Women and the Vote: Franchise Struggles, 100 Years and Counting

During 2020 we celebrate the 19th Amendment to the US Constitution and its guarantee of suffrage for women. We also reflect on the continuing struggles to ensure access to voting for all in the US and around the world.

Winter Term 2020 Courses with a 19th Amendment (Suffrage) Theme

Afroamerican and African Studies 231/History 275: “African American History 1865 to the Present” (Jason Young; TuTh 10:00 – 11:30)
The last 150 years have marked tremendous shifts for African-Americans from the threat of being lashed to the threat of being lynched; from a predominantly agricultural sharecropping class to an overwhelmingly urban underclass, the rise of the Prison Industrial Complex and the emergence of Barack Obama as the first African American president. In this course, we will study the legal and social development of racial discrimination along with the varied and persistent forms of resistance that African-Americans have adopted in response; the massive migrations of African-Americans to northern cities and to westward lands, the strange career of ‘Jim Crow’, along with the rise of the Civil Rights Movement, Black Power and the Conservative backlash of the 1980s and 1990s. The artistic production of African Americans—linking, for example, the rise of the Blues and Jazz to the Harlem Renaissance, the Black Arts Movement, and Hip Hop.

Anthropology-Cultural History 317/History 228/Political Science 334/REEES 397/Slavic 297/Sociology 317: “Communism and Capitalism in Eastern Europe” (Krisztin Fehervary; TuTh 11:30 – 1:00)
An overview of East Central Europe from 1945 to the present. The first half of the course explores the workings of state socialism from an anthropological perspective (with particular focus on political economy and material culture) from the Stalinist 1950s to the more diversified decades of the 1960s to 1980s. The second half covers the “revolutions” of 1989 and contemporary social, cultural, economic and political processes, including struggles over membership to the E.U.

Art and Design 310: “Creative Campaign for Voting: Laying the Groundwork” (Stephanie Rowden; Tu/Th 2:00 – 4:15pm)
Students research and develop the building blocks for a non-partisan, peer-to-peer, creative campaign to enliven voter registration and participation in 2020. Our goal is to make voting less confusing, more visible—and fun! The class has two areas of focus: (1) workshops and conversations with experts in areas such as communications for social impact, experience design, behavioral science, social media, and youth voting patterns; and (2) analysis of 2018 ‘get out the student vote’ campaigns, and design and testing (during the March primaries) of creative interventions to expand voter participation in 2020. Expect to expand your voting-knowledge-superpowers!

Communication 466: “Global Digital Politics” (Muzammil Hussain; MW 2:30 – 4:00)
This Capstone seminar explores the myriad and interconnected ways in which digital media and internet infrastructure are shaping and constraining participation and organizing in world politics. The course also introduces students of communication studies to international affairs and comparative inquiry, with rich case studies and current events from around the globe.

(Alisse Portnoy; MW 10:00 – 11:20)
We’ll increase our critical and analytical facility with persuasive discourse—rhetoric—by engaging powerful texts from US civil rights movements (1960s Black freedom, LGBTQ rights, woman suffrage, women’s liberation, and disability rights movements), taking time to use what we learn to think critically and analytically about our lived experiences as well.

History 261: “US since 1865” (Howard Brick; TuTh 2:30 – 4:00)
A history of the American people, their domestic institutions, and their relations with foreign nations, from the end of the Civil War to the present day.

History 262/American Culture 263: “The American South: A History of Race and Culture since Reconstruction” (Stephen Berrey; MW 11:30 – 1:00)
This course explores race, culture, and “Southernness” in the twentieth century American South. We consider Southern identities in relation to historical events (such as segregation, the Black freedom struggle, New Deal economics, recent Latin American migrations) and cultural elements (such as music, food, religion, sports). Throughout the course, we also pay attention to how the region's racial and cultural history has been shaped by gender, class, nation, and ethnicity.

History 315/American Culture 308: “American Constitutional History” (Rebecca Scott and Greg Dowd; TuTh 10:00 – 11:30)
From the origins of popular sovereignty to today’s struggles for equality, this course investigates constitutional thought and activity in America. It examines constitutional amendments, Supreme Court cases, and political struggles (Revolution, the Constitutional Convention and ratification, Civil War, New Deal, Civil Rights era, Immigration, War on Terror), that have affected how "the people" are constituted. Readings will include a large share of primary sources.

