

## A Comparative Perspective of Women in Politics

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Wednesday 10 – 11 am or by  
appointment

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### Course Overview

In 1893, New Zealand became the first country to grant women the right to vote and in 2015, Saudi Arabia became the last country to extend suffrage to women. While women were able to vote in most countries since the end of World War II, progress for women in politics has been slow. Today, women barely make up 22.5 percent of all legislators worldwide. Rwanda and Bolivia are the only countries where women make up the majority of legislators whereas Qatar or Yemen have no women in their national parliaments. In 1960, Sri Lanka elected the first woman Prime Minister - Sirivamo Bandaranaike – and in 1974, Argentina elected Isabel Perón the first woman president in the world. Today, 99 women have led their countries either as prime ministers or presidents. The United States of America currently ranks 76th in the world for its percentage of women in national parliaments and has to date not elected a woman president.

The goal of this class is to understand the male overrepresentation in politics both in the American context but also in a comparative perspective and consider innovative ways to achieve equal political representation. We will read classic and modern scholarship to better understand the theoretical feminist frameworks used to study the political representation of women and empirically explore important topics from a cross-national perspective. Throughout the quarter, we will engage with representatives of local, national, and international women's organizations to learn from their perspectives and gain a look behind the scenes of the women's movement for equal representation.

There is no clear answer to why men are overrepresented in politics but at the end of the quarter, students should be able to engage in thoughtful conversations and discussion on why men are overrepresented, women are underrepresented, and whether existing tools to achieve equal representation are adequate and sufficient.

### Required Textbooks:

Pamela Paxton and  
Melanie M Hughes. 2014.  
Women, Politics and Power  
– A Global Perspective.

IDEA. Women in  
Parliament: Beyond  
Numbers. Available for free  
as pdf online:  
<http://www.idea.int/publications/wip2/index.cfm>

### Additional Readings:

All additional readings will  
be posted on Canvas. All  
additional readings are  
required.



## Course Structure

The class is structured into three main parts. In each part we will discuss the theoretical frameworks to study the topic as well as shine empirical spotlights on specific countries to bring the theoretical concepts to life.

1. **Descriptive Representation of Women:** also called the numerical representation of women, we will first discuss the institutional, socio-economic, and cultural barriers to women's political representation before trying to explain cross-national variances of the percentage of women in parliament
2. **Substantive Representation of Women:** this part centers on the question whether the numerical representation of women will lead to the substantive representation of women. We will discuss several factors that facilitate the representation of women's interests as well as critically assess the definition of 'women interests'
3. **Special Topics in Women and Politics:** the last four weeks of the class are dedicated to the exploration of current developments in the study of women and politics such as the role of race, party ideology as well as the representation of women in post-conflict societies and Executives worldwide.

## Course Evaluation

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| 1. Class participation and attendance:     | 15% of total grade |
| 2. News Contributions:                     | 15% of total grade |
| 3. Analytical Paper and twitter town hall: | 25% of total grade |
| 4. Midterm:                                | 20% of total grade |
| 5. Final Exam:                             | 25% of total grade |



## Course requirements

1. **Class Participation and Attendance:** A successful student-centered seminar requires that students contribute to the learning process in a meaningful way. Students are expected to attend class and actively engage in course activities. Students who make regular and thoughtful contributions to class discussions, display a willingness to help others work through course concepts, and/or with particularly sophisticated responses on current events contributions can expect good participation grades. When deciding on your final grade, I will take your participation into account. Students may consult with the instructor at any time for an assessment of participation.
  - a. I expect every student to come to class prepared. This means you have read the required chapters in the textbooks as well as any additional readings on canvas. I will call on students during class – so be prepared to answer questions!
  - b. I will accept *three excused absences*. Any more absences will negatively affect your attendance grade.
  - c. You will start with an attendance grade of 100%. After three excused absences, *I will abstract 5% for each missed class or for each unexcused class*. Excused means that you emailed me before class with a reason why you cannot attend class.
  - d. Attendance will be taken in every class. You must sign the attendance sheet. If you are late, you need to see me after class to add your name. Because being on time for important appointments (such as a class) is a valuable life skill, being late at three occasions will count as one absence.
2. **Analytical Paper:** Before April 11, students will identify one domestic and one international women's organization that works on electing more women to political office. For the analytical paper, I expect you to provide a brief description about the organizations that includes the years active, programmatic goals, main activities, and geographical scope. The paper also needs to include 3 potential questions for the twitter town hall and contact information for each organization to recruit them for participation in the twitter town hall.
3. **Current Events Contribution:** During the last part of the quarter (Special Topics: May 2 - 18), I expect students to bring a printed out news article addressing the topic of that day to class.



