

Women in U.S. Politics

POLS 4575

Fall 2026

Instructor: Dr. Katelyn Stauffer
Office: Baldwin 380B
Email: kstauffer@uga.edu

Course Time:
Office Hours:

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will examine how sex and gender shape the political experiences of women in America. We will examine these experiences at both the mass and elite levels. Topics covered will include: women's experiences as candidates, women's behavior as legislators, gender and public opinion, and political participation among others. While this course is designed to give students an introduction to some of the central topics and themes in the gender and politics literature, the topics covered in this course are not exhaustive. Gender influences virtually every facet of American politics, and it would be impossible to examine every topic in detail. However, this course should familiarize students with *some* of the central debates in the literature and provide them with an analytic framework to understand the role of gender in U.S. politics more broadly.

In addition to a substantive understanding of gender and politics, students should leave the course with a firmer understanding of how political scientists conduct research, including: formulating hypotheses, gathering data, and testing empirical claims. As such we will read a number of empirical social science articles, and students will also be asked to produce a research design where they will employ these skills.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Following completion of this course students should be able to do the following:

- Understand how sex and gender shape the political experiences of women at both the mass and elite level
- Understand how institutional structures influence the role of sex/gender in American politics
- Identify testable hypotheses in political science research
- Formulate testable hypotheses for political questions
- Synthesize arguments and produce evidence to support and refute empirical claims

READINGS

There is no assigned textbook for this course. Instead we will be reading academic articles and chapters over the course of the semester. These readings will be available on eLC.

GRADING

Class Participation (20%): Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the assigned reading materials. Students are expected to critically engage with the material and to discuss how the material relates to current events. **There is no official attendance policy for this class.** If you need to miss class for any reason you are not obligated to inform me. However, if you are facing an issue that requires you to miss many classes you should come talk to me so that we can figure how to keep you up to speed in the course. ***Please do not come to class if you are sick!*** While there is no official attendance policy, please note, **it is impossible to receive a high participation grade if you consistently do not attend class and do not discuss with me how to keep yourself up to date.**

Reading Quizzes (15%): Completing the assigned readings is essential for success in this course. Throughout the semester I will give a total of 8 reading quizzes. These quizzes will be given at the beginning of class and will not be announced in advance. These quizzes are not meant to be difficult, and if you carefully complete the assigned readings you should do well. Students' **best five** quizzes will count towards this score. Please note that make-up reading quizzes will NOT be given. If you miss a quiz, you will receive an automatic 0 (but remember your lowest 3 quiz scores will be dropped).

Research Design (25%): A crucial part of this class is learning how political scientists go about conducting scientific research. To that end, students will complete a research design paper. Papers should be between 8-10 pages in length. Successful papers will: identify a research question related to gender and politics, formulate and discuss a hypothesis/hypotheses, discuss the data that would be needed to test the hypothesis, and discuss the relevance of the proposed research to our understanding of gender and politics. Political science research often takes on a collaborative nature. Students who choose to do so may collaborate on their research designs. **However, no more than 3 students may work on a single project.** Research design papers will be due on XX.

Students should email me their proposed topic and preliminary hypotheses by 5:00pm on (XX).

Mid-Term Exam (15%): There will be an in-class midterm exam. This exam will be based on the readings, material covered in lecture, and class discussion. The midterm will be on XX.

Final Exam (20%): There will be an in-class final exam. The final will primarily focus on material covered in the second half of the class, although there will be some cumulative elements of the exam (i.e. questions related to research design). Like the midterm, the content of this exam will come from readings, lectures, and class discussions. Our final exam is currently scheduled for XX at XX.

COURSE POLICIES

Grading Scale: The following scale will be used to determine final grades in the course.

