration is explicitly allowed. Always acknowledge your sources, cite appropriately, and give credit where it's due. I will give you guidance about how to do this for the research paper assigned in this course.

If instances of alleged academic dishonesty are identified, appropriate actions will be taken in accordance with the institution's policies ([UWSP Chapter 14](#)). These actions could include revising the assignment, receiving a lower grade or no credit for the assignment, receiving a lower grade for the entire course, or facing more serious academic consequences.

While other professors may have different policies, in this class I do not permit the use of generative AI for any of your writing assignments. Please refrain from using Chat GPT or other similar programs. Your written work will be run through a plagiarism detection program (Turnitin), which now has a feature that detects the use of AI. So do yourself a favor and avoid using AI for work done for this class.

If you are unsure if something might be considered academic misconduct, you are struggling to understand the content or an assignment, or you have fallen behind for whatever reason, please contact your instructor as soon as possible. By nurturing a community of support, honesty, and respect, we ensure that academic pursuits and your experiences at UW-Stevens Point are both meaningful and genuine.

The Tutoring and Learning Center (TLC)

The Tutoring-Learning Center (TLC) helps students in all disciplines become more effective, confident learners. We believe all learners benefit from sharing work with knowledgeable, attentive peer tutors. The TLC offers four tutoring services:

- **Academic Coaching:** Build skills in studying, time management, test-taking, online learning, and more.
- **Course Content:** Practice problems, deepen understanding, and prepare for exams in natural resources, STEM, World Languages, and more.
- **Reading/Writing:** Brainstorm and refine papers, essays, lab reports, citations, résumés, scholarship applications, personal writing, and more.
- **Tech Essentials:** Develop computer literacy and learn to use UWSP-related applications such as Canvas, Microsoft 365, and Zoom.

To **make an appointment**, students can self-schedule using Navigate, contact us at tlctutor@uwsp.edu or 715-346-3568, or stop into CCC 234.

Class Schedule and Reading Assignments

Week 1 – Introductions and Course Overview

9/6 – *No assigned readings*

Week 2 – Key Concepts

9/11 – Representation & Feminism

Readings:

- WPP, Ch. 1, pp. 1-18
- bell hooks. *Feminism is for Everybody*. Cambridge: South End Press, 2000. Read Ch. 1 “Feminist Politics: Where We Stand,” pp. 1-6. (e-Reserves)
- [Christina Hoff Sommers. "Are Men the Second Sex Now?", May 20, 2009. Quoted in "Feminism Is Irrelevant in the Twenty-First Century." *Feminism*, edited by Nancy Dzedzic. Opposing Viewpoints. Detroit, MI: Greenhaven Press, 2012.](#)

Online Reading Response

9/13 – Power & Patriarchy

Readings:

- WPP, Ch. 1, pp. 18-27
- bell hooks. “Understanding Patriarchy.” (e-Reserves)

Listen: to (52 mins or read the transcript), Hidden Brain: Nature, Nurture and Our Evolving Debates about Gender: <https://www.npr.org/transcripts/669192536>

Online Reading & Listening Response

Week 3 – Intersectionality & Suffrage

9/18 – Intersectionality

Read:

- WPP, Ch. 4
- [Jane Coasten. “The Intersectionality Wars.” Vox, Updated May 28, 2019.](#) (e-Reserves)

Online Reading Response

9/20 – Women’s Suffrage in the United States

Read: WPP, Ch. 2, pp. 28-41

Watch: “By one vote” (Tennessee, 57 minutes) <https://www.wnpt.org/citizenship-project/woman-suffrage/> If you have a problem, try this link: <https://video.wnpt.org/video/by-one-vote-the-citizenship-project-npt-fbjur9/>

Homework Assignment #1: Interview the oldest woman in your family about the vote and what it means to them. Draw a family tree and write a short summary of your interview. Assignment details will be provided. Bring your family tree and interview summary to class and be prepared to share insights from your interview with the class.

Week 4 – Suffrage and Women in Government

9/25 – Women’s Suffrage Globally

Read: WPP, Ch. 2, pp. 41-56

Watch: The Suffragists: Political Struggles for Women in Mexico, 2012 (1h17min.)

