

Women and Politics - Political Science 425:201  
Fall 2009 – Online Version

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This course examines women's participation in American political life as citizens, voters, activists, candidates and officeholders. We will also consider the ways in which public policies shape women's lives. In doing so, we will analyze the effects of gender on electoral behavior and political institutions and the impact of law, policy, and politics on the lives of women. Often this will require us to examine women's lives and situations in contrast to men's. In 2009, women and men are not yet political, social, or economic equals. Understanding why this is the case will sometimes lead us outside the boundaries of traditional political science. Cultural, social, and economic symbols, messages, and debates about women affect us as much, if not more so, than the ones carried out in political life.

**Required Reading:**

Ford, Lynne. 2006. *Women and Politics: The Pursuit of Equality*. Second Edition. Houghton Mifflin Company.

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

Larson, Lia (ed). 2004. *Skirting Tradition: Women in Politics Speak to the Next Generation*. The Institute of Politics, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University.

A series of readings on e-reserve in the Meir Library or linked on the D2L content page.

**Readings:** One major key to success in this course is to do all of the readings and to keep up with the reading on a weekly basis. You will not be able to perform well on the weekly discussion questions and the exams if you have not done the readings and can demonstrate that you understand them. While it may appear that the reading is heavy for some weeks, several of the selections are relatively short, so the overall reading load is fairly consistent across the semester. Don't get behind!

**Course Website:** This class will have a site on the Desire 2 Learn (D2L) system. The address for D2L is <https://uwm.courses.wisconsin.edu/> or you can get there from the pull-down link on the UWM homepage.

**Grades:** Your grade for this course will be based on two exams, your responses to weekly discussion questions, and a policy paper. Each element will be worth 25 percent of your grade. Grades will be calculated on a 100-point scale that breaks down as follows:

A = 92-100

C =  
72-77

A- = 90-91

70-71

C- =

B+ = 88-89

68-69

D+ =

B = 82-87

62-67

D =

B- = 80-81

60-61

D- =

C+ = 78-79

F = 59

– below

If you are unable to complete an exam within the specified window, you will only be allowed to take a make-up if you can produce documentation that your problem was unavoidable and due to some medical problem, excused University absence, or other emergency situation. **If you have a problem or miss an exam, get in touch with me immediately, beforehand if possible. If you miss an exam without giving me prior notice, you MUST contact me within 24 hours of that exam or you will not be allowed to take a make-up under any circumstances.**

Any student who cheats on an exam, plagiarizes, or commits any other act of academic dishonesty will receive an F for the course and will be referred to the appropriate University authorities. You may view the University's policy on academic misconduct at [http://www3.uwm.edu/Dept/Acad\\_Aff/policy/academicmisconduct.cfm](http://www3.uwm.edu/Dept/Acad_Aff/policy/academicmisconduct.cfm)

**Flow of the Class:** For our purposes this semester, a week will start on Monday at 12:00AM and end on Sunday at 11:59 PM. Each week, I will post lecture notes and a discussion question for the topic that week. These materials, combined with the readings noted on the syllabus, will constitute the materials for that week. You are to read the assigned readings, access the lecture notes, and post your answer to the discussion question. Discussion question answers are due by Sunday at 11:59 PM each week. During exam weeks, there will be no reading, lecture notes, or discussion questions.

**Exam Dates:** The exams for this class are scheduled as indicated below. Each of the exams will be available for a 48-hour exam period. Exams will be a combination of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions and will be taken through the D2L site. **You can take an exam at any time during the 48-hour window in which it is available. But you will only have one opportunity to take it – once you begin the exam, you must finish it. You cannot start an exam, then enter again at a later time to finish it. Also, exams will be timed, so you will have a set amount of time to take the exam once you begin. You should make sure that you have set aside the whole time allotted to take the exam (in case you need it) and you should make sure you have a secure connection before you begin. Also, since you have a limited amount of time, you cannot look up every answer as you do the exam. You should prepare for these exams in the same way you would any closed-book exam and be prepared to complete the exam on your own.**

**Weekly Discussion Questions:** Each week, except for exam weeks, I will post a discussion section question on the “Weekly Discussion Questions” board. By 11:59 PM on Sunday of each week, you will post a thoughtful response based on the week’s readings and lecture notes. These posts should be approximately 2-3 single spaced paragraphs and should clearly demonstrate that you have read and thought about the assigned readings. Make sure that your posts provide a reasoned discussion of the week’s question. The questions for some weeks may ask you to offer an opinion or a position on a topic. However, even opinions need to be grounded in information, so simply saying “I think” without providing support for your position will not earn you a good grade. These posts should also represent professional writing – they should be grammatically correct and free of spelling errors, shorthand, or slang. Finally, make sure you refer to the readings or lecture information as appropriate in your posts.

