

**The College of Charleston**  
**POLS 101 – Learning Community 10**  
**Sex, Politics and American Culture**

Fall 2008

Tu-Th 12:15-1:30 P.M.

111 Maybank Hall

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**The Learning Community at the College of Charleston**

Welcome to the Learning Community at the College of Charleston. Our goal is to engage first-year students in an interdisciplinary learning experience characterized by academic vigor and collaborative learning. The “learning laboratory” for the Learning Community includes the classroom, the College’s

academic resources and support services, the Peer Facilitators' seminar and the greater community at the campus, local, state and national level.

The theme of this Learning Community is Sex, Politics and American Culture. The Linked classes are Political Science 101 (POLS 101) and Women and Gender Studies 200. In this course (POLS 101) we will explore the role of sex and gender in shaping attitudes, behaviors and outcomes in the American electoral process. We will witness this process in "real time" as we are in the middle of a heavily contested and history-making campaign for the presidency of the United States- a race between U.S. Senator John McCain (R- AZ) who, if elected on November 4th, will be the oldest person ever to be elected President and U.S. Senator Barack Obama (D-IL) who, if elected, will be the first African-American to be elected president of the United States.

Through the primary season a third history-making candidate, U.S. Senator Hillary Clinton (D-NY) seemed poised to become the first woman to be elected U.S. President. She also would have been the first person elected whose spouse had been President.

What happened to Hillary Clinton's historic race for the White House?

Why did this U.S. Senator from New York and former First Lady lose a primary campaign she was widely expected to win?

How did the American electorate view her campaign for the White House in comparison to her male opponents?

How did the American media portray Hillary Clinton- were they more interested in her clothes size than her message?

How did Hillary Clinton define herself to the American electorate- did she run as a feminist candidate? Were her campaign issues similar to or different from her male opponents?

What role, if any, did gender play in Hillary Clinton's unsuccessful campaign to become the first woman President of the United States?

Despite her primary loss, was Hillary Clinton's campaign successful in breaking gender stereotypes of women who run for the Presidency? If so, what stereotypes? If not, why not?

Though Hillary Clinton failed in her Presidential bid, two years ago Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) was elected the 60th Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives-the first woman in history to hold this position and, as a result, 3<sup>rd</sup> in line of succession to the Presidency. Women represent less than 20% of the U.S. House of Representatives. What factors were critical in this male dominated legislative body electing a woman as its leader? Were these factors primarily personal or institutional?

What role does gender play in gaining access to the highest level of electoral politics and governing in our democratic system? Is being female a negative attribute, a value-added characteristic or a value-

neutral identity in our electoral system of government? We will explore these issues during the course of the semester.

### **Course Requirements**

Lectures and assignments are designed to (a) provide an overall understanding of the foundations and framework of our democratic system of government; (b) explore the influence of gender and gender stereotypes in determining our elected representatives and (c) enhance our understanding of these issues through both research and case studies of Senator Hillary Clinton's quest for the presidency and Representative Nancy Pelosi's rise as Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives.

These issues will be explored through lectures, in-class discussions of required assignments, written commentaries on specific issues, a research paper, mid-term and final examinations. Potential external experiences include local visits with a Member of Congress, a political reporter and senior officials in the Democratic and Republican parties in South Carolina. You are strongly encouraged to watch the prime-time speeches by the major women elected officials who will appear at the Democratic and Republican national conventions that are scheduled for August 25-28 (Denver, CO) and September 1-4, 2008 (Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN), respectively.

Your classroom experience this semester is supported by a number of college resources. Two valuable resources are your Peer Facilitators and the College Library where Librarian Philip Powell serves as a key team member of our Learning Community .

The Peer Facilitators have created a Seminar for the purpose of helping you successfully complete your classroom assignments, fully utilize all of the College's resources and share the academic and social experiences here that have facilitated their academic achievement. These Peer Seminars are a required part of your Learning Community and the Peer Facilitators will be periodically asked to evaluate your attendance and participation. Peer Facilitators have been provided with a copy of this syllabus and so are familiar with the class organization and required assignments.

A key element in your success this semester is how quickly you become proficient in accessing and using the Library and its resources. Phillip Powell will be your 'mentor' in this process. Librarian Powell will provide help in developing your research skills, using databases and subject guides, creating a bibliography, appropriately citing resources and generally maximizing your use of the Library as an essential academic resource.

Grades will be based on the following:

Midterm Examination	20%
Research Paper	20%
Written assignment # 1	10%
Written assignment # 2	10%

Final Examination	30%
Class Participation	10%

### **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism (presenting the words or ideas of another as one's own) is a serious offense and can result in severe academic penalties. To avoid this problem you are **required** to complete the online Plagiarism Tutorial offered by the Library ([library.cofc.edu/plagiarism](http://library.cofc.edu/plagiarism)) no later than the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of class (by Thursday, September 11, 2008). Phillip Powell will guide you through this process and verify your completion.

### **Required Textbooks**

Susan J. Carroll and Richard L. Fox, Editors. **Gender and Elections: Shaping the Future of American Politics.** 2007. Cambridge University Press. New York.

