

**GOVT 429 Department Seminar: Women and Politics**

Spring 2010

Dr. Michele Swers

Thurs 1:15-3:05PM Reiss 283

Office Hours: Tues. & Thurs. 11:40-12:40PM or by Appointment, ICC 655

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**Course Description:** This course provides an overview of the major debates concerning women and politics. We begin by examining the historical evolution of women's participation in American politics from the fight for suffrage through the modern feminist movement. In the next section of the class, we analyze the experience of women as voters, candidates, and officeholders. This part of the course deals with such questions as: What is the gender gap? Are voters biased against female candidates? Do female politicians have different issue priorities than male politicians? The course concludes by analyzing the impact of specific public policies on women. The policy areas we investigate include abortion, child care, education, and employment issues.

**Course Goals:** Students should: (1) understand the historical evolution of women's political participation and the obstacles women faced in their efforts to achieve equal political rights; (2) critically evaluate conventional wisdom and media reports concerning women's political behavior as voters, candidates, and officeholders; (3) analyze the influence of race, class, and gender considerations on the development of public policy; and (4) develop political research skills as well as written and oral analytical skills.

**Required Readings:**

Kraditor, Aileen S. 1981. *The Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement: 1890-1920*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

Lawrence, Regina G. and Melody Rose. 2010. *Hillary Clinton's Race for the White House: Gender Politics & The Media on the Campaign Trail* Colorado: Lynne Rienner.

Mansbridge, Jane. 1986. *Why We Lost the ERA*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Schreiber, Ronnee. 2008. *Righting Feminism: Conservative Women and American Politics* New York: Oxford University Press

All the required books are available for purchase at the bookstore. Additional readings will be placed on reserve and Blackboard.

**Course Requirements:**

Students are required to complete each set of readings prior to the week for which they are assigned. To facilitate class discussion, I ask students to bring the assigned

readings to class. I expect students to attend all class meetings and participate actively in the discussion. Participation will be judged based on a demonstrated understanding of the readings and an ability to critique the arguments and apply theories to contemporary events.

**Grading:**

Weekly Reaction Papers: 50 %

Candidate Profile Papers and Presentation: 40% [Paper (7-10 pages) 30%, Presentation 10%]. Papers due Thursday March 18. Order of presentations will be assigned in class.

Participation: 10%

**Weekly Reaction Papers:** Students will write a 3-4 page paper. Topics are provided in the syllabus under each week's readings. The papers are meant to provide an analysis of the arguments offered in the readings rather than a summary of ideas. The papers will guide class discussion. Students must post their paper on Blackboard by 5:00PM on the Wednesday before class meets and turn in a hard copy in class. Papers cannot be submitted after the class meeting.

**Candidate Profile Paper:** Each student will be assigned a female candidate who is running for the House, Senate, or Governor in 2010. Students will use academic readings and newspaper reports on the candidate to develop a profile of the candidate and an evaluation of her race in relation to the literature on women candidates. Students will develop a 15-minute presentation evaluating their race for the class. *Late profile papers will be marked down ten points for each day late. Late presentations are not accepted.* Further information about the candidate profiles will be provided in class. The profile papers are due Thursday March 18 **at the beginning of class**. Presentations will begin the same day. The order of individual presentations will be assigned in class.

The grade ranges are defined as follows:

A= unusual excellence (A- 90-92; A 93-100)

B= work distinctly above average (B- 80-82; B 83-86; B+ 87-89)

C= work of average quality (C- 70-72; C 73-76; C+ 77-79)

D= below average work, the lowest passing mark (D 60-66; D+ 67-69)

F= Failure, No course Credit (59 and below)

**I am not inclined to review grades and reserve the right to adjust grades down as well as up.**

## COURSE SCHEDULE

### Week 1

Jan. 14

Introduction and Overview

### Week 2

**Jan. 21**                      **The Women's Suffrage Movement**

Kraditor *Ideas of the Women's Suffrage Movement* entire

*Paper Topic:* Kraditor notes that over time suffragists' arguments for the vote evolved from arguments based on justice to claims based on expediency. Provide an example of how the suffragists utilized each type of argument. Select a contemporary political movement such as gay rights or immigration reform. Are the proponents of these movements more likely to achieve their goals by using arguments based on justice or expediency? Explain why?

**Week 3**

**Jan. 28**                      **The Women's Suffrage Movement Continued**

Video Presentation: *Not for Ourselves Alone*

**Week 4**

**Feb. 4**                      **The Modern Women's Movement**

Hartmann, Susan. 1989. *From Margin to Mainstream: American Women and Politics since 1960*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. Ch. 3: p. 48-71.

Mansbridge, Jane. 1986. *Why We Lost the ERA*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapters 1-4 & 6

*Paper Topic:* Explain why the ERA failed. Develop an argument explaining why the ERA should pass or why women do not need this protection.

**Week 5**

**Feb. 11**                      **The Backlash Against Feminism**

Klatch, Rebecca. 1987. *Women of the New Right*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. Chs. 2 & 5 p. 20-54, 119-153.

Schreiber, Ronnee. 2008. *Righting Feminism: Conservative Women and American Politics* Oxford University Press Chs 1-4 and 7

*Paper Topic:* In what ways does the conflict between feminist and conservative women reflect the arguments between suffragists and anti-suffragists? What is the most compelling argument made by each side?

