

Gender and Politics in Global Perspective

01:790:360 | Summer 2025, Session I (May 27 to July 3)

Online asynchronous course, Department of Political Science, Rutgers University

Instructor: Pin Lu (she/her), pin.lu@rutgers.edu

Office hours: By appointment over Zoom, weekends included.

This syllabus may change as the course proceeds, with any change announced on Canvas.

Course Description

This course examines the relationship between gender and political power across national contexts. Building on the primary concepts and frameworks of feminist political scholarship, it studies the ways gender organizes political institutions, collective action, and political meaning. The course proceeds through the principal arenas in which that organization operates, from electoral representation and state policy through movement mobilization, international norms, and armed conflict. Attention falls throughout on variation by region, regime type, level of development, and historical moment, and on the analytical strategies that render such variation comparable.

Course materials combine theoretical statements, empirical case studies, and journalistic accounts of ongoing public debate. Cases are drawn from North America, Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa, Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. Assignments accumulate toward a comparative research paper, and the analytical strategies introduced in the first week recur in each week that follows.

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to

- Apply the concepts and frameworks of gender analysis to problems in comparative politics
- Assess scholarly and public debates over gender and political power
- Design and carry out a comparative analysis of a gender-related political outcome

Course Format

This is an online asynchronous course running for six weeks. All materials, assignments, and grades are hosted on Canvas, and students work through each week on their own schedule. Each week combines assigned readings, a recorded lecture with embedded quizzes, a short written response, and peer review. The course carries three credits and therefore the workload of a full semester course, compressed into a summer session.

Assessment

Component	Calculation	Weight
Weekly Writing	4 of 6 weeks $\times$ 6%	24%
Peer Review	2 reviews $\times$ 5%	10%

Lecture Quizzes	5 of 6 weeks × 2%	10%
Mid-Course Feedback		1%
Midterm Memo		15%
Midterm Check-In		5%
Final Paper		35%

Weekly Writing

Six prompts are posted over the term and each student answers four of them, choosing which weeks to write in. Responses run 400 to 500 words and are due Sunday at 11:59 pm Eastern Time in the weeks selected.

Peer Review

Each student reviews two classmates' responses over the term. Canvas assigns the pairings and notifies students when a review task opens. Reviews run 100 to 150 words and are due the following Wednesday at 11:59 pm. The instructor checks and confirms all peer-assigned scores.

Lecture Quizzes

Quizzes are embedded in the recorded lecture each week and cover the essential knowledge of the field, extending beyond the assigned readings. They are time-bound and close when the week ends. The lowest weekly score is dropped.

Mid-Course Feedback

An anonymous survey on the course opens June 12 and closes June 18. Credit is given for completion.

Midterm Memo

The midterm is a comparative case memo of 1,000 to 1,200 words comparing how two countries or regions address a single issue in gender and politics, such as legislative quotas, anti-gender mobilization, or family policy. The memo defines the problem, supplies brief contextual background, carries out a focused comparison, and closes with preliminary observations. It draws on at least four course readings. Due Friday, June 20.

Sample topics

- Legislative quota design in Argentina and Rwanda and the resulting differences in parliamentary composition
- Discursive resources of anti-gender mobilization in Poland and Colombia

Midterm Check-In

Each student meets the instructor over Zoom to discuss the memo and the direction of the final paper. The meeting runs about twenty minutes and should be scheduled by Friday, June 20.

Final Paper

The final paper is a research paper of 2,000 words that develops the comparison established in the midterm memo into a causal analysis. It articulates a causal question, identifies the principal explanatory factors, justifies the selection of cases, and assesses the plausibility of the mechanisms it proposes. The

aim is to show how variation across cases illuminates the conditions producing a gendered political outcome. The paper draws on at least five course readings together with additional scholarly sources, and an appendix of up to 300 words explaining the research design is optional. Due Sunday, July 6.

Sample topics

- Why quotas raise women's parliamentary presence in some countries and leave it unchanged in others
- What accounts for the varying policy influence of anti-gender movements across countries

Grading and Submission

Detailed rubrics for every assignment are posted on Canvas. All written work is submitted through Canvas, which is the only accepted channel.

Weekly Schedule and Readings

Each week lists three required readings. Supplementary materials are optional.

Week 1. Concepts of Gender and the Logic of Comparison

May 27 to June 1

Topics

- The production of gender in everyday social interaction
- Intersectionality and its implications for comparative analysis
- Case selection and comparative research design

Required Readings

West, C., & Zimmerman, D. H. (1987). Doing gender. *Gender & Society*, 1(2), 125–151.

Weldon, S. L. (2006). The structure of intersectionality: A comparative politics of gender. *Politics & Gender*, 2(2), 235–248.

Beckwith, K. (2010). Introduction: Comparative politics and the logics of a comparative politics of gender. *Perspectives on Politics*, 8(1), 159–168.

Supplementary Materials

Lijphart, A. (1975). The comparable-cases strategy in comparative research. *Comparative Political Studies*, 8(2), 158–177.

Video. Comparative Methods in Political Science Research. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H1CGCnzw5P0>

Week 2. Representation, Elections, and Parties

June 2 to June 8

Topics

- Descriptive and substantive representation
- Electoral system effects on the legislative presence of women
- Gendered pathways to party leadership

Required Readings

- Mansbridge, J. (1999). Should blacks represent blacks and women represent women? A contingent “yes.” *The Journal of Politics*, 61(3), 628–657.
- Thames, F. C. (2017). Understanding the impact of electoral systems on women’s representation. *Politics & Gender*, 13(3), 379–404.
- O’Brien, D. Z. (2015). Rising to the top: Gender, political performance, and party leadership in parliamentary democracies. *American Journal of Political Science*, 59(4), 1022–1039.

