WOMEN IN THE U.S. CONGRESS

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University of Minnesota

POL 3310H
2:30-3:45 Tuesday and Thursday
Carlson School of Management 1-149
Spring 2010

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Course Description

Seventy-three women serve in the U.S. House of Representatives and 17 serve in the U.S. Senate. This seminar explores the ways in which congresswomen affect representation and policy making, along with the factors that enhance and constrain women’s election to Congress and women’s influence in Congress. We focus on gender dynamics in congressional elections, representation, the legislative process, and the pursuit of power inside Congress. Although the number of congresswomen has increased during the last two decades—only 25 women served in the U.S. Congress twenty years ago—women remain dramatically underrepresented. We begin the course by uncovering the sources of women’s underrepresentation by studying gender differences in candidate emergence and congressional elections. Next, we ask whether congresswomen and congressmen advocate different policy agendas and issue positions. We consider the representational implications of the gender differences we uncover, including substantive policy differences and non-policy benefits that are conferred to citizens when women occupy positions of political power. We analyze the institutional features of Congress, asking how congressional parties, committee, and rules may help and hinder congresswomen pursuing power and policy.

Required Texts/Readings

The required readings for this course include 2 books and many articles posted on WebCT (www.myu.umn.edu). On occasion, I will post short additional required readings.


Course Requirements

Students will closely track the congressional careers of several members of Congress in three short papers and data collection assignments. Students will write a research paper of at least ten pages that addresses one of the themes of the course using the data that we collect as a class, and students will share their findings with the class in a short presentation near the end of the semester. In addition, there will be a take-home midterm and an in-class midterm. Class sessions will include lecture and discussion. Class participation is an essential component of this course. Students are expected to attend regularly, to read the assigned readings prior to class, and to come to class prepared to discuss the course material. On occasion, I will distribute questions about the readings. Sometimes, you will be asked to respond to the questions while completing the readings. Other times, I will distribute the questions during the class in which we are discussing the readings.

Grades will be determined as follows:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Component</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Class participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Take-home midterm exam</td>
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<td>20%</td>
<td>In-class midterm exam</td>
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<tr>
<td>25%</td>
<td>3 short papers and data collection</td>
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<td>25%</td>
<td>Research paper and presentation</td>
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To pass this class you must complete every assignment. **You are responsible for keeping a hard copy back-up of your papers.**

Late Policy

Papers are due at the beginning of class. Late papers will be penalized by 5 points (out of 100) every 24 hours they are late. If you need to take a makeup exam, you must arrange it well in advance of the exam date and document your (valid) reason.

Academic Dishonesty

You are expected to be familiar with the University’s policies on scholastic dishonesty: [http://advisingtools.class.umn.edu/cgep/studentconduct.html](http://advisingtools.class.umn.edu/cgep/studentconduct.html)

You should consult a style manual for proper forms of citation. I will actively investigate potential cases of cheating and plagiarism, and any evidence thereof will result in disciplinary charges, as well as an ‘F’ in the course.

Writing Support

I encourage you to consult the Center for Writing: [http://writing.umn.edu](http://writing.umn.edu), a clearinghouse for the many writing resources available at the University.
I. Introduction to Women in the U.S. Congress

Tuesday, January 19: Course Introduction

Thursday, January 21: Overview of Women in Congress

1. *Women Transforming Congress*, Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4.


4. CAWP Fact Sheets on women in the U.S. House and Senate

II: Running for Congress: Political Ambition and Women’s Emergence as Candidates

Tuesday, January 26: Women as Candidates in Congressional Elections


Thursday, January 28: Women’s Candidacies in the Context of Hillary Clinton and Sarah Palin


Tuesday, February 2: Why Not More Women?


Thursday, February 4: First short paper and data assignment due,
Take home midterm assigned
Part III: Campaigning for Congress

Tuesday, February 9: Voters: Vote Choice and Gender Stereotypes


Thursday, February 11: Parties, Money, and Media Coverage


Tuesday, February 16: Take Home Midterm Due in class

Part IV. Inside Congress

Thursday, February 18: Women in the House of Representatives

1. Excerpts from Schroeder, Pat. 1999. *24 Years of House Work . . . and the Place is Still a Mess.* (WebCT)


Tuesday, February 23: Women in the House, continued.