**A Note on Posting:** When writing your answers to discussion questions or responses to other students’ postings, it is generally easier to write in your regular word processing program and then copy/paste the text into the discussion forum rather than writing directly on the screen in the discussion. This protects you from losing what you have written if your connection is interrupted.

**Policy Paper:** This semester, you will focus on a particular policy area of relevance to women and do some investigation into the current status of this policy from many different angles – how do the states and federal governments handle this issue, where do the political parties and interest groups stand, how active are women’s organizations on this issue, etc. This paper, which should be approximately 10 in length, will be due in the D2L dropbox by 11:59 PM on Sunday, December 6. Additional information on this assignment appears at the end of the syllabus.

**University Policies:** To learn more about the University’s policies on religious observances, incompletes, academic misconduct, grade appeals, military service accommodations, final exams, discriminatory conduct, and complain procedures, go to [www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/SyllabusLinks.pdf](http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/SyllabusLinks.pdf)

**Email:** Please remember that I will be sending everything to your UWM email accounts. If you don’t regularly use that account, make sure you check it or forward it to an account you do use regularly.

## Course Outline

### I. A History and Status Report on Women's Rights in the U.S.

#### **Week 1 – September 7-13** - Women and Politics: The Paths to Equality

Readings: 1) Ford, Chp. 1

2) Rhode, “The Ideology and Biology of Gender Difference” \*ER\*

#### **Week 2 – September 14-20** - The History of Women's Movements - The First Wave

Readings: 1) Ford, Chp. 2, pp. 31-50

2) Ryan, “The Early Women’s Movement” and “The Women’s Suffrage Movement and the Aftermath of Victory” \*ER\*

3) The Declaration of Sentiments, <http://www.nps.gov/archive/wori/declaration.htm>

4) *Skirting Tradition* – Timeline and Clift

#### **Week 3 – September 21-27** - The History of Women's Movements - The Second Wave

Readings: 1) Ford, pp. 52-64

2) Freeman, “The Origins of the Women’s Liberation Movement” \*ER\*

3) Whittier, “From the Second to the Third Wave” \*ER\*

4) NOW Bill of Rights

<http://coursesa.matrix.msu.edu/~hst203/documents/nowrights.html>

#### **Week 4 – September 28 – October 4** - The Constitution and Rights for Women in the U.S.

Readings: 1) Mezey, “Seeking Constitutional Parity” \*ER\*

### II. Political Participation of Women

#### **Week 5 – October 5-11** - Political Attitudes and the Gender Gap

Readings: 1) Ford, Chp 3, pp. 72-80

2) Norrander, “The History of the Gender Gaps” (Link in Content Area)

3) Kaufmann, Karen and John Petrocik, “The Changing Politics of American Men: Understanding the Sources of the Gender Gap” *American Journal of Political Science*

43: 864-887. (Link in Content Area)

#### **Week 6 – October 12-18** - Political Participation

Readings: 1) Ford, Chp 3 pp. 81-102

2) Burns, Scholzman, Verba, “Introduction: Citizenship and Unequal Participation” \*

ER\*

**Week 7 – Exam 1 – Available from 12:00 AM Wednesday, October 21 until 11:59 PM Thursday, October 22**

**Week 8 – October 26 – November 1 - Women as Candidates: An Overview**

Readings: 1) Ford, Chp. 4  
2) Lawless and Fox, Chapters 1-3  
3) *Skirting Tradition* – Dole, Lake, Pelosi

**Week 9 – November 2-8 - Women as Candidates: Why So Few?**

Readings: 1) Lawless and Fox, Chapters 4-6  
2) *Skirting Tradition* – Kuehl, Wilson

**Week 10 – November 9-15 - Women as Candidates: Public Perceptions**

Readings: 1) Dolan, “How the Public Views Women Candidates” \*ER\*  
2) Lawless, “Sexism and Gender Bias in Election 2008: A More Complex Path for Women in Politics” (Link in Content Area)  
3) *Skirting Tradition* – Arnesen, Shaheen

**Week 11 – November 16-22 - Women as Office Holders: Different From Men?**

Readings: 1) Ford, Chp. 5  
2) Swers and Larson, “Women in Congress: Do they act as advocates for women’s issues?” \*ER\*  
3) *Skirting Tradition* – DeLauro, Snowe, Boxer  
4) Goldberg, “Hillary’s Challenge” at [http://prospect.org/cs/articles?article=hillarys\\_challenge](http://prospect.org/cs/articles?article=hillarys_challenge)  
5) Lithwick, “The Fairer Sex” at <http://www.slate.com/id/2215833/>

