

POLS 4364-001: Women and Politics Syllabus

Instructor Information

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Office hours: 2-3:30pmCT, Mondays and Wednesdays or by appointment

Course Description

Description, analysis and assessment of women's place in a democracy through a focus on women's capacity to relate to and use political power.

Credit may not be obtained in both POLS 4364 and WGST 4364.

Prerequisites: GOVT 2305 and GOVT 2306.

Course Learning Objectives.

Upon completion of this course, students will have a greater understanding of gender and politics, including:

- Critical evaluation of scholarship
- Theory interpretation and evaluation
- Responsible interpretation and analysis of study results
- Key puzzles and debates in the broader political science literature

Grading

Point breakdown

There are **1000** possible points available in this class. The points and corresponding share of the final grade are broken down as follows:

- **Reading annotations + in-class reflections:** 330 points (33%)
- **Participation:** 150 points (15%)
- **Final project**
 - **Project prospectus:** 50 points (5%)

- **Project draft:** 80 points (8%)
- **Peer review:** 60 points (6%)
- **Project check-in:** 50 points (5%)
- **Final project:** 250 points (25%)
- **Syllabus assignment:** 30 points (3%)

To calculate your grade at any point in this class, divide the number of points you currently have by the total possible points (as found in Blackboard).

Assignment descriptions

Reading annotations. Over the course of the semester, you will complete 13 different readings (see reading schedule below for readings/dates). To help gauge your understanding of the main themes and how they relate to your final project, you will submit an annotated copy of the reading.

Reflection responses. Over the course of the semester, you will complete 15 short answer responses (in class). At the beginning of class, I will give a discussion question/topic based on the week's reading(s)/topic. You will have ten minutes to write a response by hand. You are allowed to (*should!*) use the reading and your annotations to help you answer the question.

Participation. This is an upper-division course where regular attendance and participation are considered basic prerequisites for success in this class. While I don't take attendance or penalize for absences, you will be graded on your ability to show up *and* participate in in-class conversations in a meaningful and constructive way.

Syllabus assignment. To help acquaint you with the layout and content of this syllabus, you'll complete a short assignment the first week of classes.

Final Project. Over the course of the semester, you will complete an original research project related to gender and politics. To help break up the process (and keep you on track), you will submit three different pieces of the project over the course of the semester, including a:

- Prospectus
- Check-in
- Draft

- Peer review + reflection

You can find detailed instructions for each of these components on Blackboard.

Course Requirements

Required text

There is no required textbook for this course. Instead, all required readings will come from peer-reviewed journal articles, which will be posted in Blackboard.

Course Policies and Expectations

Late Work.

Staying on top of your work is one of the best ways to do well in the course. Late work will incur a 10% penalty each day it's late, up to two days after the due date; any work submitted after the second day will receive a 0.

Note that incorrect and/or corrupted files will be treated as missing and will receive a 0.

Classroom Discussion: Civility and Inclusivity.

To achieve the course learning objectives to better understand *how* and *why* gender impacts political interactions and institutions it's critical to objectively study and evaluate the political landscape that influences state and non-state actors' decision calculus.

There is no simple or easy answer to the questions that feminist political scientists study, from suffrage, to candidate recruitment, to causes of war. This then requires us to examine how gender impacts these phenomena from a wide-angle. This in turn means that we may discuss viewpoints, research, and/or studies you do not agree with. It's not my job to tell you *what* to think, but it is my job to tell you *how* to go about thinking, to objectively and critically evaluate political science research.

This class is driven by in-class discussion, which gives everyone a chance to increase their understanding of the material and how it relates to their own research interests. Everyone's unique lived experiences and perspectives help provide for rich conversations and new insights into political, social, and economic phenomenon. These discussions represent an opportunity to explore new ideas in a welcoming environment. Please be gracious and courteous with others.

Plagiarism and Cheating.

Students caught cheating or plagiarizing will receive a 0 for the assignment and may face further punitive actions from the University. I do not take this issue lightly and reserve the right to fail a student from the course for cheating and/or plagiarizing. For more information, please refer to the University's Student Handbook.

Use of Generative AI (Artificial Intelligence).

Because writing, analytical, and critical thinking skills are important learning outcomes of this course, all writing assignments must be prepared by the student and the student alone. Developing strong competencies in this area will prepare you for a competitive workplace. Therefore, AI-generated and/or assisted submissions¹ are not permitted in this course and will be treated as plagiarism.

Any student suspected of using AI to complete an assignment will be called in for an oral defense of their assignment.

E-mail and Communication.

I respond to student e-mails within 24 to 36 hours on the weekdays, from around 9am to 5pm. You should feel free to e-mail me whenever your schedule allows but note that I generally do not respond to e-mail on the weekends or after 5pm on the weekdays.

Please stay in touch. Should extenuating circumstances arise that prevent you from completing your coursework please let me know as soon as you are able to so we can make arrangements. Do not wait until the end of the semester to reach out.

General Course Rules and Best Practices

- You are responsible for ensuring your file submissions are correct (i.e. not the wrong file) and readable (i.e. correct format). Incorrect and/or corrupted files will be treated as missing.
- You should have a consistent, functioning internet connection to take this course. It is your responsibility to ensure that your computer and connection are functioning properly.
- Please do not try to complete coursework on a mobile phone, if possible.

