Basic Information
Class meets: Monday, 6:10 - 9:00 p.m.
Instructor: Dr. Heather L. Ondercin
Office: 208C Stubbs Hall
E-mail: ondercin@lsu.edu
Office Phone: If calling during office hours 578-4804. If calling some other time 578-2550.
Office hours: Tuesday 2:00-5:00 pm and by appointment. Held in 118F Himes Hall (Women’s and Gender Studies)

E-mail is an effective way to reach me, I check my messages several times a day. If you can’t attend my office hours, talk to me and we can make an appointment. Never hesitate to talk to me if you have a problem, comment, or concern.

Course Description

Gender is a central organizing principle of our society, as a result it is also a central organizing principle of political institutions and individual behavior. This seminar is designed to provide an overview of research on gender and politics, with a specific focus on domestic politics. The seminar starts with an overview of theoretical perspectives on the study of gender and politics. Here we will discuss the relationship between research on gender and politics and the discipline of political science. We will also briefly cover theoretical perspectives on gender as a social construction and gender as an institution. We will use these theoretical perspective to underline our discussions throughout the rest of the semester.

Following our theoretical discussions, we will turn our attention to the role of women in social movements. First, we will examine the different women’s movements in the United States. We will also address women’s movements outside the United States and women’s participation in other social movements. We continue our discussion of women’s involvement in political organizations with the role of women in political parties. Then we will examine gender and mass political behavior, focusing on both political participation and public opinion. Next, we examine issues of women’s representation from several different perspectives, including running for elected office and political leadership. Finally, we touch on gender and public policy.

The study of gender and politics does not fit nicely into a single subfield of political science, rather it is applicable to all subfields. I have narrowed the scope of this class in two ways. First, our readings will be drawn primarily from the subfields of American politics and comparative politics. Second, the readings will focus on aspects of domestic politics. Unfortunately this does leave out a considerable body of feminist political thought and work
on gender and international relations. However, the theoretical frameworks and substantive research covered in this class will still benefit those students whose interest in gender and politics lie outside of the scope of material in this class. Additionally, the research on gender and politics tends to be more interdisciplinary than many of the other research areas in political science. This is reflected in the selection of readings that draw on history, sociology, and other disciplines.

The class can be taken for credit in either of the subfields of American or comparative politics. The form of credit you shall receive is dependent on which section you are registered for so please make sure you are registered for the correct section. We will all read the same materials. However, I expect that the subject matter of your research proposal (more about this below) should correspond to the section you are registered for. Additionally, this class has been approved for the minor in Women’s and Gender Studies.

**Course Requirements and Grading**

There are three requirements for this class: participation, discussion papers, and a research proposal.

Class participation accounts for 35% of your final grade. This component consists of: completion of all the readings listed below and active participation in class discussions. I strongly encourage you to take detailed notes on all the readings and bring those notes to class. Trust me, these notes will be invaluable later when you take your comprehensive exams and are working on future research. It is worth the time and effort now to create this resource for the future. When completing the readings you need to think of connections, similarities, and contradictions in the readings within each week and also larger themes that connect the readings throughout the entire semester. Additionally, students are expected at a minimum to answer the following questions about each reading:

- What are the major theoretical concepts? How does the author(s)’ definition differ from those used by other authors? How do the authors make those concepts concrete in their analysis/discussion?

- What is the major question or puzzle the author trying to address? How does it fit with the other literature that we have read? Why/how is the question important?

- What methodologies do the author(s) employ to address the major question? Why are they appropriate? Are there ways the author(s) could have realistically improved on them? How would changing the methodology have changed the article?

- What conclusions does the author(s) draw about the puzzle or question s/he is trying to address? Which conclusions are particularly surprising given the literature?
• What possibilities for future research are raised by the piece? What are the theoretical or empirical questions that are left to be answered? What new evidence might be brought to the question?

You are only responsible for the required readings. The supplemental readings are offered only as references and you are not required to read them. However, you may find them helpful in terms of studying for comprehensive exams and your final paper. Participation in class discussions will be assessed on both quality and quantity.

The second requirement of the course is five discussion papers based on the readings for a particular week, plus one of the supplemental readings. The discussion papers should be critical responses to the readings and should not be summaries of the readings. You should engage the material and critically analyze it from the perspective of theory, logic, design, method, evidence, conclusions, other research, and/or its overall contribution to the study of gender and politics. The first paragraph of the paper should identify the central theme and the rest of the paper should be used to develop this theme. Papers are due by 9:00 am on Monday. Papers should be typed, double spaced, and 4-6 pages in length. Please e-mail the papers to me and your classmates as either a word or pdf document. Each response paper is worth 6% of the final grade for the class, for a total of 30%.

