COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This seminar looks at gender and politics from a comparative perspective. The course looks at key questions and concepts emerging from the literature on gender and politics, which is rapidly expanding, becoming methodologically more diverse, and taking on a wider range of questions. It is impossible to understand contemporary politics without incorporating a gender analysis.

There are few areas of social activity where the gender gap is as large as it is in politics. This course will ask what accounts for this large gap? Why does a relatively poor country like Rwanda have 68% of its legislative seats filled by women, while a wealthy country like the United States has only 23%? What role do institutions, culture and structural factors play in such outcomes?

The course also looks at the impact of women’s political participation and representation on women’s rights. We ask under what conditions do countries adopt women’s rights legislation and constitutional reforms? What role does the state and state feminism play in such reforms? Why do authoritarian countries adopt women’s rights? We examine the role of women’s movements, civil society, political parties, United Nations agencies, and other actors in bringing about women’s rights reforms. What do changing understandings of gender itself tell us about politics? These are just a few of the questions raised in this course.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

The course content provides students with an understanding of basic concepts related to the study of gender and politics. It offers theoretical tools for thinking about some of the broader analytic issues and themes in gender and politics. Students will be encouraged to sharpen critical analytical skills through discussion of readings.

REQUIREMENTS

Course credits: This is a three-credit class. The credit standard for this course is met by an expectation of a total of 135 hours of student engagement with the course related activities, which include class meeting of two hours each week, multiple instructor-student meetings over the course of the semester, reading, seminar presentation, canvas reflection papers and writing of a research paper.

Participation: Participation in the class discussion is critical to being engaged in the course. You should come to class every week prepared to discuss the readings:
• What is useful about this week’s approaches? What could one emulate?
• What are some of the dilemmas raised by these approaches? What is not being asked or investigated?
• Are the research design and methods appropriate for the questions being asked? How do we evaluate the use of evidence, selection of variables, use of comparison, the use of generalization, historical reference, contextualization, engagement of literature, and extent of references to literature from the region?
• How do the readings compare with other approaches theoretically and methodologically? Why are some approaches preferable to others?
• What other questions do the readings raise?

All participants in the discussion have the responsibility to do the required readings for the week.

**Leading class discussion:** Two students will lead the discussion on each week’s readings, reflect critically on the readings, evaluate the approaches adopted, and be prepared with questions. In your presentation, which should be no longer than 15 minutes, you should select a few issues/problems/questions to orient your comments. The purpose of your presentation is to introduce a discussion and provide an agenda that will facilitate a coherent and focused discussion. Some summary of the material in the required reading may be necessary to refresh people’s minds and direct the discussion, but you should assume that everyone in the class has read the required readings for the week.

**Reflection papers:** Eight (8) reflection papers will be required on the week’s readings. They should be roughly 500-700 words and posted on Canvas. Students should post their contributions no later than Saturday 5 pm. They can be viewed by all and can engage other posts.

**Research paper:** One major research paper is required. The paper will provide you with an opportunity to explore in greater depth a substantive area of debate regarding gender and politics and to begin working on a research agenda which links the central issues in the debate to empirical research. A paper proposal in abstract form will be due by **February 17**. Your paper (excluding bibliographic references) should be about 20-25 pages in length, double-spaced with one-inch margins due **April 12** (note the earlyish deadline). See Canvas for additional suggestions regarding the paper. Coming up with an interesting research puzzle will be one of the main goals of this exercise. It is not necessary for this paper to do primary research nor will such research boost one’s grade.

**Grade Criteria:** Participation, including class discussion and 8 canvas reflection papers (40%); two seminar presentations (20%); research paper (40%).

**Note:** All assignments, including the abstract, must be submitted in Canvas in doc format (**not pdf**). Only email them to me if you experience difficulties uploading to Canvas.

**Announcements:** Any changes to the course and email notifications will be posted on Canvas. It is your responsibility to check these notices on a regular basis.
OFFICE HOURS

Office hours: **Wednesday 9:00 am – 11:00 am and Thursday 10 am – 12pm in 3327 Sterling Hall.** Please sign up for all appointments during office hours through alltripp.youcanbook.me. If these times do not work, feel free to contact me at atripp@wisc.edu to arrange another time.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

By enrolling in this course, each student assumes the responsibilities of an active participant in UW-Madison’s community of scholars in which everyone’s academic work and behavior are held to the highest academic integrity standards. Academic misconduct compromises the integrity of the university. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and helping others commit these acts are examples of academic misconduct, which can result in disciplinary action. This includes but is not limited to failure on the assignment/course, disciplinary probation, or suspension. Substantial or repeated cases of misconduct will be forwarded to the Office of Student Conduct & Community Standards for additional review. For more information, refer to https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/academic-integrity/

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

“Diversity is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for UW-Madison. We value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the university community. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and diversity as inextricably linked goals. The University of Wisconsin-Madison fulfills its public mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background – people who as students, faculty, and staff serve Wisconsin and the world.” https://diversity.wisc.edu/

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

People with disabilities will be fully included in this course. Please inform the professor if you need any special accommodations in the curriculum, instruction, or assessments of this course to enable you to participate fully. Confidentiality of the shared information will be strictly maintained. Certain accommodations may require the assistance of the McBurney Disability Office on campus. The McBurney Disability Center can be reached at (608) 263-2741 or via email at mcburney@odos.wisc.edu. McBurney statement on accommodations: http://mcburney.wisc.edu/facstaffother/faculty/syllabus.php

READINGS

Required article and chapter readings are linked to the Canvas Readings page. The books for this course cost less than $100. I priced them at $66 if you buy a mix of second hand and new books. You may find the cost prohibitive and therefore may want to buy some and borrow others from the library. The Ferree and Charrad books* are electronically available from our library (see Canvas Library Course Reading List). The books listed below will be available from the following places:

- Helen C. White Library
- Amazon amazon.com and other second-hand sources (www.book-cycle.org, abebooks.com, campusbooks.com, bestbookbuys.com, textbooks.com, etc.)
University Bookstore for purchase
Electronic versions are yet another option for cheaper versions of the books.


COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1: Monday, January 28, 2019
Introduction to Key Concepts


Westbrook, L. and Saperstein, A. 2015. ‘New Categories are Not Enough: Rethinking the Measurement of Sex and Gender in Social Surveys’, Gender and Society, 49 (4): 534-560.

Week 2: Monday, February 4, 2019
Gender and Citizenship


Week 3: Monday, February 11, 2019
Regime: Democracy


Week 4: Monday, February 18, 2019
Regime: Authoritarianism


Week 5: Monday, February 25, 2019
Institutions: States


Week 6: Monday, March 4, 2019
Institutions: Quotas, Electoral Systems, District Magnitude


Week 7: Monday, March 11, 2019
Institutions: Political Parties


Week 8: March 18, 2018
Recess

Week 9: Monday, March 25, 2019
Religion


Week 10: Monday, April 1, 2019
International Influences


Week 11: Monday, April 8, 2019
Conflict


Week 12: Monday, April 15, 2019
Gender Policy Reform


Week 13: Monday, April 22, 2019
Women’s Movements


Week 14: Monday, April 29, 2019
The Difference Women in Power Make