4. **Twitter Town hall:** At the end of the course, the class should organize a twitter town hall discussing the question “What can the US learn from other countries to achieve equal representation in Congress?” A twitter town hall is essentially a Q&A session on twitter around a specific issue where invited hosts discuss the respective topic for one hour. Students are responsible to recruit at least 1 partner organization and/or one elected official for the twitter town hall; prepare questions and potential answers and resources to tweet out during the town hall; and advertise the town hall on their social media platforms to ensure broad participation.
  - a. Read here on how to organize a Twitter Town Hall:  
[http://health.gov/healthliteracyonline/twitter\\_chat\\_guide.pdf](http://health.gov/healthliteracyonline/twitter_chat_guide.pdf)
  - b. Example of a Twitter Town hall on Women of Color in Politics:  
<https://storify.com/politicalparity/twitter-town-hall-women-of-color-marchtoparity>
5. **Midterm:** The Midterm Exam will cover all of the content studied up to the date of the exam. It will consist of concept definitions and short essay answers. I will provide a study guide. Make-up exams will only be given for valid excuses (approved university activities, documented illnesses), and only if you contact me before the exam. Please contact me in person or by email.
6. **Final Exam:** The Final Exam will cover the complete content of the course. It will consist of multiple choice, concept definitions, and short essays. I will provide a study guide.

## Course Resources

Below is a collection of resources to help you fulfill the class assignments successfully. The resources below are not exhaustive, visit my website at **[www.gendermatters.me](http://www.gendermatters.me)** for more resources. Social Media is a great resource too – consider following these and other organizations on Twitter or Facebook!

US Resources	International Resources	Traditional Media
Representation 2020 Gender Parity Index <a href="http://www.representation2020.com/gender-parity-index.html">http://www.representation2020.com/gender-parity-index.html</a>  Who Leads Us <a href="http://wholeads.us/">http://wholeads.us/</a>  Political Parity <a href="https://www.politicalparity.org/research/">https://www.politicalparity.org/research/</a>  Institute for Women’s Policy Research <a href="http://www.iwpr.org/">http://www.iwpr.org/</a>  Status of Women in the States Report <a href="http://statusofwomendata.org/">http://statusofwomendata.org/</a>  CAWP Rutgers University <a href="http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/">http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/</a>	International Knowledge Network of Women in Politics <a href="http://iknowpolitics.org/en">http://iknowpolitics.org/en</a> International IDEA <a href="http://www.idea.int/gender/">http://www.idea.int/gender/</a>  Interparliamentary Union: Women in National Parliaments <a href="http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm">http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm</a>  UN Women <a href="http://www.unwomen.org/en">http://www.unwomen.org/en</a>  European Institute for Gender Equality <a href="http://eige.europa.eu/">http://eige.europa.eu/</a>  The WomenStats Project <a href="http://www.womanstats.org/">http://www.womanstats.org/</a>	Women in the World (New York Times) <a href="http://nytlive.nytimes.com/womenintheworld/">http://nytlive.nytimes.com/womenintheworld/</a>  Women News Section of The Guardian <a href="http://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/women">http://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/women</a>  The Broadsheet at Fortune Magazine <a href="http://fortune.com/tag/broadsheet-2/">http://fortune.com/tag/broadsheet-2/</a>  Women and Politics section of Marie Claire <a href="http://www.marieclaire.com/politics/">http://www.marieclaire.com/politics/</a>

## Course Schedule

**March 21**                      **Welcome and Overview of Course**

**March 23**                      **Introduction – The Status of Women in Politics Worldwide**

Paxton and Hughes: Chapter 1 and 2

**March 28**                      **Theoretical Concepts of Political Representation**

Pitkin, Hanna Fenichel. 1967. *The Concept of Representation*. Berkeley: University of California Press. (On Canvas)

Phillips, Anne. 1998. *The Politics of Presence: Political Representation of Gender Race and Ethnicity*. 1st ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, USA. (On Canvas)

