

Women & Politics  
Political Science 338  
TTR 9:30-10:45  
Mable Hall Room 230

Professor: Dr. Wendy G. Smooth  
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### Course Description

This course is designed to provide students with a critical examination of women as political actors. In examining women as political actors we will look at various forms of women's political participation. We will focus on women's participation in the traditional spheres of what is considered politics -- women as voters and politicians and we will also focus on more "non-traditional" spheres of political activism where women's political participation has always been apparent though we have failed to recognize these spheres as political. Throughout the course, we will examine how women are galvanized into politics. We will focus keenly on the differences among women in their political activism in an effort to understand how the intersection of gender, race, class, sexuality, age and ability influence women's political participation and activism.

### Required Readings

Cohen, Cathy J., Kathleen B. Jones, and Joan C. Tronto. eds. (1997). *Women Transforming Politics: An Alternative Reader*. New York: New York University Press.

Springer, Kimberly. ed. (1999). *Still Lifting, Still Climbing African American Women's Contemporary Activism*. New York: New York University Press.

Thomas, Sue. and Clyde Wilcox. eds. *Women and Elective Office Past, Present & Future*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Reading packet is on reserve in the Political Science Department and in Love Library.

### Grading

Your final grade will be based on three response papers, a midterm examination, group projects-- discussion leader groups and a final group research project-- and class participation. Your grades will be computed as follows:

Response Papers	20%	
Midterm Examination	25%	<b>Tuesday, March 12<sup>th</sup></b>
Class Participation	15%	
Discussion Leader Groups	15%	
Final Group Research Project	25%	<b>Monday, May 6<sup>th</sup> 10:00 a.m.-12 noon</b>

### Midterm Exam

The midterm exam will consist of short answer and essay questions.

Make-up exams will be given only under dire circumstances. If you have a university- approved absence, you must discuss your situation with me prior to the scheduled examination. In the event of an illness on exam day, documented proof of the illness is required to discuss taking a make-up examination. Make-up exams will be given solely at my discretion.

### Group Research Project

Students will be organized in groups and each group will engage in an intensive semester long research project. Students will choose from one of the following projects:

- A. Organizational Scan and Analysis of Women's Organizations
- B. Local Women's Activism Research Project
- C. Action Based Policy Research Proposal

Students will be evaluated both by their peers and by the professor. This project will culminate in oral presentations at the end of the course. This project will serve as the final exam and will be presented during the final exam period for this course: **Monday, May 6, 2002 10:00 a.m.-12noon.**

The details and requirements for each project will be provided in class.

### Discussion Group Leaders

Students will be organized in small groups (no more than four) and each group will be responsible for leading the class discussion on that subject. Students leading discussion will be responsible for developing a series of questions designed to spark discussion among classmates.

As discussion leaders, students will be responsible for not only offering a summary of the week's readings, but also providing critical analysis of the topic. This is likely to involve researching and reading additional materials that are not included on the syllabus.

Students are encouraged to be as creative as possible in their presentations, but the presentation must be in accordance with the readings for the week. The presentations need not follow a formal question/answer format and the use of visual media and role playing is highly encouraged. A representative from the group must inform me of the group's project format **at least one week prior** to the presentation. Each group member will submit a 2-3 page typed double-spaced discussion of the group's topic. This paper should also include a summary of their contribution to the group and an evaluation of the contributions of the other group members. These evaluations will contribute to each student's grade on the project. **This discussion paper does not count as a response paper.**

### Response Papers

Students are required to write 3 short response papers over the course of the semester. The papers should be 2-3 double spaced, typed pages. The first response paper must be completed by **Thursday, January 31st**. In the response papers, students are required to discuss the readings for the week. Students should not summarize the readings, but instead provide your critical thoughts on the subject supported by the readings. Papers for the week should be turned in at the beginning of class. Students writing response papers for that week will be asked to share their thoughts in class. No late papers will be accepted.

### Class Participation

The success of this course is dependent upon all members actively participating. Occasionally, I will lecture in this class, but this class is primarily based on discussion. You are expected to complete the assigned readings **before** coming to class. You are also expected to attend **all classes**. Reading a daily newspaper will keep you apprised of current events, which will often be used as examples in class discussions. To enhance classroom discussions, students are encouraged to bring newspaper clippings to class to share.

### In Class Assignments

Throughout the course we will engage in small group activities that are related to the course materials and you will be evaluated based on your participation. Given the nature of these activities, there is no way to make-up missed class activities. Pop quizzes will periodically be given in class. These quizzes will be given at the beginning of class. There will be no make-up quizzes; however your lowest quiz score will be dropped. These in class assignments and quizzes will count towards your participation grade.

