

Gender and Public Policy
Barnard College
Spring 2018

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Office hours: Thursdays 11:30-1:30 and by appointment

Class location: 406 Barnard Hall

Class time: Tuesdays, 12-1:50

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course, we will examine how notions of sex and gender have shaped public policies, and how public policies have affected the social, economic, and political citizenship of men and women in the United States over time. We will think in depth about equality and liberty—what these concepts mean in the context of gender and politics, to what extent they should be the primary goals of gender-related policy, and the role of government in their promotion. We will also consider descriptive representation from theoretical and empirical perspectives. To what extent and in what ways do men and women comprise meaningful, coherent political categories? What role have female lawmakers played in developing policy that disproportionately affects women? Throughout the course, we will discuss similarities and differences between sexism, racism, and heteronormativity, and special challenges created by their intersection. By the end of the semester, students should acquire a broad understanding of gender and public policy in the United States.

Most of our class meetings will be divided into three segments. We will begin by talking about the readings I have assigned for the week. The week's discussion leader(s) will kick off this dialogue with their comments on the week's readings. We will then have a ten-minute "flash discussion" of a topic relating to course themes that was recently in the news. We will conclude our meetings with a research forum, the focus of which will change over the course of the semester.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Readings and assignments are geared toward helping students achieve the following objectives:

1. Better understand inequities based on gender and sex, their sources, and attempts to reduce them through political and legal means.
2. Think critically about the extent to which men and women have different political interests, have been affected differently by past and present public policies, would

benefit from different types of policy in the future, and require gender balance in American political institutions to achieve equitable outcomes.

3. Learn key elements of the political science canon on gender and politics, and evaluate them theoretically and empirically.
4. Consider how these scholarly works might enrich our understanding of current events, and how current events might lead us to reevaluate questions and arguments presented in scholarly work.
5. Identify an important and precise research question, use the tools of social science to investigate it, and ultimately present a clear, persuasive, and concise written and oral argument.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Your final grade will reflect four components: discussion participation, discussion leadership, response papers, and a research paper. Details are given below, and additional guidelines are attached to this syllabus.

Final grade breakdown:

Discussion participation	20%
Discussion leadership	15%
Response papers	15%
Research paper	50%
Proposal: 10%	
Final paper: 30%	
Presentation: 10%	

Participation

This course is a seminar, not a lecture, so active participation will be key to its success. Attendance is mandatory, and participation accounts for 20% of your final grade. Your participation grade is based primarily on your contributions to in-class discussions of assigned readings. However, the following will also be taken into consideration: (1) discussion questions submitted before class; (2) contributions to “flash discussions”; and (3) participation in the research forum.

Reading discussions. Reading discussions are the core of our class meetings. Students are expected to complete all assigned readings and think critically about them in preparation for class discussions. Students will be evaluated not only on the number of contributions to discussion, but also the depth of their engagement with class materials. Please see the attached class participation guidelines for a list of questions to consider while reading.

Discussion questions. Students are encouraged to post discussion questions for the group, based on the week's readings, on Courseworks. If you would like to contribute questions, please do so at least 12 hours in advance of our meeting (preferably 24) so I have time to incorporate them into my plan for the day. Please note, this applies only when you are *not* the discussion leader. When you are the discussion leader, you are required to submit questions to the class via email at least 24 hours before our meeting.

Flash discussions. Following our reading discussion, we will have one to two ten-minute "flash discussions" of topics relating to gender and politics that were recently in the news. Each student will be responsible for contributing one such topic. It could be related to the week's readings, though this is not required. Sign-ups will be first come, first serve. When it is your week to offer the topic, pay especially close attention to news relating to gender and email an article on your chosen topic to the class at least 24 hours in advance of our meeting. In class, we will talk about how this specific issue or event relates to class themes. This will not be graded separately—it will be incorporated into your participation grade.

Cell phones must be silenced and placed out of sight (e.g, in a bag) during class. Students are encouraged to limit their use of laptops in class. Research shows that electronic note taking significantly reduces students' grades. There is also a "secondhand smoke" effect. That is, your laptop can distract others sitting nearby, particularly if you are using it for anything other than note taking. Repeated use of electronic devices in a manner that is distracting to others (including the instructor) will affect your participation grade.

