Course Description

This course surveys central topics in the study of gender and comparative politics, covering such issues as comparative methods, social movements, political parties, elections, political representation, states and public policy, and institutions. It seeks to map the trajectory of feminist work in various areas of comparative research, drawing on examples from various world regions and time periods to analyze similarities and differences across cases around the globe.

Course Requirements

This course aims to introduce students to basic concepts and debates in gender and comparative politics, focusing on developing a variety of analytical skills. Grades for the course will be calculated in the following way:

- **Class participation** (30%) You are expected to come to class prepared and to participate actively in class discussions. Being prepared means doing the readings in advance of class sessions, with notes on issues to raise during the class.
- **Class presentations** (20%) You will be assigned dates to bring in additional readings for presentation and class discussion. These readings can be from the list of ‘recommended’ readings, but could also be a recently published article or book not on the syllabus. You should present a summary of the piece — including its motivation, methods, and findings — and reflect over how it speaks back to the other readings for that class session.
- **Review essay** (50%) You will write a review essay — approximately 8,000-10,000 words long — that surveys the literature in one particular area in the gendered study of comparative politics. You are not restricted to the topics outlined in the syllabus. The essay should discuss key contributions, evolution of research questions, and ongoing debates within the field. Ideally, this exercise will help serve as the foundation for a literature review in a future doctoral dissertation, but this is not required. Students are advised to consult with me in an ongoing manner over the course of the semester to discuss the topic, potential readings, and any issues that arise in the writing of this essay. **Deadline:** May 13.

Course Policies

This course seeks to provide a comprehensive introduction to the gendered study of comparative politics. It involves extensive reading prior to class, but also seeks to continue learning and reflection during class periods. To help achieve these aims:

- **Attendance** is required.
- **Bring a copy of the readings** to each class session.
- **Rethink, if necessary, your reading strategy** to maximize absorption of the material.

Reading Tips

Each week of this course requires students to gain familiarity with a large number of course readings. While students are welcome to read each article and book chapter in great depth, one of the primary skills being cultivated in this course is the ability to quickly identify, condense, and situate the central contributions of each
piece in order to gain a broad and nuanced perspective on each week’s topic. We will be working through the ‘big picture’ together during each class. To prepare for each class discussion, students are encouraged to adopt a pragmatic approach for processing the readings:

- **Carefully read the abstract**, if it is an article, or the introductory section, if it is a book chapter. These will provide a condensed overview of the main concepts, theories, arguments, data, and findings, enabling you to get a quick basic grasp of the author’s approach.
- **Skim the literature review**, which will help you see how the author seeks to build on prior work.
- **Make note** of the concepts and theories introduced, as well as the hypotheses being tested.
- **Observe** what data has been collected and what methods are being applied to analyze it.
- **Closely read the findings, discussion, and conclusion**.
- **Engage in critical reflection**: Are the concepts/theories compelling and/or well-supported? Are the data and methods appropriate for answering the research question? Would different data/methods lead to different conclusions?
- After completing all the readings, try to **map the contributions in relation to one another**, thinking about how each piece speaks to the others (hint: look at the list at the top of each reading list). What is the ‘added value’ of each piece to larger debates around this topic?

**Required Readings**

The majority of the readings are available on the course website. Students are advised to purchase books that may be particularly relevant to their future research, but this is not required. A helpful resource that may be worth purchasing is:


*Indicates readings from this volume.
**Indicates readings available on my website at [http://mlkrook.org/publications/](http://mlkrook.org/publications/).
**COURSE SCHEDULE**

**January 27: Comparative Methods**

**Topics:** definitions of ‘gender’ and ‘politics,’ gender and research methods, feminist political science, comparative politics of gender


**Recommended:**


Critical Perspectives Symposium on “Moving to a Comparative Politics of Gender?” 2006. Politics & Gender 2 (2): 221-263.


February 3: Social Movements

Topics: feminist movements, women’s movements, women in social movements


**Recommended:**


**February 10: Political Parties**

**Topics:** women’s movements, party competition, party structures, women’s sections, women’s parties


Recommended:


February 17: Suffrage and Voting

Topics: suffrage campaigns, women’s right to vote, gender gaps in voting, voter gender biases


Recommended:


**February 24: Resistance, Backlash, and Violence against Women in Politics**

**Topics:** sexism and resistance, political misogyny, violence against women in politics, backlash politics


Recommended:


**March 2: Elections**

**Topics:** candidate selection, electoral systems, electing women


*Recommended:*


**March 9: Representation**

*Topics*: theories of representation, critical mass debates, rethinking representation


Recommended:


**Celis, Karen, Sarah Childs, Johanna Kantola, and Mona Lena Krook. 2014. “Constituting Women’s Interests through Representative Claims.” Politics & Gender 10 (2): 149-174.**


**March 23: Gender Quotas**

**Topics:** debates, adoption, implementation, impact beyond numbers


Recommended:


**Nugent, Mary and Mona Lena Krook. 2016. “All-Women Shortlists: Myths and Realities.” *Parliamentary Affairs* 69 (1): 115-135.**


**March 30: Democracy and Democratization**

**Topics:** theories of democracy, defining democracy, democratic transitions


**Recommended:**


**April 6: The State**

**Topics:** feminist theories of the state, welfare states, state feminism, state reconfiguration


Recommended:


**April 13: Public Policy**

**Topics:** theorizing public policy, gender equality approaches, gender mainstreaming


**Recommended:**


April 20: Institutions

Topics: formal and informal institutions, gendered institutions, feminist institutionalism


Recommended:


**April 27: New Research Frontiers**

*Topics:* masculinities, sexuality, intersectionality

*All students are required to bring in an additional reading.*


**Recommended:**


