Gender Politics in Comparative Perspective

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the field of Gender and Comparative Politics. Our focus will be on the state, how power is gendered, and the effects on women and men in the global South. Students will develop skills in comparative political analysis, gain a deeper understanding of politics in the global South and how these states construct gender, and strengthen their research and writing skills.

We begin with a discussion of feminist theory and methodology, gender, and the state. We then investigate core issues in comparative politics, including democratic transition, citizenship, electoral systems, and migration, through a gender lens. Case studies include the prospects for women’s rights in North Africa, quotas for women in politics in Argentina, and the gendered impact of globalization in China. Readings are drawn from a number of disciplines, including politics, anthropology, political economy, and women’s studies.
Course Requirements
Grading consists of attendance, participation, and homework (20%), an in-class exam (20%), an in-class debate with position papers (25%), a research proposal (5%), and a short research paper (30%).

Class Policies
No computers, cell phone, ipads, etc. should ever be used during class without permission of the instructor.
Do not eat lunch in class.
Follow the honor code. If you have a question about plagiarism, ask.
Late discussion postings and presentations from discussion leaders is not accepted.
Late research papers and proposals lose 3 points each day for the first two days. Later work will only be accepted as determined by the instructor.
All students are expected to attend every class session, with the exception of illness or an emergency. All other absences will be unexcused and detract from your participation grade. In the event of an excused absence, please arrange to get the lecture notes and announcements from another student in the class.
My preferred communication with students is in person (during office hours, after class). When using email do not expect an immediate response. If there is an emergency, indicate that in the subject line.
For information about my research, courses, advising, and letters of recommendation, please consult my webpage.

See the file “Assignments” on Collab under the syllabus tab for additional instructions.

Course Readings
All readings are available on Collab unless otherwise noted.

The readings in this course can be challenging. Print them out and write on them. I know you can mark them up on your computer without printing and that printing costs money. So do books. Consider these readings your books, print them up, and write on them. Writing is thinking.

*Occasional changes to the syllabus are possible and will be announced in advance.
Course Outline.

Part I. Theory and Method

Class 1: What is a “comparative politics of gender” and why do we need it?


Class 2: What are gender policies and why do they vary across states?

Class 3 (Sept. 3): What is a feminist approach to the state and what is feminist methodology?

*Homework #1*


Class 4 (Sept. 5): What is gender and how is it related to the state?

Homework film clip: “Tough Guise: Violence, Media & the Crisis in Masculinity”
In-class film clips: Tank Ride, Miss Representation

Last Day to Add a Class: Sept. 11

Class 5 (Sept 10): What is the relationship between gender and the state beyond the “West”?


Last Day to Drop a Class w/o Penalty: Sept. 12

Class 6 (Sept. 12): How and why has “Western” feminism been imperialist?
Bring your remaining questions about the Rai reading from Class #5 to class today.


In-class discussion of Femen’s Topless Jihad.
Class 7 (Sept. 17): Why was gender at the core of empire?


Class 8 (Sept. 19): What are women’s interests?


Homework Film Clip: “Nicaragua: An Unfinished Revolution Part 1” and Part II

Class 9 (Sept. 24): Are women’s rights in women’s interests?

Exam review.

Class 10 (Sept. 26): *In-class Exam*
Part II. Gender & Political Transformation

Class 11 (Oct. 1): How and why have liberation movements mobilized women?


Homework Film Clip: “Nicaragua: An Unfinished Revolution, Part III”

In-class Film Clips: “Full Metal Jacket”; *The Invisible War*

Class 12 (Oct. 3): How and why do women’s movements emerge?


Homework Film Clip: *The Overthrow of Democratic Chile Part I and Part II*

In-class Film Clip: “Because our Cause is Just”
Class 13 (Oct. 8): Will a strong, autonomous feminist movement emerge in Egypt? Why or why not?
Homework #2 due today
Guest Speaker: Nancy Youssef, award-winning Middle East and Islamic World correspondent for McClatchy Newspapers.


Nancy Youssef, “For Egypt’s Women, Fear of Rape now Governs Cairo’s Tahrir Square,” McClatchy, February 25, 2013.

Homework Film Clip: After the Arab Spring, A Feminist Summer?
Part III. Women’s Rights

Class 14 (Oct. 10): Are quotas effective? Why or why not?


Browse the Inter-Parliamentary Union website, starting here: http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm

In-class Film Clip: Miss Representation
In-class Film Clip: Women Rank High in Rwanda’s Government

No Class (Oct. 15): *Reading Day*

Class 15 (Oct. 17): What is state feminism and why is it controversial among feminists?