Finally, you are to complete a research proposal for your final project. A research proposal is an important element of scholarly work. They are fundamental when seeking both internal and external support for your research. Additionally, the process of writing a proposal before jumping into a research project is productive because it allows you to fully think through the project. While the content of a research proposal is highly dependent on the subject matter of the research and theoretical and methodological perspectives of your research, there are common elements to all research proposal. Generally speaking, a research proposal should provide a detailed description of your planned research that explains the significance of the project. The research proposal should provide an explanation of the research question and details about how you intend to answer the research question, including information about the sources of your data and methods. Additionally, a research proposal should be written with the audience in mind, which is commonly a combination of generally educated academics and researchers active in the area of your proposed research. The nature of the audience means that there needs to be sufficient detail and knowledge about the extant literature to satisfy the experts, but not so over burdened with jargon that the generalists lose the significance of your project. Your proposal should be written as if you were going to complete the project. This means that the project you propose is feasible and that you are able to provide significant details about the execution of the project.

The research proposal is due May 12th. Please turn in both a hard copy and an electronic copy of the research proposal. I encourage you to stay in contact with me throughout the semester on the progress of the project. Additionally, you will be required to turn in a 1 page topic summary of the proposal February 23rd and an annotated bibliography on April
12\textsuperscript{th}. Failure to turn in either the topic summary or annotated bibliography will result in a full letter deduction on the final grade of the research proposal. The research proposal is worth 35\% of your grade for the class. The paper should be around 20 pages, not including tables, figures, and references.

I assume that students possess an intermediate understanding of statistics and research design; including interpretation and estimation of standard OLS regression and estimation techniques for limited dependent variables. If you do not possess these skills your understanding of some of the material will be hindered. Please talk with me about ways we can make sure you get the most you can out of the class. Several of the readings will utilize more advanced methods, in those cases we will discuss these methods in class.

Please note the disability and academic honesty statements at the end of the syllabus.

**Required Readings**

Readings are listed in the course outline below. Most of these will be available through J-STOR or other on-line archives. It is your responsibility to obtain copies of these readings. Readings not available on-line are available as a PDF on the course’s Moodle page. Students should print out and bring copies of all the readings to class. Additionally, there is one book that is required for the course. This book is available through many on-line retailers.

Required book:


**Tentative Course Outline\textsuperscript{[1]}**

**Week 1, January 19\textsuperscript{th}: Martin Luther King Day – No Class**

**Week 2, January 26\textsuperscript{th}: Perspectives on the study of Gender and Political Science**


\textsuperscript{[1]}Any changes to this schedule will be announced verbally in class. It is the student’s responsibility to note changes and adhere to the new schedule.

Supplemental Readings:


Week 3, February 4th: Theoretical Foundations of the Study of Gender and Politics


Supplemental Readings:


Week 4, February 9th: Gender and Political Institutions


**Supplemental Readings:**


**Week 5, February 16th:** Mardi Gras Break – No Class

**Week 6, February 23rd:** Women’s Movements in the United States


**Supplemental Readings:**


**Week 7, March 2nd: Women’s Movements Around the Globe in a Comparative Perspective**


• Jude Howell, “Gender, Civil Society and the State in China,” in Vicky Randall and Georgina Waylen (eds), *Gender, Politics and the State* Routledge.


**Supplemental Readings:**


Week 8, March 9th: Women in Other Social Movements


Supplemental Readings:


Week 9, March 16th: Gender and Parties


Supplemental Readings:


Week 10, March 23rd: Mass Political Participation


Supplemental Readings:


Week 11, March 30th: Gender Gaps in Public Opinion


Supplemental Readings:

Week 12, April 6th: Spring Break – No Class

Week 13, April 12th: Issues of Women’s Representation


Supplemental Readings:


• Do Women Represent Women? Rethinking the “Critical Mass” Debate – the critical perspectives on gender and politics section of Politics & Gender December 2006. Following articles:

Week 14, April 20th: Gender and Running for Elected Office


Supplemental Readings:


**Week 15, April 27th: Political Leadership**


Supplemental Readings


Week 16, May 4th: Public Policy


Supplemental Readings in Organizational and Policy Success


Supplemental Readings in Family Policy and the Welfare State


Weldon, Laurel. On women’s movements and Violence against Women.
Academic Honesty: All students are expected to work independently on all assignments. Group and collaborative work is not permitted unless specific instructions are given. Proper citations must be used to acknowledge any ideas, concepts, theories, organizational formats, and writing that is not your own. If you are not clear on how to properly give credit to others, please see me before turning in any assignment. All students are required to read and be familiar with the Code of Student Conduct found at www.lsu.edu/judicialaffairs as well as all other university policies and procedures. If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism see: http://www.lib.lsu.edu/instruction/plagiarism/html I take this issue very seriously and will check all things turned into me for signs of plagiarism.

Students with disabilities: Reasonable accommodations will be made for any student with documented disabilities to ensure that the student is able to participate in class to the best of their abilities. Unfortunately Stubbs Hall, the building where my office is located, is not ADA compliant, however I am more than willing to meet with students at alternative locations. If you anticipate needing any type of accommodation in this course or have questions about physical access, please tell the instructor as soon as possible. Reasonable accommodations will be made for all students with disabilities, but it is the student’s responsibility to inform the instructor early in the term. It is also the student’s responsibility to register with the disability service office on campus. Do not wait until just before an exam to decide you want to inform the instructor of a learning disability; any accommodations for disabilities must be arranged well in advance.