

Candidate Profile Research Project
Women and Politics
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In this paper you are acting as a political consultant to either the Republican or Democratic Party. You have been hired to advise the party in their efforts to recruit women candidates for Congress and statewide office. With that task in mind the party has asked you to evaluate the performance of a particular female candidate who is running in the 2010 elections. To what extent if any, has the candidate's gender impacted the race in terms of the issues the candidate emphasizes, the style and content of the overall campaign, voter reaction to the candidate, and media coverage of the race. Using your findings from this race, discuss what lessons can be learned about the advantages and disadvantages female candidates must confront when they run for office.

Sources

To fully address the issues, you will need to draw on a variety of sources. For information on the candidate and analyses of the campaign at different stages, you should search local and national newspapers through databases such as *Lexis/Nexis*. *CQ Weekly*, *National Journal*, and *Campaigns and Elections* magazines may also have articles about the race. National Journal's website Hotline and the Washington Post weblog The Fix also follows electoral politics.

CQ's Politics in America or *The Almanac of American Politics* can provide you with basic information on the political leanings and demographic characteristics of a state or district. Financial data on how well funded the candidates are and the sources of their funds can be found on the Federal Elections Commission website, fec.gov or the Center for Responsive Politics website, opensecrets.org.

To assess larger issues about the advantages and disadvantages faced by women who run for office, you will need to consult academic sources beyond the readings assigned in class. Examples of books on the subject include Richard Logan Fox *Gender Dynamics in Congressional Elections*, Kathleen Dolan *Voting for Women*, Bystrom, Banwart, Kaid and Robertson *Gender and Candidate Communication*, and Barbara Burrell *A Woman's Place is in the House*.

Academic journals such as *American Journal of Political Science*, *The Journal of Politics*, *Politics & Gender*, and *Women, Politics, and Policy* also include numerous articles on these topics. You can search many issues of these journals through the library database JSTOR. More recent issues can be found in the library.

Throughout the text of the paper use parenthetical citations. Your bibliography should include all sources used including books, journal articles, and newspaper articles.

GRADING: The Candidate profile project constitutes 40% of your final grade. 30% will be based on the 7-10 page paper and 10% will be based on the in class presentation.

In the paper, I will evaluate the quality of the analysis, the clarity of your writing and the extent of your research. A good paper will draw on a mix of books, journal articles and newspaper reports. Include full citations of all material used in the bibliography. Use parenthetical citations within the text of the paper.

The in-class presentation should be a 15 minute discussion of your race and analysis for the political party. Be prepared to answer questions from the audience. Students are encouraged to use Power Point and other multi-media to enhance their presentation.

The presentation will be evaluated based on (1) Organization and clarity. The material fits into a 15 minute presentation without seeming to waste time or grasp for additional topics. It should not appear that this is the first time the presentation is being given or that the speaker is making it up as he/she goes along. (2) Demonstration of mastery of the material and depth of the analysis. Additionally students should be able to answer audience questions about the race. (3) The quality of visual aids and/ or handouts for the class such as copies of campaign material, illustrative graphs of advantages and disadvantages faced by each candidate. (4) Public speaking skills such as eye contact and clarity of speech.

DUE DATE: All papers and presentations will be due, **THURSDAY MARCH 18**. The order of presentations will be determined randomly by lot.

THE RACES

SENATE:	Martha Coakley (D) Democratic primary and race with Scott Brown (R)	Massachusetts
	Blanche Lincoln (D)	Arkansas
	Kelly Ayotte (R)	New Hampshire
	Kristen Gilibrand (D)	New York

GOVERNOR: Kay Bailey Hutchison (R) v. Gov. Rick Perry (R) Republican Primary
Texas