- A 93 and above
- A- 90 – 92.9
- B+ 87 – 89.9
- B 83 – 86.9
- B- 80 – 82.9

- C+ 77 – 79.9
- C 73 – 76.9
- C- 70 – 72.9
- D+ 67 – 69.9
- D 63 – 66.9
- D- 60 – 62.9
- F 59.9 and below

Electronic Devices: Prior to class, please ensure that all electronic devices (phones, tablets, MP3 players, etc.) are turned off or silenced. Students are permitted to use laptops in class; however the instructor reserves the right to change this policy if computers become a distraction/become disruptive. Please remember that using a laptop for purposes other than note taking not only prevents you from fully engaging in the course but may also distract those around you. Also note that it is difficult to receive a high participation grade if you are browsing the internet rather than engaging with the material.

Tardiness: Please arrive to class on time. Failure to do so is disruptive to your fellow classmates. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class. If you are not present when attendance is taken, you will not receive credit for attending class.

Grade Disputes: If you disagree with a grade you received on an assignment (or have questions about why you received the grade that you did), please see me during office hours. I will not have an extended discussion regarding grades via email. Students wishing to dispute a grade must write a half page response explaining why they believe they deserve a different grade. This response should be emailed to the instructor prior to meeting, and students should also bring a hard copy to the meeting. Please note however, **that I reserve the right to adjust students grades up OR down** upon review.

Class Discussion: Student discussion should be respectful at all times. Since this is a class about politics, there will be many topics on which not everyone in the class will agree. It is important that we engage with each other constructively and that we are open to hearing each other's opinions. Disrespectful behavior (interrupting speakers, personal attacks, aggressive language, etc.) will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

Office Hours: I will hold office hours on **XX**. If you have questions about the class you should talk to me during this time. If you are unable to make office hours, please email me and we can arrange an alternate time. I am also available on email and am happy to answer any questions electronically. I will make every effort to respond to emails before the beginning of the next class period. **Please note that discussions about grades must be held “in person.”**

Email: If you have questions about the course, or would like to set up an appointment outside of office hours please email me at kstauffer@uga.edu Please include “POLS 4575” in the subject line of your email. Emails that do not follow this rule cannot be assured a response from the instructor. I will do my best to respond to emails within 24 hours or before the start of the next class.

Did you read the syllabus? Prior to the start of the course, I emailed the class asking you to read the syllabus before our first meeting. If you followed my instructions, please email me a picture of an

animal dressed as a person (with the subject line “POLS 4575 Extra Credit”). **Students who email me prior to our first meeting will receive 2 extra credit points on the final exam.**

Disclaimer: The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The University of Georgia defines plagiarism as: “Using another’s work as your own without correct citations.” Examples include, but are not limited to:

- I. Directly quoting another’s written or spoken words without quotation marks.
- II. Paraphrasing without attribution.
- III. Presenting someone else’s original idea or theory as your own original work without attribution.
- IV. Using statistics, images, or data without recognizing who compiled them.
- V. Turning in work that another wrote as your own work.
- VI. Self-Plagiarism: Submitting an assignment for credit that has already been submitted, unless the current instructor authorizes its use prior to submission.

Plagiarism will not be tolerated, and any work that is plagiarized will receive an automatic 0. If you are unsure about what constitutes plagiarism or how to cite a particular source please contact me prior to turning in the assignment.

Cheating on exams will not be tolerated. Cheating includes, but is not limited to, looking at notes during the exam, copying or paraphrasing the answer of a fellow classmate, or relying on any materials/readings during the exam period. If students are caught cheating during any exam they will automatically receive a 0 for that exam.

You are also responsible for being aware of the other obligations/restriction outlined by the University of Georgia’s Academic Honesty Policy. Additional information about the policy can be found here: https://honesty.uga.edu/Academic-Honesty-Policy/Prohibited_Conduct/.

UGA Student Honor Code: "I will be academically honest in all of my academic work and will not tolerate academic dishonesty of others." A Culture of Honesty, the University's policy and procedures for handling cases of suspected dishonesty, can be found at www.uga.edu/ovpi.