Discussion Leadership

Each week, there will be a discussion leader (occasionally two) responsible for reading the materials especially closely and preparing comments and questions. Discussants must email discussion questions to the class at least 24 hours before our weekly meeting. Please circulate only the questions, and not all of your notes on the readings. Great discussion questions will not simply ask for students' opinions, but push them to think about the arguments and evidence analytically based on what we've learned in class up to that point.

Discussants will begin class by speaking for 5-7 minutes each about the week's readings. Time yourself—I will cut you off at 7 minutes! This should not be a summary. Your own voice should be clear. You can think of this as a verbal response paper. You might assess the strength of arguments made, talk about how readings speak to (or past) each other, how we might think about current events in light of the week's readings, etc.

This is not a formal written assignment, but students must turn in their speaking notes. Your discussant service is worth 15% of your final grade.

Response Papers

Each student will write two 2-3 page response papers over the course of the semester. At least one of these papers must be completed by March 6th. These papers should succinctly note the main takeaways from the week's readings, and explain how they fit into the

literature. The reading responses should go well beyond summary—your own voice should be clear. Assess the strength of arguments made, think about how they relate to class themes or other readings, etc. Each of these papers is worth 7.5% of your final grade.

The class participation guidelines attached to this syllabus can help you write response papers as well. You do not have to answer all of the questions listed in the guidelines in a 2-3 page paper, but these questions can give you a sense of the kinds of things you might discuss in your paper.

Research Project

Each student will write a 25-30 page paper on a question relating to gender and public policy. Your paper should not be vaguely “about” a topic—it should ask and answer a precise question. The research project has three components: a proposal, the paper itself, and a presentation.

Proposal (due 2/13). A 3-4 page paper proposal is due on February 13th. Proposals should include the elements listed below. This is worth 10% of your final grade for the course. Please bring a hard copy to class. Late papers will receive a penalty of 3 points per day (including weekend days). If you submit a late paper, you must email it to me and leave a hard copy in my mailbox in the political science department. Late papers will not be considered submitted until they arrive in my email inbox.

1. A clear statement of the research question, and why it matters.
2. A list of scholarly works relevant to your question.
3. For those works that you chose to read for the individualized reading week, a summary of what they bring to bear on your research question.
4. An outline of your plan for answering the question. You should have a good sense of what kinds of data are available, and how you could use these data in a manageable way to investigate your question.

Paper (due 4/17). The paper is due on April 17th, and is worth 30% of your final grade for the course. Please bring a hard copy to class. Late papers will receive a penalty of 3 points per day (including weekend days). If you submit a late paper, you must email it to me and leave a hard copy in my mailbox in the political science department. Late papers will not be considered submitted until they arrive in my email inbox.

I will read and comment on a draft of your paper, as long as you email it to me no later than April 3rd (two weeks before the deadline). This is optional, but encouraged.

Presentation (4/17 or 4/24). Our last two meetings will be dedicated to research presentations. Sign-ups will be on a first-come, first-serve basis. You will have 10-12 minutes to share your research paper with the class. Time yourself—I will cut you off at 12 minutes! Students are encouraged to use presentation slides. Email the slides to me at least one hour before class, so I can load them all up before we begin. Each presentation will be followed by a few minutes of Q&A. Please note that all papers are due on April 17th, regardless of when the paper is scheduled for presentation.

For Seniors

All Seniors who have designated this course as the Colloquium to fulfill their Senior Capstone requirement must also complete the following:

1. Provide constructive criticism and feedback to your designated peer partner(s). You and your partner should hold meetings, in consultation with the instructor, to discuss your assignments, e.g. research proposals, research methods, rough drafts. A portion of the class participation grade will reflect the quality of your mentoring.
2. Attend at least one of the Senior overviews of the library and online resources hosted by the instructor or another member of the Political Science Department.
3. Generate a poster that summarizes your research question, argument, and findings. The poster should accompany your class presentation and will be displayed at the Senior end-of-year Departmental party in May. The poster will not be graded, but is required to receive a "Pass" for your Senior requirement and will factor into Departmental considerations for Senior Project Distinction.

COURSE TEXTS AND SOFTWARE

The books listed below have been ordered through the bookstore and placed on reserve at the library. All other materials are available through Courseworks.

