

**PSCI247-13 SPECIAL TOPICS IN COMPARATIVE POLITICS:
WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE**

Spring Semester 2002
Kauke 229, TTh 9:30-10:50am
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or by appointment

COURSE OUTLINE AND REQUIREMENTS

“Women’s Movements in Comparative Perspective” is a special topics course in comparative politics that draws on the burgeoning scholarship on women’s movements not only in Europe and North America but increasingly in Latin America, south central Asia, and elsewhere around the globe. Located primarily but not exclusively in states, women’s movements encompass both feminist and nonfeminist organizing and activism, and are distinguished by their specificity regarding women and their gender identity in terms of movement content, leadership, development, issues and goals.¹ “Such a definition includes feminist movements, liberal women's groups, and [even] some conservative women's organizations, and provides us with the analytical flexibility to compare women's movements within and across [nations].”² The employment of a woman-centered rather than more narrowly feminist-centered definition of women’s movements avoids any imposition of a single-nation-derived definition of women’s movements.³

The comparative study of women’s movements is a developing arena of scholarship and research in the larger political science subfield of women and politics. As such, its focus diffracts concepts and findings from several disciplines. From political science, the comparative study of women’s movements relies on theories of the state, political development literature, and democratization and democratic theory. Sociology offers insights concerning social movements and the gendered nature of societies. Women’s studies scholarship contributes to understanding systematic gendered arrangements of power and privilege, including those fragmented or reinforced by class, race, sexuality, and ethnicity. Finally, the subfield of women and politics offers a more comprehensive venue within which to situate our appreciation of the relationship between women’s movements and elected women, female leaders, and women’s policy preferences.

¹ Karen Beckwith, “Beyond Compare? Women’s Movements in Comparative Perspective,” European Journal of Political Research, 37 (4), June 2000: 437.

² Lee Ann Banaszak, Karen Beckwith, and Dieter Rucht, “When Power Relocates: Interactive Changes in Women’s Movements and States,” in Lee Ann Banaszak, Karen Beckwith, and Dieter Rucht, eds., Women’s Movements Facing the Reconfigured State (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, in press). “From the European perspective, the term women’s movement is often equated with feminism, particularly those aspects that are associated with the radical branch of the movement. This branch is distinctive in its critique of state institutions and society as patriarchal, compared to, for example, a liberal strand of the women's movement, which accepts institutional arrangements and struggles for women's equal access to them. Our definition of women’s movements permits [an analysis of] a wider array of groups than a more restrictive definition would allow” (p. 40, n. 3).

³ See Beckwith, “Beyond Compare?,” pp. 433-439.

“Women’s Movements in Comparative Perspective” asks several key questions, some of which have not yet been systematically addressed in the developing literature. These include the conditions under which women’s movements emerge, the strategies that women’s movements employ (and their distinctiveness, if any, from other political movements), the issues around which women’s movements mobilize and the commonalities of issues across national boundaries (if any), the patterns of success and failure of women’s movements’ efforts, and, finally, the relationship between women’s movements and feminist movements. Of particular interest in this course are the relationship between women’s movements and democracy, and women’s movements’ contributions to state-building. Note that these questions constitute a modest subset of the range of questions generated (or that could be generated) by a comparative study of women’s movements.

The course employs two analytical comparative strategies. The first is a conventional comparison across nations. A nation-specific focus on independent women’s movements in several different nation-states provides us with locations that vary across key concepts, such as state structure, economic arrangements, political system, configurations of representative power, political culture, and collective identities. An investigation of variations in these key concepts can help us to explain variations in the emergence, structure, strategies, and successes of women’s movements across individual nations.

The second is a comparison of within- and across-nation movement organizing and mobilization. An hypothesis of the course organization is that women’s movements develop within individual nations and then extend their activism by initiating cross-national ties and by cross-national diffusion of movement ideas, ideologies, and issues. Cross-national movement activism, or what is referred to as “transnational activism,”⁴ positions movement scholars on the boundaries between comparative politics and international relations, and research in this border subfield is relatively new.

Because comparative research on women’s movements is still developing, the responsibilities of participants in this course are heightened. Students in the course are expected, as always, to attend class and to be prepared for each class meeting by having read, in advance, the materials assigned for that day. Students should be prepared to discuss the material in detail in class every day, and all students are expected to participate. Second, students will contribute to the weekly progress of the course by making in-class presentations and facilitating discussion of specific readings. Student responsibilities for these will be assigned by the professor, and the details of preparing for this work will be provided in a separate handout. Third, students will describe, investigate, and analyze a specific women’s movement; this work will take place across the course of the semester and will be presented in a series of short papers, which will culminate in a final research paper. Due dates for papers are indicated in the reading schedule, below. Details of the paper assignments will be provided in a separate handout.