USE OF AI FOR COURSEWORK

This course requires you to complete various assignments that assess your understanding and application of the course content. You are expected to do your own work and cite any sources you use properly. You are not allowed to use any artificial intelligence (AI) tools, such as chatbots, text generators, paraphrasers, summarizers, or solvers, to complete any part of your assignments. Any attempt to use these tools will be considered academic misconduct and will be dealt with according to the university’s academic integrity policy. Students are expected to complete all work independently and without the assistance of AI-generated content. If you have any questions about what constitutes acceptable use of AI tools, please consult with the instructor *before* submitting your work. This course requires you to complete various assignments that assess your understanding and application of the course content. You are expected to do your own work and cite any sources you use properly. You

are not allowed to use any artificial intelligence (AI) tools, such as chatbots, text generators, paraphrasers, summarizers, or solvers, to complete any part of your assignments. Any attempt to use these tools will be considered academic misconduct and will be dealt with according to the university's academic integrity policy. Students are expected to complete all work independently and without the assistance of AI-generated content. If you have any questions about what constitutes acceptable use of AI tools, please consult with the instructor *before* submitting your work.

STATEMENT FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to establish eligibility through the Disability Resource Center. A memo of verification should be obtained from DRC. More information can be found here: <https://drc.uga.edu/>

If you have a disability that requires special arrangements please **register with DRC and inform me within the two weeks of class.**

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS RESOURCES

If you or someone you know needs assistance, you are encouraged to contact Student Care and Outreach in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-7774 or visit <https://sco.uga.edu/>. They will help you navigate any difficult circumstances you may be facing by connecting you with the appropriate resources or services. UGA has several resources for a student seeking mental health services (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga>) or crisis support (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/info/emergencies>). If you need help managing stress anxiety, relationships, etc., please visit BeWellUGA (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga>) for a list of FREE workshops, classes, mentoring, and health coaching led by licensed clinicians and health educators in the University Health Center. Additional resources can be accessed through the UGA App.

TENTATIVE COURSE OUTLINE

Introduction to the Course and Tools of the Trade

- Syllabus

Consuming Social Science Research

- Cassese, Erin C., Christina Farhart, and Joanne Miller. 2020. "Gender Differences in COVID-19 Conspiracy Theory Beliefs" *Politics & Gender*. 16(4): 1009 – 1018.
- Kim, Jeong Hyun, Anna Gunderson, Elizabeth A. Lane, and Nichole M. Bauer. 2023. "State Courts, State Legislatures, and Setting Abortion Policy." *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law*. 48(4): 569 – 592.

Women's Underrepresentation in the U.S.

- CAWP Fact Sheets: Women in Elective Office, 2025
- Davidson-Schmich, Louise. 2017. "How Does the U.S. Compare with Other Countries in Terms of Women's Representation?" *Vox*.

Ambition and the Decision to Run for Office

- Fox, Richard and Jennifer Lawless. 2004. "Entering the Arena? Gender and the Decision to Run for Office." *American Journal of Political Science* 48(2): 264-280.
- Bernhard, Rachel and Justin de Benedictis-Kessner. 2021. "Men and women candidates are similarly persistent after losing elections." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 118(26): 1-5.

Ambition and the Decision to Run for Office II

- Clayton, Amanda, Diana Z. O'Brien, and Jennifer M. Piscopo. 2023. "Women Grab Back: Exclusion, Policy Threat, and Women's Political Ambition." *American Political Science Review*
- Hassell, Hans J.G., Gary E. Hollibaugh Jr, and Matthew R. Miles. 2025. "Does the Presence or Absence of Elections Remove Gender Differences in Ambition for Public Service?" *British Journal of Political Science*

Gendered Political Socialization

- Bos, Angela, Jill Greenlee, Mirya Holman, Zoe Oxley, and J. Celeste Lay. 2022. "This One's for the Boys: How Gendered Political Socialization Limits Girls' Political Ambition and Interest." *American Political Science Review* 116(2): 484-501.
- Clayton, Amanda, Diana Z. O'Brien and Jennifer M. Piscopo. 2023. "Founding Narratives and Men's Political Ambition: Experimental Evidence from U.S. Civics Lessons." *British Journal of Political Science*

Who Runs for Office?