Supplementary Materials

- Franceschet, S., & Piscopo, J. M. (2008). Gender quotas and women’s substantive representation: Lessons from Argentina. *Politics & Gender*, 4(3), 393–425.
- PBS Learning Media. America From Scratch, Season 1, Episode 4.
<https://ny.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/america-from-scratch-season-1-104/>
- Roar News (2025). The rise of far-right female leaders. <https://roarnews.co.uk/2025/the-rise-of-far-right-female-leaders-true-equality-or-purely-strategy/>

Week 3. Policies and Institutions

June 9 to June 15

Mid-course feedback survey opens June 12

Topics

- Gender regimes in welfare state scholarship
- Conditions under which governments legislate on women’s rights
- Regime type and the adoption of gender equality policy

Required Readings

- Orloff, A. S. (1996). Gender in the welfare state. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 22, 51–78.
- Htun, M., & Weldon, S. L. (2010). When do governments promote women’s rights? A comparative global analysis of violence against women legislation. *Perspectives on Politics*, 8(1), 207–225.
- Donno, D., & Kreft, A.-K. (2019). Authoritarian institutions and women’s rights. *Comparative Political Studies*, 52(5), 720–753.

Supplementary Materials

- Bacchi, C. (2000). Policy as discourse: What does it mean? Where does it get us? *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 21(1), 45–57.
- Video. Gender and Development: Three Policy Approaches. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L_Zr0w6nSQQ

Week 4. Women’s Movements and Anti-Gender Politics

June 16 to June 22

Mid-course feedback survey closes June 18. Midterm memo due and check-in scheduled June 20

Topics

- Movement autonomy and cooptation in relations with the state

- Gendered repertoires of contention in struggles over land
- The transnational circulation of anti-gender discourse

Required Readings

- Tripp, A. M. (2001). The politics of autonomy and cooptation in Africa: The case of the Ugandan women's movement. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 39(1), 101–128.
- Joshi, S. (2022). Gendered repertoires of contention: Women's resistance, authoritarian state formation, and land grabbing in Cambodia. *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 24(2), 198–220.
- Corredor, E. S. (2019). Unpacking “gender ideology” and the global right's antigender countermovement. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 44(3), 613–638.

Supplementary Materials

- Celis, K., & Childs, S. (2012). The substantive representation of women: What to do with conservative claims? *Political Studies*, 60(1), 213–225.
- Video. Manosphere Messiahs: How Hating Women Went Viral from Kenya to Mexico.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JhVOIpK1t-E>

Week 5. Global Norms, Political Economy, and Armed Conflict

June 23 to June 29

Topics

- The international diffusion of gender equality norms and its contestation
- Gender and the global political economy of labor
- Gender inequality and the onset of internal armed conflict

Required Readings

- Krook, M. L., & True, J. (2012). Rethinking the life cycles of international norms: The United Nations and the global promotion of gender equality. *European Journal of International Relations*, 18(1), 103–127.
- Kabeer, N. (2004). Globalization, labor standards, and women's rights: Dilemmas of collective (in)action in an interdependent world. *Feminist Economics*, 10(1), 3–35.
- Caprioli, M. (2005). Primed for violence: The role of gender inequality in predicting internal conflict. *International Studies Quarterly*, 49(2), 161–178.

Supplementary Materials

- Lindsey, S. (2025). UNSCR 1325 past, present, and future: A twenty-five year retrospective. *Politics & Gender*, 21(3), 675–680.
- United Nations. Understanding Conflict-related Sexual Violence. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S38jbjC47oY>

Week 6. Sexuality, Misogyny, and Political Legitimacy

June 30 to July 3

Final paper due July 6

Topics

- Voter response to LGBTQ+ candidates
- Colonial legacies and local variation in sexual politics
- Misogynist practices of contemporary political leaders

Required Readings

Magni, G., & Reynolds, A. (2021). Voter preferences and the political underrepresentation of minority groups: Lesbian, gay, and transgender candidates in advanced democracies. *The Journal of Politics*, 83(4), 1199–1215.

Awondo, P., Geschiere, P., & Reid, G. (2012). Homophobic Africa? Toward a more nuanced view. *African Studies Review*, 55(3), 145–168.

Kaul, N. (2021). The misogyny of authoritarians in contemporary democracies. *International Studies Review*, 23(4), 1619–1645.

Supplementary Materials

Higgins, M. (2020). Political masculinities and Brexit: Men of war. *Journal of Language and Politics*, 19(1), 89–106.

TED Talk. Helen Benedict, The Hidden War of Women Soldiers.

https://www.ted.com/talks/helen_benedict_the_hidden_war_of_women_soldiers

Course Policies

Late Work

A weekly writing assignment submitted within 48 hours of its deadline may be accepted with a penalty of 10 percent per day, and each student may use this allowance once over the term. Quizzes embedded in the lecture videos are time-bound and cannot be retaken once the week has closed. Students who encounter medical, technical, or personal circumstances that interfere with a deadline should contact the instructor as early as possible. Exceptions are considered case by case and may require documentation.

Academic Integrity

Students complete all assignments independently and cite all sources. All submissions are checked through Turnitin. Plagiarism will result in course failure. The University policy on academic integrity is available at academicintegrity.rutgers.edu.

AI Usage Policy

AI is permitted only for correcting grammar and formatting. Students may be required to arrange a meeting with the instructor to explain the thinking behind an assignment. A student who does not do so may receive a zero on that assignment.

Accessibility

Students seeking accommodation should follow the registration procedure of the Office of Disability Services at ods.rutgers.edu. The instructor will implement approved accommodations on receipt of the letter of accommodation.

Contacting the Instructor

Email receives a reply within 24 hours. Students requesting a Zoom meeting should propose three possible times, and weekend slots are available.