



**Political Science 9782A | 4216F
WOMEN & POLITICAL LEADERSHIP**

Fall Term 2023 | Tuesdays 1:30-3:30pm | SSC 7210

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Virtual Office Hours: [Book a time to meet](#)

In Person Office Hours: By appointment, Huron University College (A212)

Course Description

Women are underrepresented in all levels of politics in Canada and in most jurisdictions around the world; and, this underrepresentation is even more pronounced in political leadership roles. In 2023, why is this still the case – and what can be done about it?

This course offers an intensive, intersectional examination into the topic of gender and political leadership, examining Canada's experience in a global context. Students are encouraged to think critically about the institutions, political cultures, partisan dynamics and other processes which enforce and sustain the underrepresentation of non-dominant perspectives into our political system.

The first half of the course examines the problem: historic institutions and traditions that have limited women's political participation; barriers faced by non-dominant groups throughout the political lifecycle, starting with candidacy through to exits from political life; partisan dynamics and incentives; the broader (and problematic) socialized ideas and norms about leadership; and the changing role of media and social media.

The second half of the course focuses on solutions towards seeing greater representation in politics, including an examination of actions and policy approaches which have proven effective in other jurisdictions. Importantly, the consequences of underrepresentation in our political system – and opportunities that emerge from improving this chronic problem in Canada – are carefully examined, from legitimacy to trust to better decision making.

For upper year and graduate students with a keen interest in the topic of gender and politics, and for those who would relish in a lively weekly discussion about smashing the patriarchy out of our political system – well, this course is for you.

Learning Outcomes

The course has four major learning objectives.

1. To offer a comprehensive exploration into the topic of gender and politics, with a focus on women in political leadership roles, including building familiarity with the key concepts, ideas and research on the topic relevant to a Canadian context;
2. To build students' ability to express their own ideas in writing, including in traditional academic assignments as well as with training on writing for a popular or professional audience, building an important specialized skill of communicating complicated ideas in simple language;
3. To provide a safe and meaningful environment for engaged dialogue about important and sometimes difficult topics, including learning to listen and share with people who may have different perspectives and experiences; and
4. Most importantly, to strengthen students' critical lenses for thinking about equity, including with respect to gender, in our political system and culture, as the basis for building engaged citizens who demand better in the future.

Teaching Methodology and Expectations of Students

This is a graduate level seminar course with an emphasis on group dialogue and peer-to-peer learning. As such, students are strongly encouraged to be present for all classes. The following are expected of students in this course:

- An expectation of self-directed, independent and active learning;
- An expectation that assigned readings will be read thoroughly prior to class;
- An expectation that each participant will participate in an active, respectful, and relevant manner, contributing ideas and insights while also listening to others;
- An aspiration toward enhanced depth and breadth of learning as the course proceeds;
- An aspiration toward more critical and analytical thinking as the course proceeds and assignments are completed; and
- An aspiration toward a continued curiosity toward new ideas and an openness toward others and their ideas.

Required Course Material

This course will draw on two central texts, which students are encouraged to purchase or access through the library:

- Pamela Paxton, Melanie M. Hughes and Tiffany D. Barnes (2020), *Women, Politics and Power: A Global Perspective, Fourth Edition*, Thousand Oaks: A SAGE Company. [Available online via Western's Library.](#)
- Linda Trimble, Jane Arscott and Manon Tremblay, eds. (2014), *Stalled: The Representation of Women in Canadian Governments*, UBC Press. [Available online via Western's Library.](#)

Other articles, podcasts and media materials will be made available through OWL.

Assignments & Evaluation

- **Class Participation (20%)** – as a seminar course, attendance and active participation is paramount. Students are expected to attend and actively participate in all class discussions and activities. The evaluation will be evaluated based each student's contributions towards the collective learning of the class. Marks will be provided at the midpoint (October 17, 2023) and conclusion (December 5, 2023) of the course.
- **Reflection Paper (15%)** - this initial short assignment asks students to respond to this question: why are more women needed in political leadership roles? This paper should draw on materials from the course as well as other materials, experiences or cases the student views to be most relevant. For undergraduate students (4216) the maximum length is 1000 words. For graduate students (9782) the maximum length is 1500 words. This assignment is due on OWL in Week 3, on Friday September 29, 2023 at 3pm.
- **Weekly Reflections (15%)** – each week, a discussion question will be posted in Forums on OWL about the readings assigned for class that week. Each student is expected to complete the readings, post a response to the question before class begins, and engage with other students' responses. Forum engagement (posts as well as engagement with other students' reflections) will be marked throughout the course, for a total of 15% of the course grade.
- **Analytical Case Study (30%)** – students will choose one specific jurisdiction and one intervention in that jurisdiction aimed to increase the representation of women in political leadership roles. The Paxton et al (2020) and Trimble et al (2014) will be instructive resources, and a list of examples will be provided in class. Students will

write a case study examining the efficacy of the intervention. For undergraduate students (4216) the maximum length is 2500 words. For graduate students (9782) the maximum length is 3500 words. More details will be provided in class. This case study is due on OWL in Week 9 on Friday, November 17, 2023 at 3pm.