- Bernhard, Rachel, Shauna Shames, and Dawn Langan Teele. 2020. "To Emerge? Breadwinning, Motherhood, and Women's Decisions to Run for Office." *American Political Science Review* 115(2): 379-394.
- Ondercin, Heather L. 2022. "Location, Location, Location: How Electoral Opportunities Shape Women's Emergence as Candidates." *British Journal of Political Science*. 52: 1523-1543.

Gender and Party Recruitment

- Crowder-Mayer, Melody. 2013 "Gendered Recruitment without Trying; How Local Party Recruiters Affect Women's Representation." *Politics & Gender* 9(4): 390-413.
- Sanbonmatsu, Kira. 2006. "Do Parties Know that 'Women Win'? Party Leader Beliefs about Women's Electoral Chances." *Politics & Gender* 2(4): 431 - 450

Women's Representation and Party Politics

- Crowder-Meyer, Melody and Rosalyn Cooperman. 2018 "Can't Buy Them Love: How Party Culture among Donors Contributes to the Party Gap in Women's Representation." *Journal of Politics*. 80(4): 1211-1224
- Hassell, Hans J.G. and Neil Visalvanich. 2019. "The Party's Primary Preferences: Race, Gender, and Party Support of Congressional Primary Candidates." *American Journal of Political Science* 63(4): 905-919.

Women's Experience as Candidates I

- Huddy, Leonie and Nayda Terkildsen. 1993. "Gender Stereotypes and the Perception of Male and Female Candidates." *American Journal of Political Science* 119-147.

- Dolan, Kathleen, 2014. "Gender Stereotypes, Candidate Evaluations, and Voting for Women Candidates. What Really Matters?" *Political Research Quarterly* 67(2): 96-107.

Women's Experience as Candidates II

- Anzia, Sarah F. and Christopher R. Berry. 2011. "The Jackie (and Jill) Robinson Effect: Why do Congresswomen Outperform Congressmen?" *American Journal of Political Science* 55(3):478-493.
- Lawless, Jennifer L. and Kathryn Pearson. 2008. "The Primary Reason for Women's Underrepresentation? Reevaluating the Conventional Wisdom." *Journal of Politics* 70(1): 67-82.

Women's Experience as Candidates III

- Bauer, Nichole. 2020. "Shifting Standards: How Voters Evaluate the Qualifications of Female and Male Candidates." *Journal of Politics* 82(1): 1-12.
- Boussalis, Constantine, Travis Can, Mirya Holman, and Stefan Muller. 2021. "Gender, Candidate Emotional Expression, and Voter Reactions During Televised Debates." *American Political Science Review* 115(4): 1242-1257.

Women as Legislators---Issue Priorities and Behaviors

- Swers, Michele L. 2002. *The Difference Women Make: The Policy Impact of Women in Congress* Chapter 3
- Dietrich, Bryce J., Matthew Hayes, and Diana Z. O'Brien. 2019. "Pitch Perfect: Vocal Pitch and Emotional Intensity of Congressional Speech of Women" *American Political Science Review* 113(4): 941-962.

Women as Legislators---Issue Priorities and Behaviors II

- Reingold, Beth, Rebecca J. Kreitzer, Tracy Osborn, and Michele L. Swers. 2021. "Anti-Abortion Policymaking and Women's Representation." *Political Research Quarterly* 74(2): 403-420.
- Steigerwalt, Amy and Jeffrey Lazarus. 2018. *Gendered Vulnerability: How Women Work Harder to Stay in Office*. Chapters 6.