- Canaday, Margot. 2009. *The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in 20th Century America*. Princeton: Princeton University Press [book available electronically through library].
- Harvey, Anna. 1998. *Votes Without Leverage: Women in American Electoral Politics, 1920-1970*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Hirschmann, Nancy J. 2003. *The Subject of Liberty: Toward a Feminist Theory of Freedom*. Princeton: Princeton University Press [book available electronically through library].
- McDonagh, Eileen and Laura Pappano. 2008. *Playing with the Boys: Why Separate is Not Equal in Sports*. Oxford: Oxford University Press [book available electronically through library].
- Mettler, Suzanne. 1998. *Dividing Citizens: Gender and Federalism in New Deal Public Policy*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Skocpol, Theda. 1992. *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press [book available electronically through library].

COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1 (1/16): Why study gender and public policy?

- In-class research forum: Formulating good research questions.

Week 2 (1/23): Liberty and equality

- Reading assignment
 - MacKinnon, Catharine. 1991. "Reflections on Sex Equality under Law." *The Yale Law Journal* 100(5): 1281-1328.
 - Hirschmann, Nancy J. 2003. *The Subject of Liberty: Toward a Feminist Theory of Freedom*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chapter 1, 3-4 (pp. 1-39, 75-137).
- In-class research forum. Exploring public opinion and Census data.

Week 3 (1/30): Women and men as political categories

- Reading assignment
 - Norrander, Barbara. 2008. "The History of the Gender Gaps." In *Voting the Gender Gap*, Ed. Lois Duke Whittaker. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, pp. 9-32. [Available electronically through the library.]
 - Huddy, Leonie, Erin Cassese and Mary-Kate Lizotte. 2008. "Sources of Political Unity and Disunity among Women." In *Voting the Gender Gap*, Ed. Lois Duke Whittaker. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, pp. 141-169. [Available electronically through the library.]
 - Sapiro, Virginia. 1981. "Research Frontier Essay: When Are Interests Interesting? The Problem of Political Representation of Women." *American Political Science Review* 75: 701-716.
- In-class research forum. Exploring Comparative Agendas Project data.

Week 4 (2/6): Descriptive representation

- Reading assignment
 - Mansbridge, Jane. 1999. "Should Blacks Represent Blacks and Women Represent Women? A Contingent 'Yes'." *Journal of Politics* 61(3): 628-657.
 - Swers, Michele and Carin Larson. 2005. "Women In Congress: Do They Act As Advocates for Women's Issues?" In *Women in Elective Office: Past, Present, and Future*, 2nd Edition. Ed. Sue Thomas and Clyde Wilcox. New York: Oxford University Press: 110-128 [book available electronically through library].
 - Glynn, Adam, and Maya Sen. 2015. "Identifying Judicial Empathy: Does Having Daughters Cause Judges to Rule for Women's Issues?" *American Journal of Political Science* 59(1): 37-54.
 - Peresie, Jennifer L. 2005. "Female Judges Matter: Gender and Collegial Decisionmaking in the Federal Appellate Courts." *The Yale Law Journal* 114: 1759-1790.
- In-class research forum. Exploring additional data sources.

Week 5 (2/13): Individualized reading week

- Reading assignment: Reading assignments for this week will be individualized. Students are responsible for choosing a selection of scholarly work relevant to their proposed research questions. At minimum, the amount of reading should be similar to that typically assigned for class. Your proposal should specify what you read, and summarize how it has informed your research project. Please see me if you would like help choosing materials.
- Additional assignment: Paper proposal due.
- In-class research forum: Discuss paper proposals together. This week, the class meeting will be devoted primarily to the research forum.

Week 6 (2/20): Suffrage and its limits

- Reading assignment
 - Harvey, Anna. 1998. *Votes Without Leverage: Women in American Electoral Politics, 1920-1970*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1, 4-6 (pp. 1-22, 104-237).
- In-class research forum: Discuss paper proposals together.

Week 7 (2/27): From “mothers’ pensions” to “welfare queens”

- Reading assignment
 - Skocpol, Theda. 1992. *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States*. Chapters 1, 8, and 9 (pp. 1-62, 424-524).
 - Hirschmann, Nancy J. 2003. *The Subject of Liberty: Toward a Feminist Theory of Freedom*. Chapter 5 (pp. 138-69).
- In-class research forum: Discuss paper proposals together.

