

POLI 348 Gender and Canadian Politics (Fall 2021)

Instructor

Ms. Suvolaxmi Dutta Choudhury

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Office Hours: Friday 11am-1pm or by appointment, via Zoom only (link: <https://mcgill.zoom.us/j/2786514781>)

Office Hours Sign-Up Sheet:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/11KkMrVe77ntQrZeQpFt3edK3xkL4ckVDZjrRP-rkfkW/edit>

TAs

Alexia Leclerc

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Course Schedule

Monday and Wednesday, 1.05pm-2.25pm.

Course Prerequisites

At least one other course in Canadian politics or GSFS.

Course Overview

This course aims to provide foundational knowledge of the conceptual and theoretical approaches to studying gender and feminism and to apply those as critical tools to understand Canadian politics. The course is therefore divided into two parts: Part 1 provides an overview of major theoretical frameworks, debates, and critiques in studying gender and feminism. This includes assessing questions such as: what is gender? What is feminism? How does gender intersect with other forms of identity? What are the possibilities and limitations of ‘gender’ as a category of analysis and ‘doing identity politics’? In Part 2, the course will examine how gender relates to politics of the state. Since we are talking about the Canadian state and society in particular, we will look at some of the key issues and debates here, such as those concerning abortion politics, sexual assault laws, and also engage with questions like how gender affects political participation and representation or how gender mediates citizenship in Canada. By the end of the course, students should develop a critical understanding of the relationship between gender and politics.

Required Texts

All required readings/material will be either available online through McGill University Library or posted on MyCourses. Readings marked with * are not part of the essential reading list, but highly recommended.

Class Format and Instructional Methods

Lectures: The class format will comprise of **in-person** lectures with the instructor, twice a week as per the class schedule. **Please note that the first day of class (Wednesday, September 1, 1.05pm-2.25pm), will be a live/synchronous Zoom session using the link available on MyCourses.** Only this introductory session will be conducted remotely. The rest of the lectures during the term will be in-person. The purpose of this live/synchronous session is to welcome students to the course, provide an overview of the course, and go through the course outline. All students are required to attend this session.

Conferences: Conference sessions with teaching assistants will be held **in-person**, starting from the third week of classes. Student are required to register for one conference on Minerva before the add/drop period ends and attend the conference sessions every week as per the schedule. Students can only attend the conference in which they are enrolled. Attendance in conferences is mandatory. Please get in touch with the instructor or your TA if you face any structural obstacles that prevent you from attending these sessions.

Office hours: Students are encouraged to use the instructor's and TA's office hours to bring their questions, doubts, or just have a discussion on the various topics being studied in the course. These are optional but can be a useful means of clearing out doubts.

Note: In the event that provincial government and university rules mandate it, **classes (both lectures and conferences) could move from an in-person to a remote format.**

In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University's control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course may be subject to change.

Other important things to note:

A productive learning experience requires everyone's participation and engagement without fear of hostility, judgment, or discrimination. The issues we discuss in this course might be deeply personal and intimate, and as a result, could generate lively discussion and heated debates. We must therefore ensure that despite differences of opinions, we will stay focused on the subject being studied in a sensitive and respectful manner. Discriminatory or abusive language of any sort will not be tolerated.

All lecture slides, notes, etc. are the instructor's intellectual property and are meant to be used only for your own learning. You are not permitted to disseminate or share these materials as doing so may violate the instructor's intellectual property rights.

Evaluation and Description of Assignments

The final grade for the course will be comprised of the following:

Conference Participation: 15%

Take-home Midterm: (**October 25-26**) 30%

Short Paper (**due on November 15**): 25%

Final exam: 30%

Conference Participation: Attendance and participation in conferences are compulsory. There will be a total of ten conferences throughout the semester and you must attend at least 9 of these to get a full score. Participation grade will be based on both attendance (5%) and the quality and quantity of your contribution to the overall discussion (10%).

Short Paper: Students will write a 2500-3500 word paper and submit it latest by November 15 on MyCourses. You will be given a list of potential questions/topics on MyCourses, from which you will choose one. You may also propose your own question/topic but would have to get it approved by your TA/instructor. The paper should draw on at least 5 academic readings. Your paper should not merely summarize readings but rather provide a clear argument, i.e., it should provide a coherent answer to the being question posed. You will use the readings to make your own argument. More details on how to write your paper will be provided by your TAs in the conferences. You may also discuss your paper with the instructor during her office hours.

Mid-term: The mid-term will be an **open-book**, written examination to be submitted on MyCourses. You will be able to access the exam on MyCourses for 24 hours – from October 25 at 9:00 AM to October 26 at 9:00 AM. You will be provided with three essay questions, out of which you need to answer **two**. You are expected to use relevant reading materials studied in the course to construct your answers. No outside research is needed. The completed exam, comprising both essays, should be submitted by 9:00 AM on October 26.

Final Exam: The final exam will be a **timed 3-hour closed-book**, written examination to be completed and submitted on MyCourses during the exam period. The exam will comprise of short questions and an essay. You are expected to draw on relevant course material. The exam will include all the material studied in the course. More details will be posted on MyCourses.