9/27 – Women in Government

Read: WPP, Ch. 3, pp. 57-79 (ending at “Women in Parliaments”)

Listen: (22 mins or read the transcript) “The double bind for women in leadership.” NPR’s Hidden Brain. <https://www.npr.org/transcripts/590881966>

Homework Assignment #2: Look for a couple of current examples of media (one could be from social media) portrayals of female politicians either here in the U.S. or globally. Is there evidence in these portrayals of a “double bind”?

Week 5 – Explaining Patterns of Representation: Culture and Socio-Economic Structures

10/2 – Social and Economic Structures

Read: WPP, Ch. 6

Homework Assignment #3: Choose from a list of films on women political leaders and watch one. Write up a short synopsis of the film in which you point to specific things in this politician’s story that exemplify any of the barriers or obstacles we are learning about: cultural expectations, socio-economic structures, intersectionality, double bind, etc. Come prepared to share a bit about the film you watched.

10/4 – Culture & Religion

Read:

- WPP, Ch. 5
- [Ruth Graham and Elizabeth Dias. “Southern Baptists Vote to Further Expand Restrictions on Women as Leaders.” *New York Times*, June 14, 2023.](#)
- [Wadud, Amina. "The 'F' Word: Feminism in Islam." *Religion Dispatches*, September 22, 2010. Quoted in "Islamic Feminism Promotes Gender Equality and Religious Identity." *Feminism*, edited by Nancy Dziedzic. *Opposing Viewpoints*. Detroit, MI: Greenhaven Press, 2012.](#)

Online Reading Response

Week 6 - Explaining Patterns of Representation – Political Institutions

10/9 – Electoral Systems and Female Representation in Legislatures

Read: WPP, Ch. 3, pp. 79-84 (ending at “Women in the Judiciary”) & Ch. 7, pp. 161-176

Explore Website: Visit the Inter-Parliamentary Union website to see women’s parliamentary representation in regions and countries. Make sure to click on both the “Monthly Ranking” and the “Global and Regional Averages” tabs: [Global and regional averages of women in national parliaments | Parline: the IPU’s Open Data Platform](#)

Homework Assignment #4: Write down two or three interesting observations that you made about global female representation by looking at the Interparliamentary Union website.

10/11 – Gender Quotas

Read:

- WPP, Ch. 7, pp. 176-199.
- Aili Mari Tripp and Alice Kang. 2008. “The Global Impact of Quotas: The Fast Track to Female Representation.” *Comparative Political Studies*. 41(3): 338-361 (e-Reserves).
- Elizabeth Powley. “Rwanda: Women Hold Up Half the Parliament.” *Women in Parliament Beyond the Numbers*. (e-Reserves)
- Elliot Kennedy. “Rwanda’s legislature is majority female: Here’s How it Happened.” *National Geographic*, October 15, 2019.
- [Rania Abouzeid. “How Women are Stepping Up to Remake Rwanda.” *National Geographic*, October 15, 2019.](#)

Explore Website: Learn more about quotas at: <https://www.idea.int/data-tools/data/gender-quotas>

Online Reading Response

Week 7 - Gender Quotas and How Women Govern

10/16 – Debating Gender Quotas

Read:

- Diana Z. O’Brien and Johanna Rickne. “Gender Quotas and Women’s Political Leadership.” *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 110, No. 1 (February 2016): pp. 112-126 (e-Reserves).
- Gregory Warner. “[It’s The No. 1 Country For Women In Politics – But Not In Daily Life.](#)” *NPR*, July 29, 2016 (e-Reserves).

Homework Assignment #5: Write down three arguments in favor of gender quotas and three against. Be sure to include at least one country to illustrate one of your arguments. DUE in Canvas by midnight on October 17.

10/18 – Do women govern differently?

Read:

- WPP, Ch. 9, pp. 218-237
- Jennifer Steinhauer. “Women in Senate Confront Military on Sex Assaults.” *New York Times*, June 2, 2013 (e-Reserves).

Online Reading Response

Week 8 – Critical Mass & Exam Review

10/23 – Do numbers matter?

Read:

- WPP, Ch. 9, pp. 237-244.
- Tali Mendelberg and Christopher F. Karpowitz. “More Women, but Not Nearly Enough.” *New York Times*, November 8, 2012 (e-Reserves).