**Week 12 – November 23-29 - Madam President?**

Readings: 1) Clift and Brazaitis, “Why Not a Woman?” and “A How-to for Women” \*ER\*  
2) Streb, “Social Desirability Effects and Support for a Female American President” (Link in Content Area)  
3) Carroll, “Reflections on Gender and Hillary Clinton’s Presidential Campaign: The Good, the Bad, and the Misogynic” (Link in Content Area)  
4) *Skirting Tradition* – Shipley, Brazile, Burke

### III. Women and Public Policy

**Week 13 – November 30 – December 6 - Reproductive Policy**

Readings: 1) Ford, Chp, 8, 301-323  
2) Chesler, “New Options, New Politics” at

[http://prospect.org/cs/articles?article=new\\_options\\_new\\_politics](http://prospect.org/cs/articles?article=new_options_new_politics)

**Policy Paper Due by 11:59 PM on Sunday, December 6**

***Week 14 – December 7-13*** - Work and Family Policy

Readings: 1) Ford, Chp. 7 and 8 (pp. 284-300)

2) Hirsham, “Homeward Bound” at

<http://www.prospect.org/cs/articles?articleId=10646>

***Week 15 – Exam 2 – Available 12:00AM on Wednesday, December 16 until 11:59PM  
Thursday, December 17***

Women and Politics  
Fall 2009  
Paper Assignment

In this paper, you will focus on a particular policy area of relevance to women and do some research into the current status of this policy from many different angles – how do the states and federal governments handle this issue, where do the political parties and interest groups stand, how active are women’s organizations on this issue, etc.

Your first step will be to choose a policy area with relevance to women and women’s lives. The policy chapters in the Ford textbook are a good place to start to get ideas. In choosing a topic, you will need to identify something specific enough so that you aren’t overwhelmed by a topic. For example, instead of deciding to look at “reproductive policy,” you should define a particular issue within that broad area – perhaps federal policies on RU-486 and the “morning after” pill, or the status of state laws on access to abortion, such as parental notification or informed consent laws, or the question of access to abortion because of the relatively small number of providers and changes in the training of new doctors. You will need to submit a paper topic to me by Sunday, October 11. The paper will be due by Sunday, December 6.

The goal in this paper is to determine the status of policy in the area you have chosen in 2009. Regardless of the topic, you should begin your paper with a discussion of your topic and why it is an issue of particular relevance to women and women’s lives. Then you should provide a brief background and history of the issue. The bulk of the paper should address the status of your issue in contemporary times. In doing so, you can address the following questions as they are relevant to your topic:

- \* What are the current controversies regarding this policy?
- \* Has there been relevant state or federal government action in this area?
- \* Are there state or Congressional laws, court cases, executive agency actions of importance?
- \* What, if any, actions or positions do the political parties take on this issue?
- \* What role do women play in shaping this policy?
- \* Are there women’s organizations on one or both sides of the policy debate?
- \* Who are the proponents of change? What groups or interests do they represent?
- \* Who are the opponents and who do they represent?
- \* Can you advocate for some position on this issue – by drawing on information you have learned in class and from your research, not just unsupported opinion

Below is a partial list of possible topics. Feel free to propose something that is not listed below and I will let you know if it fits the assignment.

Domestic violence	Women’s Educational Equity Act
Sexual harassment in the workplace	Wage gap/occupational segregation
Sexual harassment in schools	Welfare Reform
Title IX issues	
Single sex education	
Retirement Issues – Social Security and private pensions	

Employment discrimination  
Abortion access – state and federal actions  
Emergency contraception, RU-486  
Child care funding  
Family leave – pregnancy and maternity/paternity  
Women in the military/combat  
Women’s health issues

Let me say in the strongest possible terms that the work you submit for this paper must be your own. I feel very strongly about plagiarism and will treat any suspected cases seriously. Your paper must reflect your own research and writing and must properly cite any sources you use. I will post a handout on plagiarism on the D2L site for you to review. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism or how you should cite information, ask immediately.

Below are some organizations/institutions that can serve as resources for your paper. They all have websites. Also, see the end of each of the chapters in the Ford text.

#### General

Institute for Women’s Policy Research  
Women’s Policy, Inc.  
National Organization for Women  
Democratic National Committee  
Republican National Committee  
Thomas – Library of Congress – for bills introduced in Congress

#### Education

American Association of University Women  
International Federation of University Women  
Girls, Inc.  
Women’s College Coalition

#### Economic/Occupational Issues

AFL-CIO  
Catalyst  
Families and Work Institute  
Employment Policy Foundation  
U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission  
Military Women  
National Committee on Pay Equity

#### Reproductive Policy

Alan Guttmacher Institute  
Center for Law and Reproductive Policy  
Feminists for Life  
International Planned Parenthood Foundation  
Reproductive Health and Rights Center