¹ Including, but not limited to: ChatGPT, Grammarly, Gemini, etc.

- Any disruptive or disrespectful behavior will result in a loss of credit for the assignment and possibly a referral to the Office of Student Conduct.
- You are responsible for all information and announcements made in the course. Prepare to log onto Blackboard at least 2 times a week to check for updates, changes, or new information. Read the course home page thoroughly and check announcements daily.

University Policies

Refer to the current A&M University-San Antonio Student Handbook for helpful guidelines. You can find the complete listing of the University's policies and resources under the 'Syllabus and Course Calendar' link on the sidebar in Blackboard.

Tentative Course Schedule

See below for reading and assignment calendar. You must do the reading(s) ahead of time and come to class prepared to discuss the reading(s).

Week 1 (August 24; 26) – Course introduction

Reading:

- 'How to read political science' (distributed and read in class)

Assignments:

- In-class reflection assignment #1 (completed in class, August 26)
- Syllabus assignment (August 30)

Week 2 (August 31; September 2) – Gendering the study of politics

Reading:

- Htun, Mala. "What It Means to Study Gender and the State." *Politics & Gender* 1, no. 1 (2005): 157-166.

Assignments:

- Annotations (due September 1)
- In-class reflection assignment #2

Week 3 (September 9) – Social movements

(No classes September 7)

Readings:

- Beckwith, Karen. 2000. "Beyond Compare? Women's Movements in Comparative Perspective." *European Journal of Political Research* 37 (4): 431-468.

Assignments:

- Annotations (September 8)
- In-class reflection assignment #3
- Project prospectus (September 13)

Week 4 (September 14, 16) – Suffrage: conquered or granted?

Reading:

- Paxton, Pamela. 2000. "Women's Suffrage in the Measurement of Democracy: Problems of Operationalization." *Studies in Comparative International Development* 35 (3): 92-111.

Assignments:

- Annotations (September 15)
- In-class reflection assignment #4

Week 5 (September 21, 23) – Political parties

Reading:

- Clark, Janine Astrid and Jillian Schwedler. 2003. "Who Opened the Window? Women's Activism in Islamist Parties." *Comparative Politics* 35 (3): 293-312.

Assignments:

- Annotations (September 22)
- In-class reflection assignment #5

Week 6 (September 28, 30) – Sexuality and politics

Reading:

- Reynolds, Andrew. "Representation and rights: The impact of LGBT legislators in comparative perspective." *American Political Science Review* 107, no. 2 (2013): 259-274.

Assignments:

- Annotations (September 29)
- In-class reflection assignment #6

Week 7 (October 5, 7) – Elections and recruitment

Reading:

- Fox, Richard L. and Jennifer L. Lawless. 2004. "Entering the Arena? Gender and the Decision to Run for Office." *American Journal of Political Science* 48(2): 264-280.

Assignments:

- Annotations (October 6)
- In-class reflection assignment #7

Week 8 (October 12, 14) Women's role in militarization

Reading:

- Horn, Denise M. "Boots and bedsheets: Constructing the military support system in a time of war." *Gender, War, and Militarism: Feminist Perspectives* (2010): 57-68.

Assignments:

- Annotations (October 13)
- In-class reflection assignment #8
- Project check-in (October 18)

Week 9 (October 19, 21)- Quotas and descriptive representation

Reading:

- Tripp, Aili Mari, and Alice Kang. "The global impact of quotas: On the fast track to increased female legislative representation." *Comparative political studies* 41.3 (2008): 338-361

Assignments:

- Annotations (October 20)
- In-class reflection assignment #9

Week 10 (October 26, 28) – Gendered political violence

Reading:

- Bardall, Gabrielle, Elin Bjarnegård, and Jennifer M. Piscopo. "How is political violence gendered? Disentangling motives, forms, and impacts." *Political Studies* 68, no. 4 (2020): 916-935.

Assignments:

- Annotations (October 27)
- In-class reflection assignment #10

Week 11 (November 2, 4) – Gendered political economy

Readings:

- Jacqui True (2010) The Political Economy of Violence Against Women: A Feminist International Relations Perspective, *Australian Feminist Law Journal*, 32:1, 39-59

Assignments:

- Annotations (November 3)
- In-class reflection assignment #11

Week 12 (November 9, 11) – Gender and war

Reading:

- Sjoberg, Laura. "Seeing Sex, Gender, and Sexuality in International Security." *International Journal* 70, no. 3 (2015): 434–53.

Assignments:

- Annotations (November 10)
- In-class reflection assignment #12
- Project draft (November 15)

Week 13 (November 16, 18) – Post-conflict societies and peacebuilding

Reading:

- Bakken, Ingrid Vik, and Halvard Buhaug. "Civil war and female empowerment." *Journal of conflict resolution* 65, no. 5 (2021): 982-1009.

- Annotations (November 17)
- In-class reflection assignment #13

Week 14 (November 23) – Study day

No class November 25

Reading: N/A

Assignments:

- Peer review comments (November 23)

Week 15 (November 30, December 2) – Gender and public policy

Reading:

- Detraz, Nicole, and Dursun Peksen. "'Women Friendly' Spending? Welfare Spending and Women's Participation in the Economy and Politics." *Politics & Gender* 14, no. 2 (2018): 137–61.

Assignments:

- Annotations (December 1)
- In-class reflection assignment #14
- Final projects (December 9)