Evaluation of student performance in this course will be based on the following criteria. First, students will write three short papers, each of which accounts for 20 percent of the final grade. Second, students will write a final research paper, which accounts for 30 percent of the final course grade. Third, each student will facilitate one class discussion, which accounts for 10 percent of the final course grade. Students are encouraged to meet with the professor to discuss any of these assignments and to consult about their performance in the course.

⁴ Transnational activism involves “nonstate actors that interact with each other, with states, and with international organizations [that constitute] networks of activists, distinguishable largely by the centrality of principled ideas or values in motivating their formation” (Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, Activists Beyond Borders (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998: 1).

The following books are required for this course and are available for purchase in Wilson Bookstore:

Sonia Alvarez, Engendering Democracy in Brazil
Jane Jaquette and Sharon Wolchik, eds., Women and Democracy
Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, Activists Beyond Borders
Vicky Randall and Georgina Waylen, eds., Gender, Politics and the State
Monica Threlfall, ed., Mapping the Women's Movement

Students are also required to subscribe to the Financial Times; information concerning subscriptions will be provided. Additional readings are available on reserve in Andrews Library or are available through JSTOR. Each student should make a photocopy of every additional assigned reading for his or her own research purposes. Please note that this is a requirement of the course.

Students are reminded that they are obliged to understand, to uphold, and to comply with the Code of Academic Integrity at the College of Wooster. A copy of the Code may be found in The Scot's Key, pp. 55-58. Students who do not understand the Code after having read it should make an appointment to see me to discuss it; indeed, I welcome this discussion and encourage students to see me in advance of any assignment about which they have doubts or questions. Please note that any violation of the Code of Academic Integrity means the student's immediate failure in the course.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

January 15 **Introduction to the Course: Comparative Politics and Women's Movements**

RECOMMENDED: Arendt Lijphart, "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method," American Political Science Review, 65 (3), September 1971): 682-693 [available on JSTOR]; Sidney Tarrow, Power in Movement (2nd ed.), "Introduction" [on reserve]

January 17 READ: Alvarez, Engendering Democracy in Brazil, Chapter 1; and Karen Beckwith, "Beyond Compare? Women's Movements in Comparative Perspective," European Journal of Political Research, 37 (4), June 2000 [on reserve].

January 22 **Women's Movements and States: The Shaping Impact of State Structure**

READ: Randall and Waylen, eds., Chapters 1 and 7

January 24 READ: Jaquette and Wolchik, eds., Women and Democracy, Chapter 1; and Georgina Waylen, "Women and Democratization: Conceptualizing Gender Relations in Transition Politics," World Politics 46 (3), April 1994: 327-354 [available on JSTOR]

January 29 READ: Sheila Rowbotham, "Introduction," in Threlfall, ed., Mapping the Women's Movement; and Jill M. Bystydzienski and Joti Sekhon, "Introduction," in Jill M. Bystydzienski and Joti Sekhon, eds., Democratization and Women's Grassroots Movements (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999) [on reserve]

January 31 READ: Banaszak, Beckwith and Rucht, "When Power Relocates: Interactive Changes in Women's Movements and States," in Lee Ann Banaszak, Karen Beckwith and Dieter Rucht, eds., Women's Movements Facing the Reconfigured State (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, in press) [electronic copy available from professor]

February 5 DISCUSSION

February 7 **FIRST SHORT PAPERS DUE IN CLASS FOR PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION**

February 12 **Women's Movements and Feminist Movements: West Europe and North America**

READ: Threlfall, ed., Mapping the Women's Movement, Chapter 1

February 14 READ: Threlfall, ed., Mapping the Women's Movement, Chapters 2 and 3

February 19 READ: Threlfall, ed., Mapping the Women's Movement, Chapters 4 and 5

February 21 READ: Alexandra Dobrowolsky, "Shifting States: Women's Constitutional Organizing Across Time and Space," in Lee Ann Banaszak, Karen Beckwith and Dieter Rucht, eds., Women's Movements Facing the Reconfigured State (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, in press) [electronic copy available from professor]

February 26 **Women's Movements in the Making and Unmaking of States**

READ: Jaquette and Wolchik, eds., Women and Democracy, Chapters 6 and 7

February 28 READ: Jaquette and Wolchik, eds., Women and Democracy, Chapters 8 and 9

March 5 **SECOND SHORT PAPERS DUE IN CLASS FOR PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION**

March 7 READ: Jaquette and Wolchik, eds., Women and Democracy, Chapters 2, 3, and 5

