

POLI 490 – Fall 2021
Selected Problems in Political Science
Gender and Politics in Comparative Perspective

Tuesdays & Thursdays, 5:00-6:15 PM, CBB 261 & Virtually Via Zoom

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Student Hours: Mondays 2-3 PM & Thursdays 11 AM-12 NOON, 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, but during the second half we will also examine the more recent struggles of LGBTQ+ communities for recognition, civil rights, and full participation in politics. In this class, we will analyze reasons 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 and won political victories? 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, & Interteach	25%
Current Events Presentation	2%
Homework Assignments (4)	8%
Midterm Exam	15%
Regional Panel Presentation	10%
Regional or Country Research Paper	25%
Final Exam	15%
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, Participation, & Interteach

This class will meet simultaneously in-person and via Zoom on Tuesdays and Thursdays 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 25% 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, Participation, and Interteach,** which means you will earn anywhere from 0-60% of the total possible 25 points and risk failing the course. 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.

There are three class periods where we will use the Interteach to analyze assigned readings. Before coming to class, students will fill out a prep guide on the reading; in class students will work in pairs to analyze the assigned reading. Further guidance will be provided ahead of each of these sessions.

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 490 - Gender and Politics

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://wisconsin->

[edu.zoom.us/j/93519501737?pwd=VUxWbVpZL25nK0FyaEwrOWd6Rm1ldz09](https://wisconsin-edu.zoom.us/j/93519501737?pwd=VUxWbVpZL25nK0FyaEwrOWd6Rm1ldz09)

Meeting ID: 935 1950 1737

Passcode: 326143

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; as long as you complete the assignment, you will earn full credit. This presentation counts for 2% of the final grade. Recommended news sources for the Current Event assignment include: *The Atlantic*, *The New York Times*, *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 four brief homework assignments listed on the syllabus that are designed to help you prepare for that day’s discussion. Like the current events presentation, these homework assignments will not be graded, if you complete them on time, you will receive full credit. However, if they are submitted after the class for which they are assigned, you will only receive partial credit. Likewise, if you submit the homework assignment but fail to show up to class to discuss it, I will deduct points. The description of the homework assignments is on the syllabus, as well as on Canvas, where you will submit them. Please remember to bring a copy of your homework assignment with you to class, so that you can refer to it in our discussion.

Regional/Country Presentations and Research Papers

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: first participation in a panel discussion on the region and finally a research paper on a specific policy or issue. There are four class periods set aside for the regional panel presentations. The research paper 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.

Exams

There will be a midterm and a final exam, each counting for 15% of students’ final course grades. Both exams will be delivered on Canvas. Study guides will be provided. Exam dates are listed in the Class Schedule.

Communications and Technology

There is a **Canvas** section set up for this class, which you should access regularly and get accustomed to using. There you will find the syllabus, e-Reserve readings, 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.

Academic Integrity and Turnitin

All students are expected to abide by the guidelines for academic integrity contained in the UW System Administrative Code. As a student it behooves you to be well acquainted with these guidelines and to understand clearly what constitutes plagiarism, as violations can result in severe consequences. We will use the plagiarism detection program, Turnitin.com, via Canvas. You will upload all your written work to Canvas, which is connected to the Turnitin.com database.

The Writing Lab

The Writing Lab in the Tutoring-Learning Center (TLC) offers free one-on-one help with papers for any class at any point in the writing process, from outlining to checking a completed paper before submission. The Writing Lab consultants are successful UWSP students who can discuss any type of writing at any stage of the drafting process; including brainstorming, outlining, and research or citations. They work with experienced writers as well as struggling writers; we believe that everyone benefits from discussions about their writing.

Location: ALB 018 (in the basement of the library). All services are free. By appointment or drop-in times available, call 715-346-3568 or email tlctutor@uwsp.edu for an appointment.

Class Schedule and Reading Assignments

Week 1 – Introductions and Course Overview

9/2 – No assigned readings

Week 2 – Introduction to Gender and Politics

9/7 – Overview of Key Arguments and Concepts

Read: WPP, Ch. 1

9/9 – What is Gender?

Read: 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>

Week 3 – Suffrage and the Struggle for Representation

9/14 – Women’s Suffrage & the Politics of Social Movements

Read: WPP, Ch. 2

9/16 – Women’s Suffrage – Connecting to History

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 – Women in Government and Intersectionality

9/21 – Women in Government

Read: WPP, Ch. 3, pp. 57-84 (Note: I encourage you to skim the final sections of this chapter on women in the judicial branch and subnational government, but these sections are not required.)

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”?

9/23 – Intersectionality

Read: WPP, Ch. 4

Week 5 – Explaining Patterns of Representation: Culture and Social Structures

9/28 – The Role of Culture in Explaining Patterns of Representation

Read:

- WPP, Ch. 5
- Ronald Englehart and Pippa Norris. “The True Clash of Civilizations.” *Foreign Policy*, Mar./April 2003 (e-Reserves).

***Interteach Assignment #1**

9/30 – Social and Economic Structures

Read: WPP, Ch. 6

Week 6 - Explaining Patterns of Representation – Political Institutions Part I – Electoral Rules

10/5 – Introduction to Electoral Systems

Read: Michael Sodaro. 2008. *Comparative Politics*. McGraw Hill, pp. 207-216. (e-Reserves)

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

10/7 – The Impact of Electoral Systems on Female Representation

Read:

- WPP, Ch. 7, pp. 161-176
- Pippa Norris. "The Impact of Electoral Reform on Women's Representation." *Acta Politica (Special Issue)* 41 (2006): 197-213.

***Interteach Assignment #2**

Week 7 - Explaining Patterns of Representation – Political Institutions Part II – Gender Quotas

10/12 – Introducing 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).

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

10/14 – 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 #4: 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 13.

Week 8 – Midterm Exam

10/19 – Midterm Exam Review

10/21 – MIDTERM EXAM – To be taken on Canvas

Week 9 – Does Female Representation Matter?

10/26 – 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).

10/28 – 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).

Week 10 – Regional Panel Presentation & International Factors

11/2 – *Regional Panel Presentation*

11/4 – The Impact of the International Arena

Read: WPP, Ch. 8

Week 11 – LGBTQ+ Politics

11/9 – 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).

11/11 – Regional Panel Presentation

Week 12 – LGBTQ Activism During the AIDS Epidemic

11/16 – The AIDS Epidemic and Activism

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

11/18 – In-class discussion of “How to Survive a Plague”

Week 13 – LGBTQ Politics in Latin America

11/23 - 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).

****Interteach Assignment #3***

11/25-11/28 – THANKSGIVING BREAK!!!

Week 14 – Regional Panel Presentations

11/30 – Regional Panel Presentation

12/2 – Regional Panel Presentation

Week 15 – Conclusions and Review for Final Exam

12/7 – Conclusions

Read: WPP, Ch. 16

12/9 – Review Session for Final Exam

FINAL EXAM: Thursday, December 16, 5:00-7:00 PM, on Canvas