Susan Morrison, Ed. **Thirty Ways of Looking at Hillary Clinton.** 2008. HarperCollins. New York.

### **Additional required and/or recommended readings:**

Carson, Jamie L. "Strategy, Selection and Candidate Competition in U.S. House and Senate Elections." Journal of American Politics, 67 (2005), 1-28.

Center for the American Women and Politics: 2005. Fact Sheet: Women of Color in Elective Office.

Fournier, Ron. "Exit Polls Can Lead The Way in Finding Mr. or Mrs. Right for a Run in 2008". Wisconsin State Journal.

Fox, Richard L. and Lawless, Jennifer. " Enter the Arena: Gender and the Decision to Run for Office." 2004. American Journal of Political Science. 48(2):264-80.

Givhan, Robin, "Something up Their Sleeves: Gesture is the Epitome of 'Candidate Casual'. The Washington Post. December 5, 2003.

Lawless, Jennifer L. 2004. "Women, War and Winning Elections: Gender Stereotyping in the post-September 11<sup>th</sup> Era." Political Research Quarterly , 57:479-90.

Miller, Diane Helene, " Freedom to Differ: The Shaping of the Gay and Lesbian Struggle for Civil Rights." New York University Press, 1998.

National Foundation for Women Legislators. Facts about Women Legislators: Women in Elective Office 2007. [www.womenlegislators.org/women\\_legislator-facts.php](http://www.womenlegislators.org/women_legislator-facts.php).

Pew Center on the States. The Pew Center on the States Legislators Survey: A Report on the Findings. Princeton Survey Research Associates. 2003.

Pfeiffer, David. "Overview of the Disability Movement: History, Legislative Record and Political Implications." Political Studies Journal. Winter 1993.

Sanbonmatsu, Kira. 2002. "Gender Stereotypes and Vote Choice." American Journal of Political Science 46:20-34.

"The Constitutional Underclass: Gays, lesbians and the Failure of Class-based Protection." University of Chicago Press. 1999.

Wattenberg, Martin P., "Elections: Turnout in the 2004 Presidential Elections", Presidential Studies Quarterly, 35 (March 2005), 138-46.

The following references are also recommended:

### **Major Women's Political Support Organizations and/or Political Action Committees**

National Women's Political Caucus

The Women's Campaign Fund

EMILY'S List

WISH List

Fund for the Feminist Majority

### **National Polling Organizations**

The Gallup Organization

Pew Research Center for People and the Press

ABCNews/ Washington Post Poll (8/24/08)

USA Today/CNN/ Gallup Tracking Poll

NBC/WallStreet Journal Poll

Princeton Research Survey Associates Poll

You are also encouraged to read a reputable national newspaper each day to keep abreast of contemporary political issues, especially with regard to the 2008 presidential campaign. The *New York Times* and *The Washington Post* provide very good coverage of national and international political affairs and both are available online ([www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com), [www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com)) at no charge. The New York Times is also available in most campus housing facilities. Local political news is reported in *The Post and Courier* which is available online at [www.charleston.net](http://www.charleston.net) at no charge.

**August 2008**

- Tu 26 Introductions and Course Overview
- Th 28 Semester Overview and Introduction to Library Resources  
Presentation by Librarian Phillip Powell

**Topic One : Foundations of American Government****September**

- Tu 2 The Political Landscape -The Struggle for Independence from Britain  
**Required Reading:** The chronology in: Lonton, Calvin D., The Bicentennial Almanac. Nashville, TN. 1975.
- Th 4 The Origins of a New Nation – The First Continental Congress
- Tu 9 The Declaration of Independence
- Th 11 The first “Constitution” – the Articles of Confederation
- Tu 16 The Constitutional Convention-Basic Principles and Political Compromises
- Th 18 The Constitution of the United States – authority, powers, promise
- Tu 23 The U.S. Constitution and issues of Equality and Civil Rights
- Th 25 The U.S. Constitution and issues of Equality and Civil Rights
- Tu 30 The Struggle for Gender Equality – Historical overview  
**Assigned Reading:** Susan A. MacManus: “ A Brief History of Women’s Suffrage” in Gender and Elections – Chapter Two

**Topic Two : Gender and Participation in the U.S. Electoral System****October**

- Th 2 Gender, Access and Political Participation  
**Assigned Reading:** “Introduction: Gender and Electoral Politics in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” - Susan J. Carroll and Richard L. Fox in Gender and Elections
- Tu 7 Participation of American Women in Politics – A Demographic Profile  
Center for American Women and Politics – Rutgers University