SPRING BREAK MARCH 8 (International Women's Day) – MARCH 24

March 26 READ: Alvarez, Engendering Democracy in Brazil, Chapters 2, 3 and 4

March 28 READ: Alvarez, Engendering Democracy in Brazil, Chapters 5, 6, and 7

April 2 READ: Alvarez, Engendering Democracy in Brazil, Chapters 8, 9, and 10

April 4 **Transnational Activism and Women’s Movements**

READ: Keck and Sikkink, Activists Beyond Borders, Chapters 1 and 2

April 9 READ: Keck and Sikkink, Activists Beyond Borders, Chapters 3 and 4

April 11 READ: Keck and Sikkink, Activists Beyond Borders, Chapters 5 and 6

April 16 **THIRD SHORT PAPERS DUE IN CLASS FOR PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION**

April 18 **Democracy and Women’s Movements**

READ: Jaquette and Wolchik, eds., Women and Democracy, Chapter 10; Alvarez, Engendering Democracy in Brazil, Chapter 11; and Jodi Dean, “The Reflective Solidarity of Democratic Feminism,” in Jodi Dean, ed., Feminism and the New Democracy (London: Sage, 1997) [on reserve]

RECOMMENDED: Nancy Fraser, “Equality, Difference and Democracy: Recent Feminist Debates in the United States,” in Jodi Dean, ed., Feminism and the New Democracy (London: Sage, 1997) [on reserve]

April 23 **IN-CLASS PAPER PRESENTATIONS**

April 25 **IN-CLASS PAPER PRESENTATIONS**

April 30 **IN-CLASS PAPER PRESENTATIONS**

May 2 **Conclusion to the Course**

May 7 **FINAL PAPER DUE IN MY OFFICE BY NOON**

GUIDELINES FOR CRITICAL READING IN WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

In reading the assigned materials for this course, answer the following questions as a means of understanding each author's argument and of identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the argument. By doing this, you will also establish a basis from which to compare arguments by various authors. Identify the answers and locate them specifically in each text, for reference in class discussions and for research papers. Finally, take separate notes as well while you read, and write questions about the argument; these should include critical questions as well as questions of comprehension. Note that you should read each article twice: once for the purpose of taking notes and a second time for review and comprehension.

READING QUESTIONS

1. What is the author's argument? ? Is the author's argument logically constructed, or are there conceptual gaps, flaws, or elisions in the argument?
2. What key concepts does the author employ? In regard to women and politics, consider concepts such as politics, women, citizens, representation, mobilization, and power. How does the author use these concepts in constructing his or her argument? How does the author's understanding of these concepts differ from other authors' understanding and use?
3. What assumptions does the author make about women as a group, women's/woman's identity, gender-related political (and other) differences, and the relationship of women to men and to the state? About whom is the author writing when he or she writes about "women?" Remember that these assumptions may be implicit or explicit.
4. What evidence does the author present? What kind of evidence is it: empirical? intuitive? other? How timely is the evidence? Is it out of date? How extensive is the evidence? Is the evidence presented appropriate to the argument the author is making?
5. How does the author relate the evidence to his or her argument? What additional evidence would we want in order to accept the author's argument? How else might we test the author's claims?
6. What did the author omit? What competing evidence should the author have considered? What competing arguments should the author have considered? How might the author's argument be strengthened? How might the author's argument be refuted?

GUIDELINES FOR DISCUSSION

In preparing to facilitate discussion of your readings in this course, you should do the following. First, you should have carefully read the articles for which you are responsible, so that you thoroughly understand the argument the author is making, the evidence he or she employs to support the argument, and the conclusions the author draws. It will be helpful to take into account the “Guidelines for Critical Reading in Women’s Movements in Comparative Perspective,” which identify key general concerns in the reading material.

Second, you should reflect on the ways in which the article/articles/book chapters fit with the previous course readings. How are the readings for which you are responsible related to the preceding days’ discussions? Third, you should make a brief list of the major points in the readings, from which you should be able to make a brief (five minutes) summary introduction of the reading (remember that everyone else will have read the material, and many will understand it as well as you do, providing a good base for discussion).

Finally, make a list of questions concerning the reading. These questions should not be primarily concerned with evoking information (e.g. when did the regime change take place in Poland) but should instead focus on relationships among major concepts in the reading, the logical (or logical flaws in) construction of the author’s argument, and the relationship of the author’s argument to claims by other scholars. You will also be well served if you can order your questions in a way that leads the discussion, rather than in a random order with no identifiable point; that is, discussion possibilities will best be facilitated when the ordering of the questions is consciously intended to move the discussion from one point to another (e.g. from the general to the specific).

As discussion facilitator, you will be most successful when you pay close attention to what others are saying, to the progress of the discussion, and to opportunities to let the discussion “go its own way” as well as to occasions when you will need to intervene.

Your performance in facilitating discussion accounts for 10 percent of your final grade. You will be assessed on your understanding of the assigned material, the level of preparation for the day’s discussion, the quality and relevance of the questions you raise, and your ability to evoke and direct interesting scholarly discussion of the assigned reading. If you have questions concerning your presentation, please make an appointment to discuss this with me in my office.