Note on Deadlines

The deadlines for assignments will be strictly enforced. Exceptions will only be made for documented illness or other serious situations deemed as such by the instructor. Late submissions will incur a penalty of 5% per day (weekend included). A medical certificate is required to support absences from exams and late submissions because of illness.

Accommodations

If you need accommodations because of special circumstances, challenges or disabilities, please inform the [Office for Students with Disabilities \(OSD\)](#) and the instructor as soon as possible. Every effort to accommodate students with special needs and challenges will be made.

Many [resources](#) are available on-campus, off-campus and online for students who face mental health challenges. The pandemic has unleashed a range of challenges upon all of us, including heightening learning barriers and creating feelings of isolation. If you feel overwhelmed because of this or other things, please feel free to reach out to the teaching team of POLI 348 and also access the services offered by the University.

Content warning

Issues of gender and sexuality are deeply intimate but are also inherently ‘political’. Some of the topics/ study material we discuss in the course may be disturbing for some students. These are included in the course because they are directly related to the learning outcomes. Please contact the instructor if you have specific concerns about this.

Language of Submission

“In accord with McGill University’s [Charter of Student Rights](#), students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded. This does not apply to courses in which acquiring proficiency in a language is one of the objectives.”

« Conformément à [la Charte des droits de l’étudiant](#) de l’Université McGill, chaque étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être noté, sauf dans le cas des cours dont l’un des objets est la maîtrise d’une langue. »

Academic Integrity

“McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the [Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures](#).” See McGill’s [guide to academic honesty](#) for more information.

Land Acknowledgement

“McGill University is on land which long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst Indigenous peoples, including the Haudenosaunee and Anishinabeg nations. We acknowledge and thank the diverse Indigenous people whose footsteps have marked this territory on which peoples of the world now gather.”

Class Schedule and Reading List

PART 1: STUDYING GENDER AND FEMINISM: THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS

Topic	Date	Readings
Introduction <u>Live Zoom Session</u> (Zoom link on MyCourses)	Sept 1	No readings.
i. Introduction: What is gender? What is feminism?	No class no Sept 6 (Labour Day) Sept 8 Sept 13	bell hooks. 2014. "Feminist Politics: Where We Stand". In <i>Feminism is for Everyone: Passionate Politics</i>. Rita Kaur Dhamoon. 2013. "Feminisms." In <i>Oxford Handbook of Gender and Politics</i>. Sarah Ahmed. 2000. "Whose Counting?" <i>Feminist Theory</i> 1(1): 97:103. Jill Vickers 2015. "Can We Change How Political Science Thinks? Gender Mainstreaming in a Resistant Discipline." Presidential Address delivered to the Canadian Political Science Association, Ottawa, June 2, 2015.
ii. Feminism as waves of activism	Sept 15	Elizabeth Evans and Prudence Chamberlain. 2017. "Critical Waves: Exploring Feminist Identity, Discourse and Praxis in Western Feminism" R. Claire Snyder. 2008. "What is Third-Wave Feminism? A New Directions Essay" Rachel Twaites. 2017. "Making a choice or taking a stand? Choice feminism, political engagement and the contemporary feminist movement"

<p>iii. Is there something like ‘being a woman’?</p>	<p>Sept 20 Sept 22</p>	<p>Mary Hawkesworth. 2013. “Sex, Gender, and Sexuality: From Naturalized Presumption to Analytical Categories”.</p> <p>Simone DeBeauvoir. 1949. <i>The Second Sex</i>, Introduction. On MyCourses</p> <p>Judith Butler. 1988. “Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory”.</p>
<p>iv. How does gender intersect with other forms of ‘identity’?</p>	<p>Sept 27 Sept 29</p>	<p>Kimberle Crenshaw. 1991. “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color”.</p> <p>Audre Lorde. 1983. “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House.” In Feminist Postcolonial Theory : A Reader. 2013. Pg. 25-28.*</p> <p>Patricia Hill Collins. 1986. “Learning from the Outsider Within: The Sociological Significance of Black Feminist Thought”.</p> <p>Rita Kaur Dhamoon. 2011. “Considerations on Mainstreaming Intersectionality”.</p>
<p>v. Indigenous, postcolonial and other anti-oppression frameworks</p>	<p>Oct 4 Oct 6 No class on Oct 11 (Thanksgiving Day) Fall Reading Break Oct 12-13</p>	<p>Gina Starblanket. 2020. “Transforming the Gender Divide? Deconstructing Femininity and Masculinity in Indigenous Politics.” In <i>Turbulent Times, Transformational Possibilities? Gender and Politics Today and Tomorrow</i>.</p> <p>Chandra Talpade Mohanty. 1984. “Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses.” <i>Feminist Review</i> 30: 61-88.</p> <p>Nisha Nath, Ethel Tungohan and Megan Gaucher. 2018. “The Future of Canadian Political Science: Boundary Transgressions, Gender and Anti-Oppression Frameworks” <i>CJPS</i> 51(3): 619-642.</p>

		Maile Arvin et al. 2013. "Decolonizing Feminism: Challenging Connections between Settler Colonialism and Heteropatriarchy." Feminist Formations 25(1): 8-34.*
vi. Queer theory	Oct 18	Judith Butler. 1986. "Sex and Gender in Simone de Beauvoir's Second Sex".* Egg et al. 2005. "Introduction: What's Queer About Queer Studies Now?"
vii. Notions of masculinity	Oct 20	R.W. Connell and J.W. Messerschmidt. 2005. "Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept". John Grant and Fiona MacDonald. 2020. "The Alt Right, Toxic Masculinity, and Violence".

