COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This is an exciting time to be studying women and politics both in the United States and globally. In the US, there are record numbers of women running for office in the 2018 mid-term elections and the gender gap has never been larger than it is now. Minority, lesbian and transgender women are running and winning in elections never thought possible in the past. There is an explosion of interest among women in politics, with over 40,000 women expressing interesting in running for office since the 2016 election. We will be asking in this course, among other things, what accounts for this sea change and what does it mean for the future of women in politics in the US?

Globally the picture has already been changing for some time now. Although women’s position in politics has begun to improve in the last few decades, the representation of women in local and national legislatures, in ministerial positions, and as heads of state and government is still considerably below that of men worldwide. Some countries have a better track record than others. Women make up 61% of the legislature in Rwanda, while the United States trails most Western countries, with women accounting for only 19% of legislative seats. Some of the poorest countries in the world, like Senegal and Nicaragua, have some of the highest rates of female legislative representation in the world. We will be asking in this course what accounts for these differences.

The course will examine the implications of women’s exclusions from public life in a global context; the obstacles to women’s greater participation; how women have gained greater voice in political leadership; and whether women bring different kinds of concerns to the political arena. In this course we will be asking: How important is it to have equal political representation of women and men? Do women make a difference once in office? Would having more women in politics change the nature of public policy or even the way that politics is conducted? Do women engage in politics differently from men? Are women treated differently from men as politicians?

We will also consider in this course some of the obstacles for women as voters, candidates and officeholders. What are the particular constraints for women running for office? How much are women’s possibilities for being elected to office affected by the electoral system, cultural attitudes towards women in leadership, family obligations, the media, party support, and sources of financing for campaigns? The course will engage various debates regarding women’s political participation, including controversies over critical mass, electoral quotas and substantive representation. We will be asking to what extent can women influence politics once elected to office?

Perhaps more than any other type of human activity (except perhaps for military and religious institutions), politics has been considered a male domain. For this reason, this course critically examines concepts like citizenship, the public and the private, and politics itself, to explore their gendered dimensions and varied meanings. In addition, the course will look at a variety of other topics, including
the impact of social movements on women's political capabilities, how other societal differences impact gender difference in politics, and transnational influences on women's representation domestically. US experiences are placed in a comparative international context.

The objective of this course is to help students better understand why women have historically been excluded from politics throughout the world and to appreciate how and why their status is changing in this arena. Students will be able to hone their critical thinking and writing skills as well as familiarize themselves with key concepts related to the study of women and politics.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

The course content provides students with concrete knowledge of women and politics, both historically and in the contemporary context. It offers political science tools for thinking about some of the broader analytic issues and themes in women and politics. These tools are also used to analyze current events through brief weekly discussions of news and postings on Canvas. Students will be encouraged to sharpen critical analytical skills through discussion of readings and videos, a Wikipedia entry project, and other interactive assignments. I want students to be curious, ask questions, and creatively pursue their interests. The assignments help students integrate the material and apply what they have learned in the course to a wide variety of relevant topics.

REQUIREMENTS (45 hours x 4 credits = 180 hours)

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.

Reading and videos (110.5 hours): I expect students to have read the assigned material and watched assigned videos and come to class prepared to discuss the readings and videos.

Class attendance (31.25 hours): Class attendance is critical in order to engage the material in an effective way. The exams draw to a large extent on lectures and class discussion and cannot be adequately completed without participating in and attending class. Please come to class on time out of respect for other class participants, but mostly for your own sake, since being late adds stress to your life and causes you to feel you are not in control.

Participation (See Reading and videos; Preparation for current events discussion and posting of news = 5 hours): Debates and commentary are especially encouraged. I also strongly encourage class participation in various forms, especially through discussion in class. Participation can improve one’s grade, especially if it is borderline between grades. I will often start the class asking about news regarding women and politics. Come prepared to talk about what is in the news. The midterm will involve writing a blog connecting what you have learned to current affairs.

Assignments (preparation 26 hours): There will be at least two short assignments and one long one in throughout the course of the semester. These require you to draw on your readings to analyze a real-world problem, video, or dataset. The long assignment: One Wikipedia entry is required of both undergraduate students and graduate students. The entry will be a life story of a contemporary woman leader, situated in her political, historical and social context. The entry should use course themes as a starting point. We will be working together on this as a class throughout the semester. Graduate students will be writing a 20-page paper in lieu of the Wikipedia assignment.
Quizzes (preparation 4 hours): There will be at least four quizzes to make sure you are keeping up with the readings and absorbing class material.

Exams (3.25 hours): Two open book exams are required. The open-book exam will involve essays that integrate material. The midterm will be in a blog format.

