

Politics 125A
Women as Political Actors
 Wednesday, 2:10-5:00
 Golding 103

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 Office Hours: Tuesday 2:30- 4:30 and by appointment

OVERVIEW: This course provides an overview of women's role in the American political system as activists, citizens, and elected officials. Throughout the semester, we will consider the important historical efforts of women in the political world, learn about the political behavior and attitudes of more contemporary female citizens, and contemplate the role of women as political leaders and policy makers. The central questions that run throughout this course are: what is the nature of women's power in the American political system? How has women's political power changed over time? How do other characteristics such as race and class shape political power among women? What is the state of women's political power today, and what can we anticipate in the future? In answering these questions, we draw will from many areas of scholarship, including American political development, social movements, political behavior, and political psychology. There are no prerequisites for this course, though an introductory course in American politics and some prior social science coursework are strongly suggested.¹

EVALUATION: The final grade will be based on the following:

1) Midterm exam (in class)	20pts
2) Final exam (in class)	30pts
3) Term paper	20pts
4) Participation	20pts
5) Attendance	10pts

Though I will discuss in greater detail how the paper and exams will be evaluated, in general each of the course requirements is intended to measure 1) factual knowledge, 2) ability to understand and apply theoretical reasoning, 3) ability to craft coherent and consistent arguments, and 4) ability to write and communicate ideas clearly. You should keep this in mind as you think about your own progress and performance in the course. Please feel free to speak with me *at any time* about the course requirements and their evaluation. The grading system in this course is intended to be very clear in order to help you focus on the course material, rather than wonder how you are performing in the class. In addition, if you have any special needs, please feel free to speak to me about how we might work together to establish an optimal learning and testing environment for you. You can also learn about resources on campus by contacting the Disabled Students' Program.

The participation portion of the course will be based on both in-class contributions to our discussion, as well as the completion of nine "reading responses" throughout the course of the semester; one response must be submitted for each of the 4 sections in the course (as delineated in the syllabus). These reading responses need not be formal papers, but rather thoughtful reactions to the materials that we have read that week. These responses should be 2 to 3 paragraphs in length, well written, and edited. You should post them on LATTE no later than 5pm the day before our class meets. The content of these responses can focus on a critique of one or several of the readings, questions that the readings raise for you, or comments on how the readings tie into previously discussed materials in the course. All students are encouraged to log onto LATTE before class to read their colleagues posts in order to ensure an enriching discussion during our meeting.

¹ If you are thinking about a major or minor in Women's and Gender Studies, please see Professor Dian Fox, the Undergraduate Advising Head, or Katie Dalton, the Program Administrator, as soon as possible to fill out the appropriate paperwork and to make sure that you understand the prerequisites and requirements.

COURSE TEXTS: We will be reading four books in this course:

Luker, Kristin. 1985. *Abortion and the Politics of Motherhood*.

Kahn, Kim Fridkin, 1996. *The Political Consequences of Being a Woman*.

Lawless, Jennifer and Richard Fox. 2005. *It Takes a Candidate: Why Women Don't Run for Office*.

Conway, Margaret M, David Ahern, and Gertrude Steuernagel. 2004. *Women and Public Policy: A Revolution In Progress*, CQ Press.

All of these books can be purchased at the campus bookstore or on-line. Other readings can be found in the library or on Jstor.org.

Section 1: *Moments of Change*

Week 1: Introduction

September 1

Roshin, Hanna. "The End of Men" *The Atlantic*. July/August 2010. On line at:
<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2010/07/the-end-of-men/8135/>

Week 2: The Suffrage Movement

September 8

Adams, Abigail. Letter to John Adams from Abigail Adams. *Letters from Mrse. Adams, the Wife of John Adams*, 1848.

Keyssar, Alexander, *The Right to Vote: the Contested History of Democracy in the United States*. Chapter 6.

Week 3: The Women's Liberation Movement

September 15

Friedan, Betty, *The Feminine Mystique*. Chapter 1.

hooks, bell. *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*. Chapters 1 and 3.

Berkeley, Kathleen. 1999. *The Women's Liberation Movement in America*. Chapters 2–5.

Costain, Anne. 1992. *Inviting Women's Rebellion: A Political Process Interpretation of the Women's Movement*. (p1-15, p136 - 142)

Week 4: Gender Consciousness:

September 22

Gurin Patricia. "Women's Gender Consciousness." *Public Opinion Quarterly*, volume 49, page 143 - 163

Gay, Claudine and Katherine Tate. 1994. "Doubly Blind: The Impact of Gender and Race on the Politics of Black Women." *Political Psychology* Vol. 19: 169-184.

Klein, Ethel. 1984. *Gender Politics*. Chapter 5.

Bard, Julia. 2008. "From Seneca Falls to... Sarah Palin?" *Newsweek*.

Section 2: *Women and Political Behavior*

Week 5: Political Attitudes and Political Participation

September 29

Shapiro, Robert and Harpreet Mahajan. 1986. "Gender Differences in Policy Preferences: A Summary of Trends from the 1960s to the 1980s." *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 50, 42-61.

Harell, Allison. 2009. "Equal Participation but Separate Paths?: Women's Social Capital and Turnout." *Journal of Women, Politics, & Policy*. 1-22.

Burns, Nancy, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Verba, Sidney. 2001. *The Private Roots of Public Action: Gender, Equality, and Political Participation*. Harvard University Press, Chapters 1, 3 and 11.