History 331/Polish 331: “Poland in the Modern World” (Brian Porter-Szucs; MW 4:00 – 5:30)
The history of Poland from the restoration of independence in 1918 until the present day, including coverage of the Nazi occupation during WWII, the four decades of communism, and the path towards integration with Europe after 1989.

Law 793: “Voting Rights/Election Law” (Ellen Katz; MWTh 10:20 – 11:35)
Explores the law governing the right to vote in the United States, the way the law and other forces have shaped the structure of American political participation, and alternative directions American democracy might take. Topics will include the 2000 presidential election dispute, the individual right to vote, reapportionment, representation of minority interests in democratic bodies, preclearance procedures, political and racial gerrymandering, direct democracy, and alternative voting systems. A central aim is to explore general issues
of democratic theory in the context of the legal frameworks and the actual institutions that regulate American democracy.

Political Science 140: “Introduction to Comparative Politics” (Andrei Markovitz; MW 1:00 – 2:30)
An introduction to the social scientific study of comparative politics. Topics include: the state and state-building, the political economy of development, revolution, dictatorship, democracy, democratization, the varieties of democracy, electoral systems, social cleavage-structure, and this course offers an introduction party systems.

Political Science 401/Women’s Studies 422: “Feminist Political Theory” (Elizabeth Wingrove; MW 4:00 – 5:30)
Explores the politics of inequalities between men and women by considering theories of gender differences. Draws on interdisciplinary work in feminist studies to think about political institutions, and to see the effect of political institutions on subject positions with different gender identities.

Political Science 406: “Democratic Theory” (Lisa Disch; TuTh 2:30 – 4:00)
This course focuses on democracy in theory and in practice in the United States. We will explore two interrelated problems: (1) The ways in which inequality poses obstacles to democratic politics. Specific forms of inequality addressed will include economic, racial, and gender inequality. (2) Citizen participation - what kind of participation does democracy require, what drives citizen participation, what prevents it? Drawing on Tocqueville, in analyzing these problems we will consider both formal institutions/laws and social habits and norms.

Political Science 489: “Gendered Violence in War” (Ragnhild Nordås; Th 9:00 – 12:00)
Sexual violence occurs in many conflicts, and affects both women, men and children. The consequences of the violence can be detrimental to the survivors themselves, their families, and entire communities; and the effects can linger long after war has ended. Only recently has the international community recognized this type of violence as an international security issue. How and why did the international community start to take this issue seriously? How prevalent is conflict-related sexual violence globally? What are the causes and consequences of conflict-related sexual violence? How can we stop sexual violence, and help survivors? These are some of the key questions in this course.

Political Science 495: “Women & War: Contemporary & Historical Perspective” (Anne Manuel; MW 4:00 – 5:30)
War is not a gender-neutral space. Theoretical explorations: women as the bearers of culture, feminist critiques of war, refugee crises in which the camp is an alternative to the home, how masculinity is redefined during wartime, narratives that deploy the assumption of violent conflict as the “natural” or default mode of human interaction as compared to narratives that turn on the assumption of peace as the “natural” or default mode, and how wartime conditions can advance or limit claims about gender equality and gender justice. Some areas of focus: women in combat in the U.S. military, rape in the U.S. military, rape as
a crime of war, the history of women in the peace movement, and the overlap of pro-women’s suffrage and anti- World War One activism in the 1910’s.

Political Science 496: “Are Americans Good Citizens” (Ted Brader; Th 9:00 – 12:00)
How well do Americans live up to expectations for citizens in a democracy? We begin by considering a range of perspectives on what democracy demands of citizens. We then review evidence on the actual political behavior of Americans to see how they compare to expectations. Over the course of the academic term, we consider what Americans know about politics, their beliefs and values, their level of civic and political participation, the quality of political discussion, and the manner in which they evaluate policies and political leaders.

Psychology 297/Women’s Studies 297: “Promoting Equity and Inclusion in the Academy and the Workplace” (Abby Stewart; MW 10:00 – 11:30)
The course enlists students in advancing equity and inclusion. Students explore how equity and inclusion arise in particular settings, the academy, corporate, government, laboratory, and non-governmental organizations. We examine the impact of social identities, inclusion/belonging, unconscious bias and stereotypes, the role of allies, community engagement, and leadership. This year we will particularly examine access to voting as a context for equity and inclusion.

