POSC346/446: WOMEN AND POLITICS

Karen Beckwith, Professor

Spring Semester 2012
TTh 2:45-4:00pm
Clark Hall 210

Office: 223 Mather House
Office Hours: Wednesday 1:00-3:00pm,
or by appointment
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COURSE OUTLINE AND REQUIREMENTS

POSC346/446, Women and Politics, involves a critical examination of the impact of gender on the
forms and distributions of power and politics, with primary reference to the experience of women in the
United States. Major concerns of the course include what we mean by “sex,” “gender,” and “politics;”
the relationship between women and the state; how women organize collectively to influence state
policies; and how the state facilitates and constrains women's access to and exercise of political power.
The course is organized around several issues central to the study of women and politics. The first
sections of the course concern women, gender and elections, focusing on women’s candidacies for
national legislative office, the legislative behavior of elected women, and the meaning of women’s
political representation, including consideration of women’s movement organizing and influence. We
will employ these concepts to understand the gendered nature of elections in the United States. Because
2012 is a US election year, we turn to conventional electoral politics, focusing on women’s candidacies
and their campaigns; we also consider how women’s election to office might translate into public policy
outcomes.

The second section of the course focuses on gender and political institutions. In this section, we will
consider how political institutions, in their construction, may constrain women’s access to political
representation and power, with specific attention to constitutional arrangements and the gendered impact
of facially neutral institutions, to deepen our understanding of the workings of governments and political
systems, and of women’s political empowerment. In the final section, we conclude the course by
considering women and politics in global comparative perspective, examining those general factors that
might provide for increased gender equality and improved life status for women.

Evaluation of undergraduate student performance in this course is based on the following criteria.
First, each student is expected to attend class and to be prepared for each class meeting by having read,
in advance, the materials assigned for that day. Students should be prepared to discuss the material in
detail in class every day, and all students are expected to participate. Informed participation in class
discussion accounts for 10 percent of the final grade. Second, students will facilitate two in-class discussions of course readings. The specific dates and readings will be assigned by the professor. Each discussion facilitation is worth 10 percent of the final grade. Third, students will complete two short papers, each of which accounts for 20 percent of the final grade. Finally, each student will complete a final paper. The final paper assignment includes the written completed paper itself, which accounts for 20 percent of the final grade, and an in-class presentation of the paper’s finding, which accounts for remaining 10 percent of the course grade. Details of these assignments will be available in separate course handouts. Due dates for assignments are indicated in the reading schedule, below.

**Books required for this course** are listed below and are available for purchase in the University Bookstore:


Eileen McDonagh, *The Motherless State*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009. (Used copies of this book may be purchased.)

Christina Wolbrecht, Karen Beckwith and Lisa Baldez, eds., *Political Women and American Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008. (Used copies of this book may be purchased.)

**Additional readings** are available through electronic journals (e-journals), through the Kelvin Smith Library website, or on the course website at [http://politicalscience.case.edu/faculty-listings/professor-beckwith-political-science-courses/](http://politicalscience.case.edu/faculty-listings/professor-beckwith-political-science-courses/). Each student should print a hardcopy of every additional assigned reading for his or her own research purposes. Please note that this is a requirement of the course.

Students are encouraged to subscribe to and to read the *Financial Times*.

**Standards of academic integrity** are an integral component of this course. Students are reminded that they are obliged to understand, to uphold, and to comply with the Academic Integrity Policy of the University. A copy of the Code may be found online at [http://www.case.edu/provost/ugstudies/acintegrity.htm](http://www.case.edu/provost/ugstudies/acintegrity.htm). Students who do not understand this Policy after having read it should make an appointment to see me to discuss it; indeed, I welcome this discussion and encourage students to see me in advance of any assignment about which they have doubts or questions. It is a course requirement that students read the University’s Academic Integrity Policy.
SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

January 17  Introduction to the Course

January 19  Women, Gender and Politics


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January 24  Women, Gender and Elections


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February 2  Women and Political Representation


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February 14  **Women Organizing and Women’s Movements**


February 16  READ: Banaszak, *The Women’s Movement*, Chapters 4, 5 and 6

February 21  READ: Banaszak, *The Women’s Movement*, Chapters 7 and 8

February 22  FIRST SHORT PAPER DUE IN MY OFFICE BY 3:00PM

February 23  NO CLASS MEETING; Professor at Research Seminar at Texas A&M University

February 28  **Gender and Political Institutions**


March 1  READ: Irving, *Gender and the Constitution*, Introduction and Chapter 1: Framework

March 6  READ: Irving, *Gender and the Constitution*, Chapters 2-4

March 8  INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY

READ: Irving, *Gender and the Constitution*, Chapters 5-6

March 12-16  SPRING BREAK
March 20 READ: Irving, *Gender and the Constitution*, Chapters 7-8

March 22 READ: Irving, *Gender and the Constitution*, Chapters 9-10

March 23 SECOND SHORT PAPER DUE IN MY OFFICE BY 3:00PM

March 27 **Women, Gender and Politics in Comparative Perspective**

READ: McDonagh, *The Motherless State*, Chapters 1 and 2

March 29 READ: McDonagh, *The Motherless State*, Chapters 3 and 4

April 3 READ: McDonagh, *The Motherless State*, Chapters 5, 6 and 7

April 5 READ: Inglehart and Norris, *Rising Tide*, “Part I: The Causes of the Rising Tide” (Chapters 1, 2, and 3)

April 10 READ: Inglehart and Norris, *Rising Tide*, “Part II: The Consequences of the Rising Tide” (Chapters 4, 5, and 6)

April 12 NO CLASS MEETING; Professor attending Midwest Political Science Association meetings

April 17 READ: Inglehart and Norris, *Rising Tide*, “Conclusions” (Chapter 7)

April 19 IN-CLASS PRESENTATIONS

April 24 IN-CLASS PRESENTATIONS

April 26 IN-CLASS PRESENTATIONS

FINAL PAPER DUE IN MY OFFICE: THURSDAY, MAY 3, BY 3:30PM