

Political Science 389: Gender and American Politics Spring 2021

Instructor: Sara Morell (she/her/hers)

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Class Time: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday 3:00 PM – 5:00 PM

Office Hours: TBD

Zoom Link for Class: <https://umich.zoom.us/j/95351351136>

Zoom Link for Office Hours: <https://umich.zoom.us/j/99178189638>

Link to Sign Up for Office Hours:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1ugzxtXALicHe9CGZzyx4ZFzqyjAFpDurN-IEB8hkLqc/edit?usp=sharing>

You: If you would like me to refer to you by a name or pronouns other than those on the class roster, please let me know.

Course Overview:

Gender, while socially constructed, has a tremendous impact on the political world. It influences how we, as people, experience the world and how others perceive us. It shapes who institutions (government agencies, political parties, bureaucracies, etc.) prioritize and what political issues or groups receive attention.

This course is a broad overview of social science work about gender in the context of U.S. politics. While centering questions of gender identity, attitudes, and behavior, this course will challenge students to consider important questions, including what it means to hold a common identity, how governments and government policy shape access to rights and resources, underlying motivations for public opinion, political change, and if, when, and how political representation matters.

A fundamental premise of this course is that a person's gender identity does not exist in isolation from their other identities. It intersects with other identities, including, but not limited to, race, class, partisanship, and sexuality, influencing both one's personal and structural relationships with politics.

We will also dive more deeply into pivotal moments in U.S. history, including the fight for women's suffrage, the rise of the welfare state, the failure to pass the Equal Rights Amendment, and the ACT UP protests around HIV/AIDS. While this course predominately centers gender, I have also selected a few readings that look at sexuality, particularly in the context of U.S. political institutions, public opinion attitude change, and social movements.

Course Format:

This is an accelerated semester, and so this course comes with a heavy reading load, along with the expectation that class time will be spent more on active discussion than lecture and summary.

Generally speaking, we will cover the first sub-topic on the first day, the second sub-topic on the second day of each week, and the third day we will synthesize the sub-topics and make connections across readings. Occasionally the third day will involve watching a tv episode or movie that is particularly relevant to the themes of that week – followed by a short discussion. **I want to emphasize that some of these readings are challenging!** I do not expect you to get/remember every detail. Still, you should come to class with an understanding of the major takeaways from each reading, the questions you had after reading the piece, and some initial thoughts on where you agree/disagree.

I also realize that this semester (and this year) has been extraordinarily challenging. **Your health and wellbeing are my top priority, and I want to be as accommodating as possible to your needs during this difficult time.** While I expect that you come to class prepared, extenuating circumstances do arise, and they're certainly a lot more common right now. Please let me know if there are specific things that I can do to accommodate your needs right now.

Please let me know if there's ever a week when you are unable to get to all the readings. And please feel free to ask for extensions on assignments, as needed. You must ask for an extension at least 24 hours before the assignment is due. Though I'll be flexible on deadlines if something extreme happens, I cannot ignore the University's deadlines for turning in grades at the end of the semester. I will aim to be flexible where I can.

Grade Breakdown:

Class Attendance + Participation: 30% (Attendance – 10%, Participation 20%)

This class is discussion-based, which means you have to contribute to get credit! Participation can mean many things, from asking substantive questions about the material to summarizing small group discussions for the class. When participating in class discussions, I expect everyone to listen to previous comments and actively respond to each other's points. Everyone comes into this classroom with a different background and set of experiences, and I hope to create a learning environment where everyone can grow their critical thinking skills.

I'm not going to do reading quizzes or use Perusall to track whether you're doing readings. This is a difficult semester, and if you have to miss a reading or two throughout the semester, that happens. However, if it becomes clear that readings aren't being done consistently (and there aren't extenuating circumstances), I may randomly start doing reading quizzes as part of your participation grade.

Part of participation is coming to class. **You have one unexcused; no questions asked absence that you can use at any time without notifying me.** After that, if you are unable to attend a class, you must email me the day before. Unless it's medical, a personal/family emergency, or a UM recognized excused absence, you should assume that your absence is unexcused. I will not expect a doctor's note for medical absences.