Part V: How Does it Matter? Representation and Legislative Behavior

Thursday, February 25: Representation in the District: “Homestyle”


Tuesday, March 2: NO CLASS
Thursday, March 4: Descriptive Representation


Tuesday, March 9: Substantive Representation and Women’s Issues


Thursday, March 11: Substantive Representation, cont.

1. Women Transforming Congress, Chapters 12, 14.


3. Pearson, Kathryn, and Logan Dancey. “Speaking For the Underrepresented: The Gender Dynamics of Floor Speeches in the House of Representatives.”

Tuesday, March 16: SPRING BREAK

Thursday, March 18: SPRING BREAK

Tuesday, March 23: Substantive Representation, continued

1. Excerpts from Dodson, Debra. 2006. The Impact of Women in Congress. (WebCT)

2. Women Transforming Congress Chapter 9

Thursday, March 25: Second paper and data assignment due

Also read about the Congressional Caucus for Women’s Issues and its co-chairs: http://www.womenspolicy.org/caucus/
Tuesday, March 30: Gender and Race


2. Read about the Congressional Black Caucus, Congressional Hispanic Caucus, Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus
http://www.thecongressionalblackcaucus.com/  
http://velazquez.house.gov/chf/  

Thursday, April 1: Women in the Senate

1. Women Transforming Congress, Chapter 11.


Part V: Congressional Organization, Partisanship, and Women’s Pursuit of Power

Tuesday, April 6: Parties and Partisanship in Congress


2. Pearson, Kathryn. “Gendered Partisanship in the U.S. Congress” (WebCT)


Thursday, April 8: Women as Party Leaders


Tuesday, April 13: Committees in Congress


Thursday, April 15: **Third paper and data assignment due**

Tuesday, April 20: From a Comparative Perspective


Thursday, April 22: **In-class bluebook MIDTERM**

Tuesday, April 27: Research presentations

Thursday, April 29: Research presentations

Tuesday, May 4: Research presentations

Thursday, May 6: Last day of class, research presentations

**Friday, May 7: Research paper due by 4:30**

Turn in your paper in 1414 Social Sciences Building (in my box) by 4:30 (Political Science Department Office closes at 4:30!)
ONLINE RESOURCES

Center for American Women & Politics  http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~cawp/
House Clerk’s website on congresswomen  http://womenincongress.house.gov/
U.S. Senate  http://www.senate.gov
Library of Congress  http://www.loc.gov
THOMAS – Legislative Information  http://thomas.loc.gov
  http://thomas.loc.gov/home/legbranch/legbranch.html
Roll Call  http://www.rollcall.com (ask Prof. Pearson for password)
The Hill  http://www.thehill.com
C-SPAN  http://www.cspan.org
  http://www.c-span.org/resources/congress.asp
CQ Weekly Report  http://library.cqpress.com/cqweekly/
  (from UMN library)
CongressDaily:AM and PM  http://nationaljournal.com/pubs/congressdaily/  (from UMN library)
CQ Today Midday Update  email to subscribe from cq.com:
  middayupdate-subscribe@lists.cq.com
Congress.org  http://www.congress.org

News Coverage:
Washington Post:  http://www.washingtonpost.com

Party Organizations:
DNC:  http://www.democrats.org/
RNC:  http://www.rnc.org/
DSCC:  http://www.dsc.org/
NRSC:  http://www.nrsc.org/
DCCC:  http://www.democraticaction.org/
NRCC:  http://nrcc.org/

Campaign Finance:
FEC:  http://www.fec.gov/
Open Secrets:  http://www.opensecrets.org/
Campaign Finance Institute:  http://www.cfinst.org/
527s:  http://www.irs.gov/charities/political/
Political Money Line:  http://politicalmoneyline.com/
Brookings Institution:  http://www.brookings.edu/gs/cf/cf_hp.htm