

PSC/WMS 2400—Women in U.S. Politics

Winter 2011



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Class Meetings:

W– 6 to 9 PM

Location:

Carnegie 206

Office Hours:

MW—10:30 to 11:30 AM

W—2:30 to 3:30 PM

TR—2 to 3 PM

(or by appointment)

Course Description:

In this course we will examine the role of women in contemporary American Politics. Certainly, no such examination can take place without first taking a look at a brief history of the women's movement and the winning of the right to vote, in particular. Political scientists have noted major differences in many behaviors between men and women (e.g., party affiliation, voter turnout, decisions to seek office, and so forth) and we will attempt to review them. In addition, we will examine what issues are of salience to women and how women from different ideological and partisan perspectives view those issues. We will attempt to answer key questions about the role of women in recent campaigns and look to the implications of recent elections for the role of women in politics. In particular, we will examine the treatment of women in politics by the news media.

Texts (required):

Dolan, JA, Deckman, MM, & Michelle L. Swers. Women in Politics: Paths to Power and Political Influence. 1st Edition. ISBN: 9780131505452.

Kornblut, Anne. 2009. Notes from the Cracked Ceiling, Crown Publishing. ISBN: 9781439150283.

Lawless & Fox. 2010. It Still Takes a Candidate: Why Women Don't Run for Office. Cambridge University Press. ISBN: 9780521674140.

Sonbonmatsu, 2006, Where Women Run, University of Michigan Press. ISBN: 9780472069347.

Traister, 2010, Big Girls Don't Cry, Simon & Shuster Adult Publishing Group. ISBN: 9781439150283

Other readings will be posted periodically on ANGEL.



Student Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of the course students will:

- *Demonstrate* a knowledge of the underpinnings of contemporary feminist political thought;
- *Identify* key women players in the history of women in politics and in contemporary politics;
- *Employ critical thinking* and communications skills in discussing the role of women in politics both in the classroom and in the real world;
- *Evaluate* the way women in politics are portrayed and treated by the news media;
- *Demonstrate* through discussion, journals, and the paper a knowledge of who the key women players have been, are, and are likely to be in U.S. politics; and
- *Communicate* the achievement of these goals in periodic reaction papers, exams, writing, and class discussion.





Course Tasks, Expectations, and Grading:

- You will come to class each week prepared to discuss the reading material assigned for that week. This includes textbooks and material placed on Angel.
- Each week you will submit (both hard copy to me and electronic copy to Angel) a 1 to 2 page reaction paper expressing your interpretation and reactions to arguments made by the authors. It is not expected that you will react to everything, but that you will pick out a key point or two on which to focus. The best reaction papers will integrate the readings with happenings in the real world. The average grade on the reaction papers will constitute **20% of your final grade**.
- There will be both a mid term exam and a final exam, both of which will be take home in nature. These exams will each be worth **20% of your final grade**.
- You will be expected to complete a research paper (about 10 pgs) with at least 6 sources—books, peer reviewed articles, or news items—beyond the assigned readings. The paper will be worth **20% of your final grade**.
- An attendance grade lower than 75% will result in an automatic failure of the course regardless of the student's performance on individual assignments. Attendance is a necessary, but not sufficient, component of the student's ability to meet the other learning objectives.



What it means to be a Professional:

- Being a student is *your job*.
- Contribute to the learning environment both in and out of the classroom.
 - ⇒ No unnecessary noise or other distractions in the room: cell phones, bodily noises, constant trips to the restroom, crunchy or smelly food, and so on.
- Read the syllabus, assignment instructions, and emailed communications carefully.
- Know when the instructor holds office hours.
- This is a political science course, MLA citation style is not acceptable. APSA or APA citations are the only formats acceptable—see links on Angel.
- Pay regular attention to the news since where it may be appropriate we will be discussing how current events in American Politics relate to the course.
 - ⇒ Try to avoid “opiniotainment” sources such as those on MSNBC and FOX News.

*** Only valid excuses from the Clark Health Center or a physician will be accepted to prevent a failing grade for low attendance.**



Approximate Reading and Discussion Schedule:

Week	Topic	Assigned Reading	Notes/Comments/Other
January 12 th	Intro to Course	Anderson—On Angel Encyclopedia Britannica—On Angel Campaigns & Elections: The History of Women in Politics—On Angel	Film: Iron Jawed Angels
January 19 th	Theoretical & Historical Framework	Solnit—On Angel Dolan, et al: Preface, Chaps 1 & 2, Appendix A Lawless & Fox: Chaps 1 & 2 Sanbonmatsu: Chap 1	
January 26 th	Gender Gap	Dolan, et al: Chap 3 Lawless & Fox: Chap 3	
February 2 nd	Family & Self-perception	Dolan, et al: Chap 4 Lawless & Fox: Chaps 4 & 6	
February 9 th	Recruitment	Lawless & Fox: Chap 5 Sanbonmatsu: Chaps 2—4	Guest Speaker?
February 16 th	Deciding to Run	Dolan, et al: Chap 5 Lawless & Fox: Chap 7 Sanbonmatsu: Chaps 5 & 6	
February 23rd	Winter Break	No Newly Assigned Readings	No Classes
March 2 nd	Women in Office	Dolan, et al: Chaps 6—9	Mid term exam due back
March 9 th	Wrapping up the Academics	Lawless & Fox: Chap 8 Sanbonmatsu: Chap 7	
March 16 th	The 2008 Election I	Kornblut: Entire Volume	
March 23 rd	The 2008 Election II	Traister: Chaps 1—6	
March 30 th	The 2008 Election III	Traister: Chaps 7—12	
April 6 th	Close to Reality?		Film: The Contender Term Paper Due
April 13 th	Finals Week		Final Exam (Due at Scheduled Exam Time)