Psychology 393: “Political Psychology” (Joshua Rabinowitz; TuTh 1:00 – 2:00)
Survey of how psychological factors affect political behavior, and vice versa: leadership, war and peace, political socialization, ideology, political cognition, mass media, political commitment and voting, rebellion, terrorism, and negotiation-mediation.

Public Policy 475: “Moving Power and Money: The Politics of the 2020 Census” (Ren Fairley and Lisa Neidert; March 9-24—TuTh 11:30 – 1:00)
Focuses upon how the census is taken, how the apportionment population is defined, how Congressional seats are apportioned to states by Congress, and how redistricting is accomplished within states. Includes lab sessions where students may use different definitions of the apportionment population or apportionment techniques.

Sociology 331: “The Politics of Data” (Lisa Neidert; MW 4:00 – 5:30)
This course will concentrate on the importance of the Federal Statistical System for governance. The data from the Federal Statistical System is essential for our democracy as these data are the fuel for policy decisions by the federal government and state/local policy makers as well. The alternative is policy-by-anecdote. There is an increased politicization of data – what should be collected, how a concept should be measured, who should be included in the data and who gets to see it. Even more critical is the outright refusal to fund, use or believe the evidence that comes from federal statistics. This course will touch on the use of evidence as a specialized form of knowledge that takes time to learn. Students will learn how concepts are measured, how data are collected and how to critically examine measures. Examples will be drawn from the Census Bureau, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the
National Center for Health Statistics, the Bureau of Justice Statistics, and the EPA. These will be used to touch on apportionment, gerrymandering, the monthly jobs reports, life expectancy, gun deaths, and the many obstacles to evidence-based decision making.

Women’s Studies 150: “20th Century Writings by Women of Color” (First-year seminar) (Emily Lawsin; MW 2:30 – 4:00)
We will examine writings by women of color in the 20th Century up to the present—poetry, fiction, oral histories, and essays by and about Asian American, African American, Native American, and Latinx women. This diverse range of writings will help us analyze how race, gender, class, and sexuality help shape our conceptions of American identity. For more than a century, women of color have refused to remain silent observers of history and have redefined their social and political positions in American society. We will explore the cultural, linguistic, and familial traditions that have informed their respective approaches to racism, feminism, education, and oppression.

Women’s Studies 150/American Culture 103: “Race, Gender, Recreation and Sport in 20th Century America” (Ava Purkiss; MW 4:00 – 5:30)
During the 2016 Summer Olympics, African American athletes Simone Biles, Simone Manuel, Michelle Carter, and Ashley Johnson made history by performing extraordinarily well at sports that white athletes normally dominated. This course will examine the historical reasons why these black women are exceptional. For African Americans in particular, anti-black racism, sexism, and exclusion from leisure spaces (e.g., parks, gymnasiums, playgrounds, swimming pools) hindered full participation and mastery in sport and recreational programs. In the twentieth century, what one did or was able to do in one’s spare time became more than merely personal choice, but battles over women’s rights, civil rights, respectability politics, citizenship, and class status. Through historical essays, photography, documentary film, podcasts, and newspapers, we will explore how certain sports and leisure activities became racialized and gendered in the twentieth century.

Women’s Studies 363/American Culture 363: “Asian/Pacific Islander American Women” (Emily Lawsin; MW 10:00 – 11:30)
Focuses on the experiences of Asian American and Pacific Islander American women in the United States, including, but not limited to Chinese, Japanese, Filipina, Korean, Native Hawaiian, South Asian, and Southeast Asian American women. Texts and films include an introduction to materials by and about Asian/Pacific Islander American (APIA) women, from historical, anthropological, sociological, psychological, musical, and literary perspectives, thereby allowing students to compare and contrast the experiences of different ethnicities and generations. Discussions and assignments examine the intersections of gender, race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, and nationality in APIA women’s lives. Learning critical theories about feminism, immigration, domestic violence, and globalization will show how APIA women have become agents of social change, publicly and privately, at home and in their communities.