Two Short Reading Responses: 20%

By the end of the semester, you will need to complete two short reading responses relating to each week's readings. You must turn in your short response by 11:59 PM the night before the

first class of the week for it to count as a reading response for that week. This reading response should be 3 paragraphs in length and should be about 2 pages double-spaced.

In the first paragraph, summarize the reading's main points. This paragraph should be **short** – no more than ½ a page.

In the second paragraph, respond to the reading with **two** of the following questions:

- Was there anything in the readings that was unclear or that you want us to go over in more depth?
- What questions do you still have about the topic discussed in the readings?
- What did you agree/disagree with about this reading? Why?
- How does this reading relate to other readings or concepts we've discussed so far?
- How does this reading relate to your personal experiences or other political events not discussed in the reading?

In the third paragraph, come up with a research question not asked or answered in the reading. Say why that question is important and how the answer would further our understanding of gender and politics in relation to the topic of your chosen reading. This paragraph should include three aspects: your expected answer to the question, why this is your answer, and how you might go about collecting original data to answer the question.

Short Preparation Assignments: 15% (Topic Selection – 5%, Progress Report – 10%)

There will be two short assignments that prepare you for the longer assignments. The **Topic Assignment** is due **June 3rd**, at 11:59 PM. The **Outline and Progress Report Assignment** is due **June 17th**, at 11:59 PM; this date is one week before the long assignment due date.

Long Assignment Two (format of your choosing): 35%

Option One

Pick one of the topics from this course and put together a creative project about how the themes of that week apply in your own life or interview a friend or family member and make a project about their experiences. This final project can come in any format **other** than analytical/academic writing. No papers or anything that basically *works* as a paper! Write a poem. Make a podcast. Make a collage. Make a political cartoon. And then, write a 2-page double-spaced summary of the themes in your creative piece and how they reflect what you've learned from this course about the relationship between gender identity and politics.

Option Two

You will choose one of three different topics listed below. Lay out the different arguments made on your chosen topic, but then *focus most of the paper* on where you agree and disagree with those arguments. Make a clear argument for why you're right and back up that argument with examples from the reading, class, and the political world. This paper should be 5-7 pages double-spaced.

Potential Topics for Option Two

- Many social movements frame issues in terms of shared gendered experiences but people relate to their gender identity in extremely diverse ways, often based on other identities

and experiences. How should we make sense of gender as a both diverse and shared experience? What are the benefits and drawbacks of framing a a political issue or social movement in terms of shared versus diverse gender experiences? Pick a contemporary topic of importance to you and relate Fearon, Butler and Young's discussions of gender identity to that topic.

- What are the benefits and limitations of descriptive representation? How does it benefit a group to have people of their shared identity in government, and how does it not? When does descriptive representation lead to substantive representation, and when does it not? Focus your essay on at least one contemporary example of a politician or political issue (related to gender) where you think descriptive representation did or didn't lead to substantive representation and tie that issue to the ways in which Mansbridge and Brown think about representation.
- What explains either the gender gap (or lack thereof) in public opinion or political participation? Should we think of these differences as based in material (resource-based), structural or psychological differences and why? How do other differences across other identities shape how you think about the causes of this gap? Pick a specific type of political participation (i.e. donating, attending protests, working on a campaign, etc) OR a particular gender policy issue (i.e. an issue where Huddy mentions there is a gender gap) and talk about why we have or haven't seen change in the size of the gender gap on that issue and why.
- Pick a question or topic of your choosing and run that question/topic by me in advance.

A Note About Grading:

The final grade breakdowns for this class are as follows: A (94-100), A- (90-93), B+ (87-89), B (83-86), B- (80-82), C+ (77-79), C (73-76), C- (70-72), D+ (67-69), D (63-66), D- (60-62), F (Below a 60)

You are always welcome to speak with me to get more information about why you received the grade you did and what you can do to improve on future assignments.