GUIDELINES AND REQUIREMENTS FOR PAPERS

Student evaluation in this course is based on the completion of three short research papers which culminate in a final research paper that employs a women's movement in a specific nation as a location for investigating the key questions in this course. These papers are organized to move from the descriptive to the analytical, and from discrete questions to more general conclusions. The purposes of these papers are to build a foundation of knowledge about a specific nation, in the context of discussing women's movements in comparative perspective generally; to develop and to refine students' critical thinking and political analysis skills; to provide independent research opportunities that may serve to underpin Independent Study Thesis work; and to advance students' writing experience and abilities.

The final research paper in this course should be the culmination of your understanding of the reading material and class discussions, and the application of that understanding to research concerning a specific women's movement in a single nation. The final research paper can be viewed as the product of your work in this course, the result of a process of research, thinking, and writing. In working on your final paper, you will need to complete the following by the dates indicated:

- Identification of Nation Choice⁵ and Draft Bibliography Due January 21
 - First Paper Due February 7 (20%)
 - Second Paper Due March 5 (20%)
 - Third Paper Due April 16 (20%)
 - Final Research Paper Due May 10 (30%)

Identification of Topic: The best papers and, ultimately, the best final paper, will result from a choice of nation in which you have a particular interest and where library resources are sufficient to support your research. Identifying your choice of nation will, therefore, require some library research in advance. You will need to read about women's movements in your first choice of nation and, perhaps, in other nations, in news periodicals and scholarly journals to determine if there is enough information available to provide support for your papers. This is also the point at which you should begin to construct a bibliography. Once you have convinced yourself that there is sufficient material to support your research, you need to get your research topic approved by me. A well-written page, identifying and explaining the topic, and a second page listing potential sources, will suffice.

Short Papers. The short papers are intended to provide the foundation for the final research paper, which will consist, in large part, of revisions of the short papers. The short papers are also intended to help guide progress toward the final version. Each paper should be no shorter than five and no longer than seven pages, prepared on a word processor. It should be formally documented (in-text citations and bibliography; see APSA Style Manual for Political Science, on reserve). Each paper should be entitled and paginated, with correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar. There is a full grade penalty for each day a paper is late. Please keep one paper copy (hard copy) of your paper; it would be a good idea to keep an electronic copy as well. Note that electronic copies are not acceptable as paper submissions; only hard copies will be accepted at each due date. Please remember that you are obliged to understand, uphold, and comply with the Code of Academic Integrity at the College of Wooster.

First Paper. In this paper, please identify and describe the major women's movements in the single nation on which you have chosen to focus your research. Discuss the type of state it is, its political system, and its dominant economic arrangements, with special attention to women's status. This paper should enable the reader to understand the national context, what women's movements are active, and

⁵ This requires a discussion with me, and my approval. Please arrange to see me well in advance of this date.

how this nation's women's movements might be positioned in comparison to women's movements in other nations and internationally.

Second Paper. Relying upon research in the first paper, this paper should provide a more complex and detailed description and analysis of the women's movement's. Who are the movement's constituents and activists? What are its core issues? What are its strategies for achieving its goals? Is the movement primarily autonomous; does it work in coalition with other movements; is it state-involved? This paper should enable the reader to understand the internal organization of the movement, its strategies, and its trajectory and, again, how we might be able to understand the movement in comparative perspective and in international terms.

Third Paper. Building from the first two papers, discuss and analyze the women's movement's interaction with the state. Have the movement's strategies been effective? How has the state responded to women's movement initiatives? What have been the outcomes of the women's movement's activities and campaigns? To what extent has the movement focused solely within its borders, and to what extent has the movement made connections with other movements in other nations? Finally, discuss the extent to which the course theoretical readings on women's movements and states are relevant to the circumstances and experience of the movement you are studying.

Final Research Paper. Although your final research paper will be well on its way to completion, given your progress in writing the three short papers, it differs from them in requiring you to rethink your research in the context of a theoretical framework derived from your work in the course as a whole. Consider your previous papers and research in light of issues concerning women's movements and democratic politics, women's movements and transitions to (and from) democracy, and women's movements engaged in transnational activism. Use both the introduction and conclusion of your final paper to address these questions.

Your final paper should be no shorter than ten and no longer than fifteen pages, prepared on a word processor. As with the short papers, it should be formally documented (in-text citations and bibliography). Each paper should be entitled and paginated, with correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar. There is a full grade penalty for each day a paper is late. Again, please keep one paper copy (hard copy) of your paper; it would be a good idea to keep an electronic copy as well. Note that electronic copies are not acceptable as paper submissions; only hard copies will be accepted at each due date. Please remember that you are obliged to understand, uphold, and comply with the Code of Academic Integrity at the College of Wooster.