Online Reading Response

10/25 – Midterm Exam Review

Week 9 – Midterm & Global LGBTQ+

10/30 – MIDTERM EXAM – In class exam – Zoom students will need to attend class in-person

11/1 – Global LGBTQ+

Read:

- Paul Angelo and Dominic Bocci. [“The Changing Landscape of Global LGBTQ+ Rights.”](#) *Council on Foreign Relations*, January 29, 2021 (e-Reserves).
- Jacob Poushter and Nicholas Kent. [“The Global Divide on Homosexuality Persists - But increasing acceptance in many countries over past two decades.”](#) *Pew Research Center*, June 25, 2020 (e-Reserves).

View Maps: Shayanne Gal and Ashley Collman. [“10 maps showing how different LGBTQ rights are around the world.”](#) *Business Insider*, May 17, 2020 (e-Reserves).

Online Reading & Map Response

Week 10 – LGBTQ+ Politics

11/6 – The AIDS Epidemic and Activism

Watch: How to Survive a Plague. Film by David France, 2013. Running Time: 1h 49 mins.

In-class discussion of “How to Survive a Plague”

11/8 - Latin America’s Unexpected Leadership on Gay Rights

Read: Omar Encarnación. “Latin America’s Gay Rights Revolution.” *Journal of Democracy*, April 2011, Vol. 22, No. 2 (e-Reserves).

Online Reading Response

Week 11 – Women’s Movements & the State

11/13 – Historical case: Women and the Sandinista Revolution in Nicaragua

Read: Maxine Molyneux. “Mobilization without Emancipation? Women’s Interests, the State, and Revolution in Nicaragua.” In *Women, Gender, and Politics: A Reader*, edited by Mona Lena Krook and Sarah Childs. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010. (e-Reserves)

Online Reading Response

11/15 – Protest Movement in Iran

Read:

- Azadeh Moaveni. “The Protests Inside Iran’s Girls’ Schools.” *New Yorker*, August 7, 2023.
- [Farnaz Fassihi. “Dreaming of a New Iran: Diaries From Three young Women.” *New York Times Magazine*, June 14, 2023.](#)

Watch:

- [New York Times Video. “‘Women, Life, Freedom!’ Videos Show Widespread Protests in Iran.” September 22, 2023.](#)

Online Reading Response

Recommended for further background on the protests: [Vivian Yee and Farnaz Fassihi. “‘They Have Nothing to Lose’: Why Young Iranians are Rising Up Once Again.” *New York Times*, September 24, 2022.](#)

Week 12 – Abortion and Reproductive Rights

11/20 – The Abortion Debate

Read: Selections from *Reproductive Rights*, edited by Sabine Cherenfant. *Opposing Viewpoints*. Detroit, MI: Greenhaven Publishing, 2023, pp. 17-36:

- Should Abortions Be Legal? Chapter Preface
- Amnesty International. “Criminalizing Abortion Only Makes Abortion Less Safe.”
- Kimberley Brownlee. “The U.S. Abortion Bans Abuse Women’s Personal Freedom.”
- Paul Stark. “Abortion is Not the Answer to Gender Inequality.”

Online Reading Response

11/22 – Abortion and Reproductive Rights in Latin America

Read: [Diana Cariboni. “How Latin American Women are Winning the Battle for Abortion Rights.” NACLA, May 19, 2022.](#)

Listen: [“The Mexican Model of Abortion Rights.” The Daily Podcast, May 17, 2022.](#)

Online Reading & Podcast Response

11/23-11/26 – THANKSGIVING BREAK!!!

Week 13 – Conclusions

11/27 – Culture Wars and Gender Rights in the U.S. Today: The Dobbs Decision & Anti-Trans Bills

Read:

- [Interview with Erin Reed. “Anti-Trans Bills Are Sweeping the U.S., Despite, Not Because of Public Opinion.” Jacobin, August 23, 2023.](#)
- Other readings TBA

11/29 – Conclusions & Course Evaluations

Read: WPP, Ch. 16

Week 14 – Time to Work on Research Papers – No classes this week

12/4 – No class – Prof. Collins will be out of town

12/6 – No class – Prof. Collins will be out of town

Week 15 – Regional Panel Presentations

12/11 – Student Panel Presentations

12/13 – Student Panel Presentations

FINAL EXAM PERIOD:

Tues., Dec. 19, 5:00-7:00 PM – Student Panel Presentations, SCI A201 & Via Zoom