### Academic Integrity

Students are expected to maintain complete academic integrity. Failure to do so will result in a zero for the assignment and you will be reported to the appropriate university officials.

\*\* Students with a university- documented disability should discuss with me any special accommodations needed for the course. Please make me aware of your needs as soon as possible.

### Class Schedule

#### **Course Overview and General Housekeeping**

January 15

No readings

#### **Approaches to Studying Women and Politics: Devising a Framework**

January 17

*Women Transforming* “Introduction: Women Transforming U.S. Politics: Sites of Power/Resistance”

“The Riddle of Consciousness: Racism and Identity in Feminist Theory.” Nancie E. Caraway. from *Women in Politics Outstiders or Insiders?* (1999)

“Two Paths to Equality” Lynn E. Ford. from *Women and Politics The Pursuit of Equality*. (2001)

#### **The Road to Political Inclusion: The Suffrage Movement and The Quest for Women’s Rights**

January 22<sup>nd</sup>

“Taking the Law Into Their Own Hands: Voting Women During Reconstruction” Ellen Carol DuBois

“The Struggle for Political Rights” Nancy McGlen and Karen O’Connor from *Women, Politics and American Society*

Exerts from *Women, Race and Class* by Angela Davis (1983)

January 24<sup>th</sup>

Video Hearts and Hands

## Women and Social Movements

### The Women's Movement

January 29<sup>th</sup> & 31<sup>st</sup>

"The Women's Movement and Black Discontent" Paula Giddings from *When and Where I Enter The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America*

"Personal Politics" Sara Evans from *Personal Politics the Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement & the New Left* (1979)

"Decade of Discovery 'The Personal Is Political' and 'The Politicization of Personal Life Women versus Women'" Sara Evans *Born For Liberty* (1997)

*Women Transforming* "Nothing Distant about It: Women's Liberation and Sixties Radicalism" Alice Echols

### Not Without Critique: The Women's Movement

February 5<sup>th</sup>

"The Feminist Movement: Where Are All the Asian Women?" Esther Ngan-Ling Chow from *Making Waves An Anthology of Writings By and about Asian American Women* ed. Asian Women United of California

"A Chicana Perspective on Feminism" Beatriz M. Pesquera and Denise Segura from *The Latino/a Condition* eds Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic (1998)

"Feminism Lives: Building a Multicultural Women's Movement in the United States" Leslie R. Wolfe and Jennifer Tucker *The Challenge of Local Feminisms Women's Movements in Global Perspective* ed Amrita Basu (1995)

### Women in the Civil Rights Movement

February 7<sup>th</sup>

"Trailblazers: Women in the Montgomery Bus Boycott" Mary Fair Burks from *Women in the Civil Rights Movement* (1990).

"Men Led, but Women Organized: Movement Participation of Women in the Mississippi Delta" Charles Payne from *Women in the Civil Rights Movement* (1990).

"Invisible Southern Black Women Leaders in the Civil Rights Movement: The Triple Constraints of Gender, Race and Class." Bernice McNair Barnett. From *Gender & Society* vol. 7 no. 2, June 1993: 162-182.

### Women in Revolution

February 12<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup>

*Still Lifting* "Inside Our Dangerous Ranks": The Autobiography of Elaine Brown and the Black Panther Party Margo V. Perkins

"Nobody Ever Asks What a Man's Role Is In the Revolution" Regina Jennings from *The Black Panther Party (Reconsidered)* ed. Charles Jones (1998)

Additional readings will be announced in class.

