Women and Public Policy
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1. Course Description
The purpose of this course is twofold: first, to broadly explore the extent to which gender matters within the public policy context; and second, to explore how implicit and explicit views about gender impact different policy issues. Because many students do not have a policy background, the first part of the course will provide an overview of the policy process. Then we will examine how gender ideology has impacted women’s citizenship status in the United States. This is important because women’s citizenship status forms a backdrop against which all policy matters are determined. The final part of the course will examine specific policy issues, some of which are clearly directed at women and others that are not explicitly gendered but that differentially impact women. While the focus of the seminar is on women as a class, we recognize that many other factors impact policy decisions and that women differ on many other dimensions (e.g., race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, geography, class, political ideology etc.) Some of these factors will figure more prominently than others in our examination of specific policy areas.

2. Required Readings
The readings encompass a wide range of academic disciplines and methodological approaches, many of which will be new to the students. In order to understand the materials, it is essential that students devote a significant amount of time every week to the assigned readings. The readings will come from materials that will be made available online, and the following books:


3. Course Requirements
The format of the course will consist of lectures and student led discussions. Therefore, it is essential that you do the readings assigned for each class meeting in advance so that you can think critically about the issues being analyzed. Each class meeting will provide
you with an opportunity to ask questions, engage in debate, and develop your thoughts so please come prepared. Students should come prepared to consider the full range of policy positions, even those which you are predisposed to oppose. All views are welcome in the class, subject to the rule that we will treat each other with respect.

Each week, three students will be expected to lead a classroom discussion for the final hour of the meeting. The students should work as a team in preparing for the class discussion, although each will play a specific role that day. One person will take the role of facilitator, who is responsible for raising discussion questions and making connections between the themes raised by the week’s readings and the rest of the course. The second person will play the role of devil’s advocate, identifying specific passages that the class should be directed to discuss. The devil’s advocate also should come prepared to make arguments against the authors. The third person is responsible for summarizing the discussion at the end of class and writing up a 2 page synopsis that will be handed in at the beginning of the next class session.

Grading will be as follows:

Students will turn in a 1 page sheet listing the topics they will cover in their policy briefs and literature review. They can earn up to 5 points of extra credit for having the beginning of a bibliography for each of these topics.

There will be an in-class quiz covering material from the first third of the semester. It is worth up to 10 points.

There will be a longer in-class quiz covering material from the final two thirds of the semester. It is worth up to 20 points.

Students will write two policy briefs; each will have a length of 1,500-2,000 words. One will be an “objective” brief and the other will be an “advocacy” brief. Each brief is worth up to 15 points. Students must choose one social policy and one economic or health policy for their briefs.

Students will write 10 pages long critical literature reviews on research in policy areas of relevance to women. The literature reviews are worth up to 30 points. Students are encouraged to write literature reviews on one of the areas chosen for their policy briefs. Finally, students can earn up to 10 points based on their contributions to classroom discussions, including those they choose to lead.

4. Class Schedule and Reading Guide

Section I: The Study of Public Policy

1. Introduction

Conway, Ahern and Steuernagel, chapter 1.

Kraft and Furlong, Chapter 1.
2. The Rationale for Government Involvement

   Kraft and Furlong, Chapters 2 and 3.


3. Approaches to Studying Public Policy and Writing a Policy Brief.
   Kraft and Furlong, Chapters 4-6.


Section II: Citizenship Status and Public Policy

   Possibly show *Iron Jawed Angels* (125 minute film on women’s suffrage).


***Students will turn in a 1 page sheet listing the topics that they would like to write about in their policy briefs and literature review.

5. The Implications of Differential Citizenship Status for Women.


   Conway, Ahern and Steuernal, chapter 7.
6. Writing a lit review and in-class quiz.

**Section III: Social Policies**

7. Welfare Policy
   Kraft and Furlong, Chapter 9.

   Johnson, Duerst-Lahti and Norton, Chapters 4-9.

8. Criminal Justice
   Conway, Ahern and Steuernal, chapter 9.


9. Reproductive Issues
   Conway, Ahern and Steuernal, chapter 4.

   Rose, Chapters 1-6.

**Section IV Economic and Health Policies**

10. Health Policy
    Conway, Ahern and Steuernal, chapter 3.

    Kraft and Furlong, Chapter 8.


11. Employment Issues
    Conway, Ahern and Steuernal, chapter 5.


12. Women and Economic Equity
   Conway, Ahern and Steuernal, chapter 6.


13. In class quiz on Sections II and III.

14. Wrap up and turn in literature reviews.