NOTE: All exams, papers, and the abstract must be submitted in Canvas in doc format (not pdf). Please do NOT email them to me or give me a hard copy unless you experience difficulties uploading to Canvas.

GRADING CRITERIA

Participation (5%); quizzes (5%); assignments (15%); Wikipedia entry (25%); mid-term exam (25%); final exam (25%).

LAPTOPS AND CELL PHONE USE

Students may use laptops in class but only for taking notes. Studies show that students absorb more when notes are handwritten (as long as they decipher their notes afterwards!). Cell phones must be turned off and put away. I cannot compete with these devices, which are a source of distraction.

OFFICE HOURS

Please sign up for all appointments during office hours with Professor Tripp through ailitripp.youcanbook.me. Office hours are Monday 2:00 pm to 3:30 pm and Wednesday 9:30 am to 11 am in 3327 Sterling Hall. If these times do not work feel free to contact me at atripp@wisc.edu to arrange another time.

DEADLINES

See Canvas for Wikipedia deadlines
October 24  Midterm exam on Canvas
December 3  Wikipedia entry due 9 pm in Canvas
December 15 Final exam 2:45 pm - 4:45 pm on Canvas

CANVAS

Explore Canvas, which is a key resource for course updates, resources, sources for your Wikipedia entry, videos, links to additional readings, suggested movies, and other useful information. Add information about yourself on the About Us page on the Discussions tab, including fun facts, photos. If you have worked for a party, on a campaign, as an intern or in some other political capacity you might include that information as well. Please bookmark the Canvas course.

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

The required books are available for purchase from A Room of One’s Own, 315 W Gorham St, phone: (608) 257-7888 and the University Book Store. They can be borrowed from the Helen C. White Reserve Room. Additional readings are available on Canvas. A course packet is available from the L&S Copy Center in the Sewell Building. Topical readings from the news with links to the Canvas will be assigned throughout the course as they appear in the media. Please purchase the most recent editions of these books.


COURSE OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE
September 5

WOMEN’S STRUGGLE FOR CITIZENSHIP

September 10
Shattering the Class Ceiling
• Paxton and Hughes, Chapter 1

September 12
Women’s Struggle for Citizenship
• Assignment #1 (see Canvas)

STRUGGLES FOR SUFFRAGE

September 17
US Struggles for Suffrage
• Paxton and Hughes, Chapter 2 page on Social Movement Concepts
• Video: One Woman, One Vote (link on Canvas)

September 19
Global Struggles for Suffrage
• Paxton and Hughes, Chapter 2

GENDERED NATURE OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

September 24
• Paxton and Hughes, Chapters 8, 10
• Video: Makers: Women Who Make America (Politics) link on Canvas

September 26
Voter Participation and the Gender Gap
PROBLEMS OF REPRESENTATION

October 1, 3
Representation and Women’s Interests
- **Quiz 1:** October 1

October 8, 10
Problems of Inclusion and Intersectionality
- Paxton and Hughes, Chapter 9
- **Video:** *Eleanor Holmes Norton*

CULTURE, SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND INSTITUTIONS

October 15, 17
Culture, Social Structure and Institutions
- **Quiz 2:** October 15
- Paxton and Hughes, Chapters 3, 4, 5, 7, 14

October 22
Quotas and Women’s Representation
- Paxton and Hughes, Chapter 6, 13, 15

October 24
MIDTERM

GENDER AND ELECTIONS

October 29
Gender and Elections
- Women are running — and winning — in 2018 (link on Canvas)
October 31
Gender and Presidential Elections
• Video: Looking Ahead: What 2016 Means for Gender and Politics/The Politics of Gender (link on Canvas)

November 5, 7
Congressional Elections and Statewide Elections
• Readings about November mid-term elections TBA

November 12
Media and Elections
• Video: Misrepresentation
• Assignment #2

STATE FEMINISM

November 14, 19
• Quiz 3: November 14
• Paxton and Hughes, Chapter 11, 12
• Start reading Cooper

WOMEN IN THE EXECUTIVE

November 21, 26
• Cooper, Chapters 8-14
WOMEN, CONFLICT AND POLITICS

November 28
Unexpected Consequences of Conflict for Women’s Rights
- Quiz 4: November 28
- Tripp, Preface, Chapters 1 and 4, *Women and Power in Postconflict Africa*
- Video: *Watch Pray the Devil Back to Hell* (link on Canvas)

December 3
Women’s Movements
- Cooper, Chapters 1-7

December 5
- Video: *Iron Ladies of Liberia* (see Canvas for link)
- Assignment #3: Work on Wikipedia entry and submit December 6

December 10
Discussion of *Madame President*
- Cooper Chapters 15-23

December 12
Final Class

December 15, 2:45 pm-4:45 pm
Final Exam