### Descriptive Representation of Women

**March 30**                      **What Explains the Under-Representation of Women?**

IDEA. Chapter 2 and 3  
Paxton and Hughes: Chapter 3, 10

**April 4**                        **Institutional Barriers to Political Office**

Paxton and Hughes: chapter 6  
IDEA: Latin America Case Study or Burkina Faso Case Study

Spotlight: Electoral Gender Quotas

Dahlerup: Quotas as a “Fast Track” to Equal Political Representation for Women; available here: <http://equalvoice.ca/pdf/APS5.pdf>

IDEA: Rwanda, Argentina, South Asia Case Study (pick one)

**April 6**                        **Socioeconomic Barriers to Political Office**

Paxton and Hughes: chapter 5 and 13  
IDEA: The Arab States Case Study

**April 11**                      **Cultural Obstacles to Women’s Political Representation**

Paxton and Hughes: chapter 4 and 12

Norris and Inglehart (2001) “Cultural Obstacles to Political Representation.” Available here: [http://www.hks.harvard.edu/fs/pnorris/Articles/Articles%20published%20in%20journals\\_files/Cultural\\_Obstacles\\_JofD2001.pdf](http://www.hks.harvard.edu/fs/pnorris/Articles/Articles%20published%20in%20journals_files/Cultural_Obstacles_JofD2001.pdf)

**April 13**                      **International Effects on Political Representation**

Paxton and Hughes: chapter 7  
IDEA: IPU Case study

Strategies for Policymakers: Bringing Women Into Government. Available here:  
<https://www.inclusivesecurity.org/publication/strategies-for-policymakers-bringing-women-into-government/>

**April 18**                      Trip to Colorado Capitol to meet with female lawmakers

**April 20**                      **Midterm**

**The Substantive Representation of Women**

**April 25**                      **Critical Mass vs. Critical Actors**

Dahlerup, Drude. 1988. 'From a Small to a Large Minority: Women in Scandinavian Politics.' or Kanter, Rosabeth Moss. 1977. 'Some Effects of Proportions on Group Life: Skewed Sex Ratios and Responses to Token Women.' *(both available on Canvas)*

Childs, Sarah, and Mona Lena Krook. 2006. 'Should Feminists Give Up on Critical Mass? A Contingent Yes.' *Politics & Gender* 2 (04). Cambridge University Press (CUP).

**April 27**                      **Do Women Make A Difference?**

Hughes And Paxton: Chapter 8  
IDEA: Chapter 5 and South Africa or Sweden Case Study

**Special Topics in Women and Politics**

**May 2**                         **Women in the Executive Worldwide (Part I)**

Documentary: Madame Presidenta: Why not U.S.?

**May 4**                         **Women in the Executive Worldwide (Part II)**

Jalalzai, Farida. 2013. *Shattered, Cracked, or Firmly Intact? Women and the Executive Glass Ceiling Worldwide*. Chapters 1, 2, 4 (on Canvas)

**May 9**                         **Women, Politics, and Intersectionality**

Paxton and Hughes: chapter 9  
IDEA: Ecuador Case Study

**May 11**

**Women in Conservative Parties**

Celis, Karen and Sarah Childs. 2014. *Gender, Conservatism and Political Representation*: Introduction, chapter 1 and 13 (on Canvas)

**May 16**

**Women in Post-Conflict Societies**

Paxton and Hughes: chapter 12

**Okeke-Ihejirika**, Philomina and Susan Franceschet (2002) "Democratization and State Feminism: Gender Politics in Africa and Latin America." (on canvas)

Read one of these spotlights:

Spotlight Rwanda

Sustaining Gains in Rwanda: The Influence of Indigenous Culture and Post-Genocide Politics.

Available here: <https://www.inclusivesecurity.org/publication/sustaining-gains-in-rwanda-the-influence-of-indigenous-culture-and-post-genocide-politics/>

Spotlight Cambodia

Good Governance from the Ground Up: Women's Roles in Post-Conflict Cambodia.

Available here: <https://www.inclusivesecurity.org/publication/good-governance-from-the-ground-up-womens-roles-in-post-conflict-cambodia/>

**May 18**

**Twitter Townhall Prep**

**May 23**

**Twitter Townhall**

**May 25**

**Final Exam Review**

**May 28 – June 2**

**Final Exam Week**