Important! Mid-term due on October 25-26

PART 2: GENDER AND CANADIAN POLITICS

Topic	Date	Readings
i. Gender, participation and representation in politics	Oct 25 Oct 27	Melanee Thomas. 2013. "Barriers to Women's Political Participation in Canada". UNB Law Journal. Lisa Young. 2013. "Slow to Change: Women's Representation in the House of Commons". In <i>Stalled: The Representation of Women in Canadian Governments</i>. UBC Press. Elisabeth Gidengil & Joanna Everitt. 2003. "Talking Tough: Gender and Reported Speech in Campaign News Coverage." Political Communication 20:3, 209-232.

		Elisabeth Gidengil. 1996. "Gender and Attitudes Toward Quotas for Women Candidates in Canada." <i>Women & Politics</i>, 16:4, 21-44.
ii. Gender and voting behaviour	Nov 1	<p>Andrea M.L. Perrella, Steven D. Brown, Barry J. Kay. 2012. "Voting Behaviour among the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgendered Electorate." <i>Canadian Journal of Political Science</i>. 45:1: 89–117.</p> <p>Elisabeth Gidengil, Brenda O’Neil & Lisa Young. 2010. "Her Mother’s Daughter? The Influence of Childhood Socialization on Women’s Political Engagement." <i>Journal of Women, Politics & Policy</i>. 31:4, 334-355.</p> <p>Stolle and Gidengil. 2010. What do Women Really Know? A Gendered Analysis of Varieties of Political Knowledge. <i>Perspectives on Politics</i> 9:1, 93-109.</p>
iii. Gender, law, and public policy a. Sexual assault laws	Nov 8	<p>Elaine Craig. 2020. "Feminism, Public Dialogue, and Sexual Assault Law." In <i>Turbulent Times, Transformational Possibilities? Gender and Politics Today and Tomorrow</i>. Pg. 101-115.</p> <p>Emily Bazelon. "The Return of the Sex Wars" (New York Times article).</p>
b. Abortion politics	Nov 10	Janine Brodie, Shelley Gavigan, and Jane Jenson. 1992. <i>The Politics of Abortion</i>. Chapter 1.
Important! Short paper due on November 15	Nov 15	Kelly Gordon and Paul Saurette. "Representing the Cause: The Strategic Rebranding of the Anti-Abortion Movement." In <i>Representing Abortion</i>. Chapter 6. Pg. 94-103.
iv. Racialized and gendered citizenship: Are we all really equal?	Nov 17	Jo-Anne Lee and Linda Cardinal. "Hegemonic Nationalism and the Politics of Feminism and Multiculturalism in Canada." In <i>Painting the Maple:</i>
	Nov 22	

	Nov 24	<p><u>Essays on Race, Gender and the Construction of Canada. Pg. 215-238.</u></p> <p><u>Green, Joyce. 2001. "Canaries in the Mines of Citizenship: Indian Women in Canada." CJPS 34, 4 (2001): 715-38.</u></p> <p><u>Sedef Arat-Koc. 2012. "Invisibilized, Individualized, and Culturalized: Paradoxical Invisibility and Hyper-Visibility of Gender in Policy Making and Policy Discourse in Neoliberal Canada." Canadian Women Studies 29:3, 6-17.</u></p> <p><u>Naved Bakali. 2015. "Contextualising the Quebec Charter of Values: How the Muslim 'Other' is Conceptualised in Quebec." Culture and Religion, 16:4, 412-429.</u></p>
v. No need for feminism in today's world?	Nov 29 Dec 1	<p><u>Janine Brodie. 2008. "We Are Equal Now. Contemporary Gender Politics in Canada." Feminist Theory 9:2, 145-164.</u></p> <p><u>Alexandra Dobrowolsky. 2020. "A Diverse, Feminist 'Open Door' Canada? Trudeau-Styled Equality, Liberalisms, and Feminisms." In <i>Turbulent Times, Transformational Possibilities? Gender and Politics Today and Tomorrow.</i></u></p> <p><u>Micheale Ferguson. 2010. "Choice Feminism and the Fear of Politics." Perspectives on Politics 8:1, 247-253.</u></p> <p><u>Tamara A. Small. 2020. "The Promises and Perils of Hashtag Feminism." In <i>Turbulent Times, Transformational Possibilities? Gender And Politics Today And Tomorrow.</i></u></p>
Conclusion	Dec 6	No readings

Important! Final Exam (date to be posted later)