Midterm Review

Midterm

Consuming Social Science Research

- Badas, Alex and Katelyn E. Stauffer. 2019. "Voting for Women in Partisan and Nonpartisan Elections" *Electoral Studies*
- Shoub, Kelsey, Katelyn E. Stauffer, and Miyeon Song. 2021. "Do Women Officers Police Differently? Evidence from Traffic Stops." *American Journal of Political Science* 65(3): 755-769.
- **Email me proposed topic and preliminary hypotheses by 10/16 at 5:00pm**

Research Design Workshop (Dr. Stauffer out of town)

Gender, Party, and Cooperation

- Dittmar, Kelly, Kira Sanbonmatsu, and Susan J. Carroll. 2018. *A Seat at the Table: Congresswomen's Perspectives on Why Their Presence Matters* Chapter 5
- Lawless, Jennifer, Sean Theriault, and Samantha Guthrie. 2018. "Nice Girls? Sex, Collegiality, and Bipartisan Cooperation in the U.S. Congress." *The Journal of Politics* 80(4): 1268-1282.

Descriptive and Symbolic Representation--Candidates and Representatives

- Campbell, David E. and Christina Wolbrecht. 2006. "See Jane Run: Women Politicians as Role Models for Adolescents." *Journal of Politics* 68(2): 233-247.
- Ladam, Christina, Jeffrey J. Harden, and Jason H. Windett 2018. "Prominent Role Models: High-Profile Female Politicians and the Emergence of Women as Candidates for Public Office." *American Journal of Political Science*. 62(2): 369-381.

Descriptive and Symbolic Representation--Candidates and Representatives

- Dolan, Kathleen. 2006. "Symbolic Mobilization? The Impact of Candidate Sex in American Elections." *Political Research Quarterly* 34(6): 687-704.
- Reingold, Beth and Jessica Harrell. 2010. "The Impact of Descriptive Representation on Women's Political Engagement: Does Party Matter?" *Political Research Quarterly* 63(2): 280-294.

Descriptive and Symbolic Representation--Collective Representation

- Clayton, Amanda, Diana Z. O'Brien and Jennifer Piscopo. 2019. "All Male Panels? Representation and Democratic Legitimacy" *American Journal of Political Science* 63(1): 113-129.
- Stauffer, Katelyn E. 2021. "Public Perceptions of Women's Inclusion and Feelings of Political Efficacy." *American Political Science Review*. 115(4): 1226-1241.

Gender, Partisanship and Public Opinion

- Ondercin, Heather L. 2017. "Who is Responsible for the Gender Gap? The Dynamics of Men's and Women's Democratic Macropartisanship, 1950-2012." *Political Research Quarterly*
- Barnes, Tiffany and Cassese Erin. 2017. "American Party Women: A Look at the Gender Gap within Parties." *Political Research Quarterly* 70(1): 127-141.

Feminism, Partisanship and Public Opinion

- Klar, Samara. 2018. "When Common Identities Decrease Trust: An Experimental Study of Partisan Women." *American Journal of Political Science* 62(3): 610-622.
- Schreiber, Ronnee. 2018. "Is There a Conservative Feminism? An Empirical Account." *Politics & Gender* 14(1):56-79.

Research Design Workshop (Dr. Stauffer out of town)

Republican Women

- Wineinger, Catherine N. 2022. *Gendering the GOP*. Chapters TBD
- Thomsen, Danielle. 2015. "Why So Few (Republican) Women? Explaining the Partisan Imbalance of Women in the U.S. Congress." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 40(2): 295-323.

Intersectionality I

- Reingold, Beth, Kerry Haynie and Kirsten Widner. 2020. *Race, Gender, and Political Representation: Toward a More Intersectional Approach*, Chapters TBD.
- Hancock, Ange-Marie. 2009. "Race and Gender in the 2008 Democratic Presidential Nomination Process: An Untraditional Intersectional Analysis of the 2008 Election."

Intersectionality II

- Strolovitch, Dara. 2006. "Do Interest Groups Represent the Disadvantaged? Advocacy at the Intersections of Race, Class, and Gender." *The Journal of Politics*
- Hawkesworth, Mary. 2003. "Congressional Enactments of Race-Gender: Toward a Theory of Raced-Gendered Institutions." *American Political Science Review* 97(4): 529-550.

Final Exam