In-class Film Clip: South African Football Association (SAFA) Challenged on Lack of Gender Equality
Class 16 (Oct. 22): What can women’s organizations accomplish and how?


In-class Film Clip: [2008 Africa Prize for Leadership](#)

Class 17 (Oct. 24): Why are women’s rights about elite men?

Homework Clip: 1994 South Africa WHY

In-class Film Clip: “Tunisia: Women Fight to Keep 50 Years of Equality”

**Class 18 (Oct. 29): Is religion bad for women?**
Mala Htun and Laurel Weldon, under review, “Religion, the State, and Women’s Rights: Comparative Analysis of Sex Equality in Family Law.”

Read “Class Debate” under the Resources tab on Collab.

In-class discussion of Class Debate and Position Papers, Debate Teams assigned, Debate Teams meet.

**Class 19 (Oct. 31): In-Class Debate and Position Papers Due**
Turn your position papers in on Collab and also bring a hard copy with you to class for reference.

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**Part V: Gender & the Global Economy**

Class 20 (Nov. 5): How is the global economy gendered?

Start making a list of possible research topics related to gender and the global economy for your final paper and a possible country(ies) to research.

For Homework: 40 Maps that Explain the World: #1, #7, #10, #35

In-class Film clip: “Life and Debt”
In-class Trailer: “Inside Job”
In-class Film clip: “Greek Economic Crisis”
In-class Film clip: “Inequality for All”
In-class film clip: “Italy’s Brewing Anti-Immigrant Climate”

Class 21 (Nov. 7): Do development programs work for women? Why or why not?


Homework Film Clip: The Micro Debt

Discussion of research paper assignment (read the details on the Assignments file under the Syllabus tab on Collab).

Research Paper Partners posted on Collab.
Class 22 (Nov. 12): What factors shape the industrial sexual division of labor?


Homework Trailer: “Last Train Home”
In-class Film Clip: “China Blue”

Class 23 (Nov. 14): Who migrates and why? How does it affect gender norms?
Homework #3


Homework film clip: “International Migration”
For Homework: 40 Maps that Explain the World: #11, #12,#30

In-class Film Clip: “Modern Heroes, Modern Slaves”
In-class Film Clip: “Anger at Beheading of Sri Lankan Maid”
In-class Film Clip: “Egyptians Mourn Drowned Immigrants”
Class 24 (Nov. 19): What is human security and why is prostitution a transnational problem?


For Homework: *40 Maps that Explain the World: #17*

In-class Film Clip: *Italian Sex Trade Fueled by Human Trafficking*

Class 25 (Nov. 21): Doing Research *Meet in Alderman Electronic Classroom*

Read the pages on [Research Overview](#) and [Primary Research](#)

Come to class with a good research question written out and ready to research.

Guest speaker: Gary Treadway, Librarian for Politics and History, Coordinator of Humanities and Social Sciences Collection.

Students will work with a writing partner at the end of class to develop a research topic and strategies for finding sources.

*Thanksgiving Break: November 27- December 1*
Class 26 (Nov. 26): Research Paper Proposal Due
Your research proposal needs a question that you hope to answer. Your answer is a claim. You can’t have a confirmed claim until you do the research and write up the paper. Until then, you have a tentative claim, or a hypothesis.

Class 27 (Dec. 3): Writing Well
Read the discussion about how to do a research paper and browse this site and this one.
Guest Speaker: Director, UVa Writing Center

In-class writing exercise: bring a copy of your research proposal to class.

Class 28 (Dec. 5): Outlining and Evidence
Read the discussion about how to do an outline and browse this site for additional research paper writing tips. Click here for an explanation and illustration of how to make an outline for a research paper, and here for a a parody of Mary Kate Olson on the difference between reasons and evidence, and here for a clip from the TV show “Mythbusters” on evidence.


In-class exercise: Slavery Footprint; 40 Maps that Explain the World: #9

Students will work with a writing partner to develop the outline for their research papers. Bring a copy of your revised research proposal with you to class.

Dec. 16: Research Paper due at noon on collab
For 2 bonus points on the final research paper, make comments on a draft of your writing partner’s research paper. Then copy and paste your comments into the text box when you turn this assignment in on collab. Turn your research paper in as an attachment.

Writing is thinking, and papers require several drafts. For general suggestions on how to revise your research paper see “Rewriting or Revising”