- **Op Ed (20%)** - students will translate learnings from their analytical case study into a short editorial article (~600-800 words) which could be published in a popular media source for a general public audience. Op Eds are due on OWL in Week 11 on Friday, December 1, 2023 at 3pm. Training will be provided in a special class on Week 7 about how to write an effective op ed. The strongest article from the class will be submitted for publication with a major media outlet – and that student will receive 100% on this assignment.

What Grades Mean

The University of Western Ontario Senate has adopted a set of grade descriptors which explain the meaning of grades assigned in all university courses:

- A+ 90-100% One could scarcely expect better from a student at this level
- A 80-89% Superior work which is clearly above average
- B 70-79% Good work, meeting all requirements, and eminently satisfactory
- C 60-69% Competent work, meeting requirements
- D 50-59% Fair work, minimally acceptable
- F Below 50% Fail

Class Schedule

Week 1	Tuesday, September 12, 2023 @ 1:30- 3:30pm	<p>Welcome to Women & Political Leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Introductions & course overview ● Discussion about all assignments and evaluations ● Sign up for seminar leadership ● Initial framing conversation: how does Canada stack up when it comes to the representation of women in politics, and in our top political roles? <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Course outline (noting that if there are topics you would like to cover during this course that you do not see on this outline, please raise them!) ● Review Interparliamentary Union monthly rankings ● UN Women – Facts and figures: Women’s leadership and political participation (available on OWL)
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Week 2	Tuesday, September 19, 2023 @ 1:30- 3:30pm	<p>The Problem</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The historical evolution and context ● Orienting theories of gender, power and leadership ● A contemporary picture of (under)representation <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Paxton et al (2020), “Chapter 1: Introduction to Women in Politics” in <i>Women, Politics and Power: A Global Perspective, Fourth Edition</i>. ● Paxton et al (2020), “Chapter 2: Women Struggle for the Vote” in <i>Women, Politics and Power: A Global Perspective, Fourth Edition</i>. ● Listen to “Episode 1: The Problem,” No Second Chances Podcast, Canada 2020 (link in OWL) ● Elizabeth Goodyear-Grant and Amanda Bittner (2017), “Digging Deeper into the Gender Gap: Gender Salience as a Moderating Factor in Political Attitudes,” <i>Canadian Journal of Political Science</i> 50(2): 559-578 (available on OWL)

<p>Week 3</p>	<p>Tuesday, September 26, 2023 @ 1:30- 3:30pm</p>	<p>Barriers: An Intersectional Lens</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The pipeline problem: an intersectional and critical analysis of what we know today <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three invited essays in <i>Politics & Gender</i> about on ‘The Structure of Intersectionality’ and the comparative politics of gender (available on OWL) – choose one to read, and two to skim • Paxton et al (2020), “Chapter 3: Positions and Pathways” in <i>Women, Politics and Power: A Global Perspective, Fourth Edition</i>. • Paxton et al (2020), “Chapter 4: Intersectionality and Difference” in <i>Women, Politics and Power: A Global Perspective, Fourth Edition</i>. • Tweet thread by Calgary Mayor Jyoti Gondek on August 28, 2022 about her experiences: https://twitter.com/JyotiGondek/status/1563992273180049409?s=20&t=iDc39tvOQKmE1-er89EbcA <p>Notes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short reflection paper (15%) due on OWL on Friday September 29, 2023 at 3pm
<p>Week 4</p>	<p>Tuesday, October 3, 2023 @ 1:30-3:30pm</p>	<p>“She’s Not Qualified” & Other Misogynistic Bullshit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socialized ideas and definitions of leadership • Ambition and confidence • Role model effects <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paxton et al (2020), “Chapter 5: Explaining the Political Representation of Women: Culture” in <i>Women, Politics and Power: A Global Perspective, Fourth Edition</i> • Richard Fox and Jennifer Lawless (2014), “Uncovering the Origins of the Gender Gap in Political Ambition,” <i>American Political Science Review</i> (available on OWL). • “See Jane 2021: Looking Back and Moving Forward - the State of Representation in Popular Television from 2016 to 2022,” Gina Davis Institute on Gender and Media (available on OWL)