Class Readings:

WEEK ONE: Gender and Identity

- May 4th: No Readings Due
- May 6th: What is identity? What is gender?
 - James Fearon: What is Identity? (As We Now Use the Word)
 - Judith Butler: Gender Trouble (Excerpt)

WEEK TWO: Gender as a Social Grouping

- May 10th: Are women a cohesive identity group?
 - Iris Young: 'Gender as Seriality: Thinking about Women as a Social Collective'
- May 11th: Descriptive and Substantive Representation
 - Jane Mansbridge: 'Should Blacks Represent Blacks and Women Represent Women?'

- Nadia Brown: 'Sisters in the statehouse: Black women and legislative decision making' (Chapter Three)
- May 13th: No Readings Due

WEEK THREE: Rights and Benefits

- May 17th: Voting Rights
 - Corrine M. McConaughy: 'The Women Suffrage Movement in America: A Reassessment' (Chapter Three)
 - Evette Dionne: [Women's Suffrage Leaders Left Out Black Women](#), Teen Vogue
 - *Optional Background Information*: [University of Michigan Suffrage Timeline](#)
- May 18th: Government Benefits
 - Margot Canaday: The Straight State (Chapter 4)
 - Gene Demby and Shereen Marisol Meraji: [The Original Welfare Queen](#), Codeswitch Podcast. You can listen or read the transcript.
- May 20th – No Readings Due

WEEK FOUR: Public Opinion and Political Participation

- May 24th: Public opinion
 - Leonie Huddy et al.: 'Gender, Public Opinion and Political Reasoning in Political Women and American Democracy.'
 - Nate Silver: "[Change Usually Doesn't Come This Fast](#)," FiveThirtyEight
- May 25th: Political Participation
 - Nancy Burns et al.: 'What's Happened to the Gender Gap in Political Participation? How Might We Explain It'
 - Mirya Holman: The Differential Effect of Resources on Political Participation Across Gender and Racial Groups in Distinct Identities: Minority Women in U.S. Politics
- May 27th – No Readings Due

WEEK FIVE: Political Attitudes and Social Movements

- May 31st - NO CLASS: MEMORIAL DAY
- June 1st: Political Attitudes
 - Erin Cassese and Tiffany Barnes: 'Reconciling Sexism and Women's Support for Republican Candidates: A Look at Gender, Class, and Whiteness in the 2012 and 2016 Presidential Races'
 - Nick Valentino et al.: 'Mobilizing Sexism: The Interaction of Emotion and Gender Attitudes in the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election.'
- June 3rd: Social Movements

- Melissa Deckman: 'Tea Party Women: Mama Grizzlies, Grassroots Leaders, and the Changing Face of the American Right' (Chapters Three and Four)
- **Topic Selection Due 11:59 PM**

WEEK SIX: Political Parties, the ERA (and Social Movements Continued)

- June 7th – No Readings Due
 - We will continue our conversation about social movements by watching [United in Anger: A History of ACT UP](#) in class. **You are not expected to watch this for homework.**
- June 8th: Political Parties
 - Melody Crowder-Meyer and Rosalyn Cooperman: Can't Buy Them Love: How Party Culture Among Donors Contributes to the Party Gap in Women's Representation
 - Danielle M. Thomsen: Why So Few (Republican) Women? Explaining the Partisan Imbalance of Women in the U.S. Congress
- June 10th: ERA
 - Christina Wolbrecht: Explaining Women's Rights Realignment: Convention Delegates, 1972-1992

WEEK SEVEN: Political Candidates and Candidate Stereotypes (and ERA continued)