Week 8 (3/6): Differential effects of New Deal policies

- Reading assignment
 - Mettler, Suzanne. 1998. *Dividing Citizens: Gender and Federalism in New Deal Public Policy*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. Chapters 1, 3-6 (pp. 1-27, 53-177).
- Additional assignment: And at least one response paper must be completed by this date.
- In-class research forum: Discuss the progress you are making on your papers, challenges you are facing, and how you might address them.

Week 9 (3/13): No class (spring break)

Week 10 (3/20): Protective labor legislation and the Equal Rights Amendment

- Reading assignment
 - Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers*, Chapter 7 (pp. 373-423).
 - Harrison, Cynthia. 1988. *On Account of Sex: The Politics of Women’s Issues, 1945-1968*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Chapters 1-6 (pp. 3-108).
 - Mansbridge Jane. 1986. *Why We Lost the ERA*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapters 1-3, 10.

- In-class research forum: Discuss the progress you are making on your papers, challenges you are facing, and how you might address them.

Week 11 (3/27): Title IX

- Reading assignment
 - McDonagh, Eileen and Laura Pappano. 2008. *Playing with the Boys: Why Separate is Not Equal in Sports*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Chapters 1-4
- In-class research forum: Discuss the progress you are making on your papers, challenges you are facing, and how you might address them.

Week 12 (4/3): Abortion

- Reading assignment
 - Beisel, Nicola and Tamara Kay. "Abortion, Race, and Gender in Nineteenth-Century America." *American Sociological Review* 69: 498-518.
 - Adams, Greg D. 1997. "Abortion: Evidence of an Issue Evolution." *American Journal of Political Science* 41: 718-37.
 - Norrander, Barbara and Clyde Wilcox. 1999. "Public Opinion and Policymaking in the States: The Case of Post-Roe Abortion Policy." *Policy Studies Journal* 27: 707-22.
 - Berkman, Michael and Robert E. O'Connor. 1993. "Do women legislators matter? Female legislators and state abortion policy." *American Politics Research* 21: 102-24.
- Additional assignment (optional): Last day to submit a paper draft for review.
- In-class research forum: Concise writing exercise.

Week 13 (4/10): Sexual orientation

- Reading assignment
 - Canaday, Margot. 2009. *The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in 20th Century America*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Introduction, Chapters 2-5 (pp. 1-18, 55-213).
- Additional assignment: Your second response paper must be completed by this date.
- In-class research forum: How to prepare and give an effective presentation.

Week 14 (4/17): Research presentations

- Research paper due.

Week 15 (4/24): Research presentations

Discussion Participation Guidelines

Class participation is worth 20% of your final grade. To get an A for participation, you must come prepared to discuss the readings assigned for each week. As you read, think about the questions listed below. This will help you prepare for discussion.

- What is the central argument? (1-2 sentences)
- What kind of evidence is used to support the argument?
 - Were you convinced? Why or why not?
- If there is more than one reading assigned for the week, how do they relate to each other? Are the arguments complementary? Are they in tension with each other? If so, which do you find more compelling and why?
- How do they relate to readings from prior weeks?
 - Again, are they complementary? In tension?
 - What might authors of other books/articles we've read say about this reading?
- Does this reading help to answer any of the motivating questions of the class? If so, how?

I strongly recommend writing some notes immediately after you finish each book or article, so it's still fresh in your mind.

Research Paper Guidelines¹

These guidelines are meant to assist you in writing a strong research paper in the field of political science.

1. Articulate a clear research question engaging a political science topic and a clear thesis summarizing your answer to that question.

- a. Ideal question – Research question is clear and interesting. Great questions are often framed as puzzles.
 - i. e.g. “Why has public opinion on abortion grown more conservative at the same time that public opinion on LGBT rights has grown more liberal?”
- b. Ideal thesis – Thesis is clear, nuanced and innovative.
 - i. e.g. “I argue that, based on news coverage at the time it was decided in 1905, *Lochner v. New York* was not obviously controversial despite its status as a landmark mistake today.”
 - ii. e.g. “We examine whether people who regularly walk past the abortion clinic buffer zone have different views about the first amendment issues related to it than similar people who do not.”
- c. Comments – Your question and thesis should appear very early (i.e. first or second paragraph). Many times the best statement of the paper’s question/thesis ends up in the conclusion by accident. Don’t make this mistake. Students often ask if the question needs to include a question mark. The answer is yes. This format tends to facilitate precision.