Week 5	Tuesday, October 10, 2023 @ 1:30- 3:30pm	<p>Social Inequality = Political Inequality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social structure • Wage gaps, educational opportunities and work • Networks and access <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lea Elsässer and Armin Schäfer, “Political Inequality in Rich Democracies,” <i>Annual Review of Political Science</i> March 2023 (available on OWL) • Paxton et al (2020), “Chapter 6: Explaining the Political Representation of Women: Social Structure” in <i>Women, Politics and Power: A Global Perspective, Fourth Edition</i> • Tammy Schirle and Moyosoreoluwa Sogaolu, “A Work in Progress: Measuring Wage Gaps for Women and Minorities in the Canadian Labour Market,” <i>CD Howe Institute</i> (available on OWL) • Explore OECD data on Women in Politics: https://data.oecd.org/inequality/women-in-politics.htm
Week 6	Tuesday, October 17, 2023 @ 1:30- 3:30pm	<p>Political Women, Scrutiny & Media</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interest in the personal lives of political women • Differential treatment by media • Social media environment <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ludovic Rheault, Erica Rayment, and Andreea Musulan (2019), “Politicians in the line of fire: Incivility and the treatment of women on social media,” <i>Research & Politics</i>. Available on OWL. • Maria Escobar-Lemmon and Michelle Taylor-Robinson (2015), “Sex, Survival and Scandal: A Comparison of How Men and Women Exit Presidential Cabinets,” <i>Politics & Gender</i> 11(4). Available on OWL. • Katie Simpson (2016), “Trump is a self-celebrating ‘sexual predator,’ says Canada’s 1st female PM,” <i>CBC</i>. Available on OWL. <p>Notes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First half participation marks will be uploaded

Week 7	Tuesday, October 24, 2023 @ 1:30- 3:30pm	<p>Training Session - Writing Effective Op Eds</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special session: training about writing op eds and distilling complex ideas and research into simple and compelling language <p>Readings – Op Eds (all available on OWL):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka and Gabriela Ramos, “Can we achieve gender equality” <i>Reuters</i> (April 8, 2020) • Caitlin Jenner, “I thought Trump would help trans people. I was wrong,” <i>The Washington Post</i> (October 25, 2018) • Peggy Drexler, “Why does Meghan get all the blame?” <i>CNN</i> (January 11, 2020) • Roxanne Jones, “Kamala Harris shows Black women they have the power to change the world,” <i>CNN</i> (November 10, 2020)
Take a break! Fall Reading Week is October 30 to November 3, 2023		
Week 8	Tuesday, November 7, 2023 @ 1:30- 3:30pm	<p>Thinking about System Solutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signs of progress? A review of Canada and beyond • Electoral systems • Quotas <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kim and Fallon, “Making Women Visible: How Gender Quotas Shape Global Attitudes toward Women in Politics,” <i>Politics & Gender</i> (2023) • Paxton et al (2020), “Chapter 7: Explaining the Political Representation of Women: Politics” in <i>Women, Politics and Power: A Global Perspective, Fourth Edition</i> • Read “Introduction” and “Conclusion” chapters of Linda Trimble, Jane Arscott and Manon Tremblay, eds. (2014), <i>Stalled: The Representation of Women in Canadian Governments</i>, UBC Press
Week 9	Tuesday, November 14, 2023 @ 1:30- 3:30pm	<p>Exit Interviews</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lessons from epic departures • Addressing the quality of life and working conditions of elected officials <p>Readings</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jett and Stelloh, “New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern says she will resign as she cites burnout” <i>NBC World News</i> • “MP Exit Interviews: Current Work” Samara Centre for Democracy • Humans of the House podcast, listen to two episodes with female-identified elected officials (of your choice) <p>Notes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analytical Case Study (30%) due on OWL on Friday, November 17, 2023 at 3pm
Week 10	Tuesday, November 21, 2023 @ 1:30-3:30pm	<p>Examining Interventions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class discussion – come prepared to share about the interventions studied in your case study and discuss ideas for your op ed <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Careful reading of Forum posts from each student about their intervention, case study fundings and op ed ideas
Week 11	Tuesday, November 28, 2023 @ 1:30-3:30pm	<p>Do Women Make a Difference?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Descriptive representation, symbolic representation • Demonstrated diversity benefits • Women leaders during COVID • Legitimacy, trust and decision making <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nora Siklodi, Kenny le and Nicholas Allen, “From Gender Equity to Gendered Assignments? Women and Cabinet Committees in Canada and the United States,” <i>Government & Opposition</i> (2023). • Paxton et al (2020), “Chapter 9: Do women make a difference?” in <i>Women, Politics and Power: A Global Perspective, Fourth Edition</i> • Avivah Wittenberg-Cox (2020), “What Do Countries With The Best Coronavirus Responses Have In Common? Women Leaders,” <i>Forbes</i> <p>Notes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Op Ed (20%) due on OWL on Friday, December 1, 2023 at 3pm

Week 12	Tuesday, December 5, 2023 @ 1:30- 3:30pm	The Final Chapter <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Guest speakers - TBD● Closing words on gender equity, politics and our collective role in driving progress Readings <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Speaker bios & materials shared in OWL (see Resources folder) Notes <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Second half participation marks will be uploaded
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