- June 14th – No Readings Due
 - We will continue learning about the ERA by watching Episode Three of Mrs. America -- "Chisholm" – in class. **You are not expected to watch this for homework.**
- June 15th: Women as candidates
 - Richard Fox and Jennifer Lawless: Gendered Perceptions and Political Candidacies: A Central Barrier to Women's Equality in Electoral Politics
 - Rachel Bernhard et al: To Emerge? Breadwinning, Motherhood, and Women's Decisions to Run for Office
 - Daniel Butler and Jessica Preece: Recruitment and Perceptions of Gender Bias in Party Leader Support
- June 17th: Gender Stereotypes
 - Leonie Huddy and Nadya Terkildsen: Gender Stereotypes and the Perception of Male and Female Candidates
 - Monica Schneider and Angie Bos: Measuring Stereotypes of Female Politicians
 - **Outline and Progress Report due 11:59 PM**

WEEK EIGHT: Women as Elected Officials

- June 21st: Women as Elected Officials
 - Sarah Kliff, [The research is clear: electing more women changes how government works](#), Vox

- Alice Eagly, [What does social science say about how a female president might lead](#), The Conversation
- June 24th – **Final Project due 11:59PM**

Additional Information:

Arrangements for Students with Disabilities: If you think you will need accommodation(s) for a disability, please let me know immediately. Once I'm made aware of your needs, I can work with you or Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) to determine appropriate accommodations. Some aspects of this course, including the assignments, the in-class activities, and how the course is taught, might be modified to facilitate your participation and progress. SSD (734-763-3000; <https://ssd.umich.edu/>) typically recommends accommodations through a Verified Individualized Services and Accommodations (VISA) form. Any information you provide is private and confidential and will be treated as such.

Attendance: Each student will be responsible for all announcements and materials covered in class. If you miss class for any reason, you should set up a time to meet with me during office hours to catch up.

Canvas: I will post a Canvas announcement on Friday of each week, going over the material for the following week, along with any updates or announcements you will need before class on Monday. It is your responsibility to set up your Canvas notifications so that you receive these in your inbox, or make sure you check the Canvas announcements page each week on Friday after 5:00 PM.

Email policy: I will reply to emails that I receive during regular working hours (i.e., Monday through Friday, 9 AM to 5 PM) as soon as possible, often the same day. For emails received outside of those working hours, I will generally reply during the next working day. **This policy also applies to emails sent the day an assignment is due. If you have a question about an assignment, it is always best to ask it at least one day in advance.**

Plagiarism and Cheating: My experience at the University of Michigan has been that plagiarism is extremely rare. However, out of fairness to all students behaving ethically, I have absolutely no tolerance for any type of cheating, including plagiarism. This class is new, and I made all of the assignments myself, so I doubt this will be an issue. But know that any student who is found to have cheated on any assignment will **fail this course**. The best way to ensure you are not plagiarizing is to cite all of your sources. Ignorance of what constitutes plagiarism or cheating does not provide an excuse or justification for engaging in such behavior. To familiarize yourself with these issues, you should read LSA's webpage on academic misconduct:

<https://lsa.umich.edu/lsa/academics/academic-integrity/academic-misconduct.html>.

Religious and Academic Conflicts: In keeping with the University of Michigan's policy of respecting students' religious commitments, all attempts will be made to accommodate conflicts arising out of religious observances. For example, I am happy to move assignment deadlines that conflict with a religious holiday or to set up a time to meet during office hours to talk about topics covered in class that were missed because of a religious holiday. However, you must give me **considerable** advanced notice if you need to miss class or move an assignment because of a religious holiday.

Student Mental Health and Wellbeing: **More than any other year, I know that many of you may be struggling with issues of mental health and wellbeing.** Please also know that if you are having difficulties, you should feel free to contact me to figure out what steps to take to address these issues.

If you or someone you know feels overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, here is some information about the available resources. You can contact **Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)** at [\(734\) 764-8312](tel:734-764-8312) and <https://caps.umich.edu/> during and after hours, on weekends and holidays, or through its counselors physically located in schools on both North and Central Campus. You can also consult **University Health Service (UHS)** at [\(734\) 764-8320](tel:734-764-8320) and <https://www.uhs.umich.edu/mentalhealthsvcs>, or for alcohol or drug concerns, see www.uhs.umich.edu/aodresources.

For a listing of other mental health resources available on and off campus, visit <http://umich.edu/~mhealth/>.