2. Engage the relevant academic literature and situate your argument within it.

- a. Ideal – Paper engages existing literature and shows how proposed research speaks to and builds on prior work.
- b. Comments – Summary of academic literature shouldn’t be the point of the paper, but the best work will spend some time using Google Scholar etc. to identify key pieces. The best lit reviews will explain what we know and what we don’t know to highlight where your work fits in and how it contributes to knowledge.

3. Discuss and justify the methodology chosen to answer your research question.

- a. Ideal – Provides clear justification for important methodological choices.
- b. Comments – Explain what you did and why you did it (ideally so someone else could theoretically recreate it). Also explain why your

¹ These guidelines reflect the joint work of Dino Christenson, Katie Einstein, David Glick, Kate Krimmel, Doug Kreiner, and Max Palmer.

approach is a good one to answer the question. May also potentially include discussion of the “road not taken.”

4. Collect, analyze and interpret quantitative and/or qualitative data to test argument / answer question.

- a. Ideal – Strong, creative or ambitious (but manageable) data collection effort. Data analysis is clear. Clearly explains how data either supports or casts doubt on argument/hypotheses and speaks to the question.
- b. Comments – This will vary a lot by project. If you do something quantitative, make your own graphics (don’t just paste from Survey Monkey etc.). Good graphics are big part of the job. Be thoughtful. Think through what your evidence shows and doesn’t show. Clearly explain. Whenever possible, use graphs instead of tables. Graphs are easier to look at, and they force you to think carefully about the comparisons you want to make.

5. Draw broader implications from your research.

- a. Ideal – Clear discussion of broader implications and how paper contributes to literature. Demonstrate awareness of limitations on generalizability.
- b. Comments
 - i. Think long and hard about what your work shows and doesn’t show. Most importantly, what does it tell us beyond the narrow circumstance you studied? Why should we care? What does it mean? So what?
 - ii. As important – tell us what it doesn’t tell us, what are the limitations. “Small sample size” or “only one case study” is a good starting point in many cases, but it’s also often a generic answer. You can do more and better. Tell the reader why, specifically, your one case provides limited generalizability and postulate how your findings may or may not differ in other contexts. For example, if you study affordable housing policy in New York City, discuss how they may operate differently here than in less wealthy places, but also discuss how your findings may offer insights beyond New York (i.e. we can imagine the results would be similar in other expensive cities like San Francisco and Boston). If you study a highly salient Supreme Court case involving same sex marriage, tell us whether your insights would apply to all Supreme Court cases or only other salient ones and why it matters.
 - iii. Often this will happen near the end of the paper. A one paragraph summary of the paper is an abstract, NOT a conclusion. The last couple of paragraphs are where you take it to the next level and say what it means – this is where you can even speculate and extrapolate a bit.

6. Write clearly and professionally.

- a. Ideal – Writing is clear and precise. Composition structure is clear, logical, and compelling. Prose is fluid and professional. Virtually error-free.
- b. Comments
 - i. Proofread! Sloppy writing detracts from your argument and research findings. Please make sure that every paragraph has a (as in one and only one) clear point. One idea per paragraph will get you a long way. In addition, check your paper for awkward sentence structures, repeated words, and the passive voice (see the next point.) Finish your paper and then find at least one sentence in each paragraph that you can rewrite more directly and efficiently. Repeat!
 - ii. Avoid passive voice (this is far too common). Sometimes the first person voice is acceptable in research, especially when describing what you did (e.g. “I selected 10 small businesses from Yelp and interviewed their owners” is better than “10 small businesses were selected...”).
 - iii. After you’ve written your first draft, make a “backwards outline.” That is, construct an outline of your paper by summarizing the main point of each paragraph and thinking about how it contributes to your central thesis. If it doesn’t, cut it! This will help you eliminate excessive background information, and keep your paper focused.