February 19 <sup>th</sup> & 21 <sup>st</sup>	<p><b>Women’s Political Organizations</b>  <i>Women Transforming</i> “Organizational Mobilizations, Institutional Access and Institutional Change” Debra Minkoff</p> <p>“Seeking a Voice: South Asian Women’s Groups in North America”          Jyotsna Vaid from <i>Making Waves An Anthology of Writings By and about Asian American Women</i> ed. Asian Women United of California</p>
February 26 <sup>th</sup> & 28 <sup>th</sup>	<p><b>Women and the Politics of Necessity</b>  <i>Women Transforming</i> “Transforming Democracy: Rural Women and Labor Resistance” Eve S. Weinbaum</p> <p><i>Still Lifting</i> “Necessity Was the Midwife of Our Politics’: Black Women’s Health Activism in the “Post” Civil Rights Era (1980-1996)”          Deborah Grayson</p> <p><i>Still Lifting</i> “ONAMOVE: African American Women Confronting the Prison Crisis” Jennifer Smith</p>
March 5 <sup>th</sup>	<p><b>Community Work as Political Activism</b>          “Women Warriors in the War on Poverty” Nancy A. Naples from <i>Grassroots Warriors Activist Mothering, Community Work and the War on Poverty</i> (1998)</p> <p>“Seasoned Outsiders: Women As Political Activists and gitators” Lynne E. Ford from <i>Women and Politics the Pursuit of Equity</i></p> <p>“‘If It Wasn’t for the Women...’ African American Women, Community Work and Social Change” Cheryl Townsend Gilkes from <i>Women of Color in U.S. Society</i> eds. Maxine Baca Zinn and Bonnie Thornton Dill (1994)</p>
March 7 <sup>th</sup>	TBA
March 12 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Midterm Examination</b>
March 14 <sup>th</sup>	Video Nebraska Women in Politics
<b>Spring Break Holiday March 17<sup>th</sup>-24<sup>th</sup></b>	

## **Women as Political Actors in Institutions**

### Becoming “Political” Women

March 26<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup>

*Women Transforming* “Latina Women and Political Consciousness: La Chispa Que Prende” Carol Hardy-Fanta

“Asian Pacific American Women in Mainstream Politics” Judy Chu from *Making Waves An Anthology of Writings By and about Asian American Women* ed. Asian Women United of California

*Women Transforming* “Breaking Barriers to Representation: Chicana/Latina Elected Officials in California” Paule Cruz Takash

Additional readings will be announced in class.

### Women and Elections: Candidates and Voters

April 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup>

*Women and Elective Office* “The Bottleneck: Women Becoming Candidates” Georgia Duerst-Lahti

*Women and Elective Office* “Voter Reaction to Women Candidates” Elizabeth Adell Cook

*Women and Elective Office* “Campaign Finance: Women’s Experience in the Modern Era” Barbara Burrell

“The Gender Gap Mystique” Karen M. Paget *The American Prospect* (Fall 1993)

“Gap Politics” Steven Stark *Atlantic Monthly* (July 1996)

“Women and Political Participation” M. Margaret Conway from PS Online APSA’s Journal of the Profession June 2001

### Women in Congress: Institutional Power?

April 9<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup>

“Understanding the Policy Impact of Electing Women: Evidence from Research on Congress and State Legislatures” Michelle Swers PS Online APSA’s Journal of the Profession June 2001

*Women and Elective Office* “Representing Women’s Interests in the U.S. House of Representatives” Debra L. Dodson

“Women, It’s Not Enough to be Elected: Committee Position Makes A Difference” Noelle Norton from *Gender Power, Leadership and Governance* eds. Georgia Duerst-Lahti and Rita Mae Kelley (1995)

*Still Lifting* “Black Women in Congress during the Post-Civil Rights Movement Era” Sharon D. Wright

Women in State Legislatures

April 16<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup>

“Why are More Women State Legislators?” Wilma Rule from *Women in Politics Outsiders or Insiders* ed Lois Duke Whitaker (1999)

*Women and Elective Office* “The Geography of Gender Power: Women in State Legislatures” Barbara Norrander and Clyde Wilcox

Additional readings to be announced in class.

**Merit in the Margins**

April 23<sup>rd</sup>

*Women Transforming* “The Marginalized Uses of Power and Identity: Lesbians’ Participation in Breast Cancer and AIDS Activism” Andrea Densham

*Women Transforming* “Smashing Icons: Disabled Women and the Disability and Women’s Movements” Marian Blackwell-Stratton, Mary Lou Breslin, Arlean Brynne Mayerson, and Susan Baily

“Deconstruct to Reconstruct African American Women in the Post Civil Rights Era” Mamie Locke from *Black and Multiracial Politics in America* eds. Yvette M. Alex Assensoh and Lawrence J. Hanks (2000)

April 25<sup>th</sup>

TBA

**Looking Ahead: What Happens Next?**

April 30<sup>th</sup>

*Women and Elective Office* “Into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Will Women Break the Political Glass Ceiling?” Jean Reith Schroedel and Nicola Mazumdar

Additional readings to be announced in class.

May 2<sup>nd</sup>

Course Wrap Up

**\*\*\*Final Group Research Project Due In Class \*\*\***

**Monday, May 6, 2002 10:00a.m. -12noon**