**Week 6**

**Feb. 18**                      **Gender Gap**

*Voting the Gender Gap* Chapters 1 (Norrander), 8 ( Huddy, Cassese, and Lizotte),

Burrell, Barbara. 2005. "Gender, Presidential Elections and Public Policy: Making Women's Votes Matter." *Journal of Women, Politics and Policy* 27: 31-50.

*Paper Topic:* What are the major sources of the gender gap in public opinion and demographically (which groups of women drive the gender gap)? Does the gender gap increase the political influence of women in the Democratic and Republican Party? Why or why not?

## **THURSDAY FEB 18. CANDIDATE PROFILE ASSIGNMENTS DISTRIBUTED**

### **Week 7**

**Feb. 25**

### **Women as Candidates Part I**

Dolan, Kathleen. 2005. "How the Public Views Women Candidates." In *Women and Elective Office: Past, Present, and Future* eds. Sue Thomas and Clyde Wilcox New York: Oxford University Press.

Fox, Richard L. and Jennifer Lawless. 2004. "Entering the Arena: Gender and the Decision to Run for Office." *American Journal of Political Science* 48: 264-280.

Niven, David. 1998. "Party Elites and Women Candidates: The Shape of Bias." *Women & Politics* 19 (2): 57-80.

Falk, Erika and Kate Kenski. 2006. "Issue Saliency and Gender Stereotypes: Support for Women as Presidents in Times of War and Terrorism." *Social Science Quarterly* 87: 1-18.

*Paper Topic:* What is the most compelling explanation for why more women do not run for office? What policy reforms or program initiatives would you suggest to increase the number of women running?

### **Week 8**

**March 4**

### **Women as Candidates Part II**

Lawrence, Regina G. and Melody Rose. 2010. *Hillary Clinton's Race for the White House: Gender Politics & The Media on the Campaign Trail* Colorado: Lynne Rienner.

*Paper Topic:* Is the media biased against women candidates? Does contemporary media coverage, help, hurt, or have no impact on women's candidacies for legislative and executive office?

## **Spring Break March 5-14**

### **Week 9**

**March 18                      Presentation of Candidate Profiles**

**CANDIDATE PROFILE RESEARCH PAPERS AND PRESENTATIONS  
THURSDAY MARCH 18**

**Week 10**

**March 25      Women in Office**

Mansbridge, Jane. 1999. "Should Blacks Represent Blacks and Women Represent Women? A Contingent 'Yes.'" *Journal of Politics* 61: 628-657.

Michele Swers and Carin Larson 2005. "Women in Congress: Do They Act as Advocates for Women's Issues?" in *Women and Elective Office Past, Present, and Future* eds. Sue Thomas and Clyde Wilcox

Hawkesworth, Mary. 2003. "Congressional Enactments of Race-Gender: Toward a Theory of Raced-Gendered Institutions." *American Political Science Review* 97: 529-550.

Sandalow, Marc. 2008. *Madam Speaker: Nancy Pelosi's Life, Times, and Rise to Power* Ch 11, 12,13, & 15. New York: Modern Times.

*Paper Topic:* Feminist theorists like Jane Mansbridge claim that the election of women will lead to better substantive representation of women's interests. In what ways does the empirical evidence support and/or undermine these claims? Should voters interested in women's issues vote for the female candidate in a party primary (ie Democratic man v. Democratic woman in a Democratic primary, Republican man v. Republican woman in a Republican primary)?

**Week 11**

**April 1              Easter Break**

**Week 12**

**April 8              Abortion and Reproductive Issues**

Jost, Kenneth and Kathy Koch. 2006. "Abortion Showdowns." *CQ Researcher* Vol. 16 No. 33 p.769-792.

Wilcox, Clyde and Patrick Carr. 2009. "The Puzzling Case of the Abortion Attitudes of the Millennial Generation." In *Understanding Public Opinion* eds. Clyde Wilcox and Barbara Norrander CQ Press.

*Paper Topic:* Based on the evidence from the readings, over the next ten years, do you believe that public policy regulating abortion and reproductive health will become more or less restrictive? Explain why?

**Week 13**

**April 15**

**Education and Economic Opportunity**

Glazer, Sarah. 2005. "Gender and Learning." *CQ Researcher* Vol 15 No. 19 p. 445-468.

Billitteri, Thomas J. 2008. "Gender Pay Gap". *CQ Researcher* Vol 18 No. 11 p.241-264.

From The Shriver Report: A Woman's Nation Changes Everything 2009 eds. Heather Boushey and Ann O'Leary A Study by Maria Shriver and the Center for American Progress

Mary Ann Mason. "Better Educating Our New Breadwinners."

Heather Boushey "The New Breadwinners."

Brad Harrington and Jamie J. Ladge. "Got Talent? It Isn't Hard to Find."

*Paper Topic:* What are the most compelling explanations for the gender pay gap and the trend in women's career patterns? What needs to change to close the pay gap?

**Week 14**

**April 22**

**Midwest Political Science Conference No Class**

**Week 15**

**April 29**

**Economic Opportunity and the Work Family Balance**

Glazer, Sarah. 2006. "Future of Feminism" *CQ Researcher* Vol 16 No. 14 p.313-336.

From The Shriver Report: A Woman's Nation Changes Everything 2009 eds. Heather Boushey and Ann O'Leary A Study by Maria Shriver and the Center for American Progress

Ann O'Leary and Karen Kornbluh. "Family Friendly for All Families."

Maria Echaveste. "Invisible yet Essential." Immigrant women in America"

*Paper Topic:* What is the biggest obstacle faced by women in the workplace? What public policy reforms would you suggest to alleviate this problem?