- Th 9                   **MIDTERM EXAMINATION**
- Tu 14                 **Fall Break- No Class**
- Th 16                 Women and the Presidency
- Assigned Reading:** Georgia Durst Lahti – “Presidential Elections- Gendered Space and the Case of 2004 in Gender and Elections, Chapter Two
- Assigned Reading:** Deborah Tannen- “The Double Bind” in Thirty Ways of Looking at Hillary Clinton: Reflections by Women Writers
- Assignment # 1 Due**
- Tu 21                 Hillary Clinton for President
- Assigned Reading:** Elizabeth Kolbert- “ The Tyranny of High Expectations” in Thirty Ways of Looking at Hillary Clinton
- Assigned Reading:** Katha Pollit – “Hillary Rotten” in Thirty Ways of Looking at Hillary Clinton.
- Assigned Reading:** Laura Kipnis- “Medusa for President” in Thirty Ways
- Th 23                 Hillary Clinton for President –
- Handout for Discussion:** Daniel M. Shea and Bryan Reece- 2008 Election Preview: Candidates and Issues in the 2008 Presidential Campaign- “Close up: Top Four Democrats and Republican Candidates”.
- Assigned Reading:** Jane Kramer – “My Generation” in Thirty Ways of Looking at Hillary Clinton
- Tu 28                 Hillary Clinton for President
- Assigned Reading:** Letty Cottin Pogrebin – “ The Wife, The Candidate, The Senator, And Her Husband in Thirty Ways of Looking at Hillary Clinton.
- Th 30                 Hillary Clinton for President
- Assigned Reading:** Lionel Shriver- “Monarch in the Making” in Thirty Ways of Looking at Hillary Clinton
- November**
- Tu 4                   The 2008 U.S. Presidential Election
- Th 6                   Women, Power and the U.S. Congress

Required Reading: Richard L. Fox. "Congressional Elections: Where are We on the Road to Gender Parity?" in Gender and Elections, Chapter Four

Tu 11 U.S. Congress – The Pelosi Era

**Assigned Reading:** Marc Sandalow- "Nancy Pelosi: Charting New Roads for Women in Congress" in California Journal, Volume XXXII, Number 12, December 2001

**Assignment # 2 Due**

Th 13 U.S. Congress – The Pelosi Era

Tu 18 Women and the American Judiciary

Th 20 Electoral politics and State Government

**Required reading:** Sanbonmatsu, Kira. 2002. "Political Parties and the Recruitment of Women to State Legislatures". Journal of Politics, 64 (3): 791-809.

Tu 25 Electoral politics and Local Government

**Required reading:** Sanbonmatsu, Kira. "State Elections: Where do Women run? Where do Women win? In Gender and Elections , Chapter Eight.

Th 27 **Thanksgiving – No class**

**December**

Tu 2 Gender and Electoral politics -International Comparisons

Th 4 Gender and electoral politics - Future challenges

**Research Paper Due**

Tu 9 **Reading Day – No Class**

Th 11 **Final Examination**

**12 noon - 3:00 P.M.**

**Required assignments**

**Research Assignment- Gender, Electoral Politics and the 2008 Presidential Campaign -Was gender the primary factor in Hillary Clinton's loss in the 2008 Presidential Primary ?**

In "Gender and Electoral Politics in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century" (Gender and Elections), Susan Carroll and Richard Fox assert that gender affects the outcomes in contemporary electoral politics due to six critical factors:

- (1) The electoral playing field (candidates, campaign strategists, political reporters, political analysts etc. )is dominated by men;
- (2) gendered language using metaphors of war shape the definitions of candidates and their campaigns;
- (3) sports language is also dominant in the coverage of campaigns by the media;
- (4) voters' expectations about the abilities, appearance and behavior of candidates are highly gendered;
- (5) the expectations Americans have about how candidates and political leaders should dress are highly gendered, and
- (6) gender stereotypes are apparent in the strategies candidates employ in reaching voters.

Carroll and Fox assert that these gender stereotypes affect our assumptions about the electability of candidates and contribute to the outcomes of their campaigns for electoral office.

Your assignment is to research each of these claims as they apply to the 2008 primary campaign (January-June 2008) for the Presidency of the United States. You should draw a conclusion about whether they are supported by empirical data regarding the candidacy of Senator Hillary Clinton and her major democratic opponents for the U.S. Presidency – Senator Barack Obama, former Senator John Edwards and Governor Bill Richardson.

You are required to select and develop an annotated bibliography of twenty (20) sources that describe Hillary Clinton's qualifications to be President of the United States. These sources should be a combination of journal articles, political commentary, national polls, political analyses, official campaign reports, candidates' speeches and/or research findings and reports.

From your selected sources:

- (a) Develop a glossary of the ten (10) most common terms used to describe Senator Clinton's positive qualifications to be President and the ten (10) most common negative terms that describe those qualifications .
- (b) Divide these terms into those that are (a) gender specific; (b) gender-neutral; (c) descriptive of gender-related related characteristics (i.e., body size, hair, clothes, etc.); (d) descriptive of qualities related to training, experience and preparation.
- (c) How are Senator Clinton's opponents described on the same characteristics in the same articles?

Based on your research, answer the following questions:

- (1) Was there a gender distinction in the assignment by the major networks and cable channels of reporters assigned to Senator Hillary Clinton's campaigns versus those of her three major opponents?
- (2) Was gendered language evident in the analysis and reporting on Hillary Clinton's primary campaign versus those of her opponents? if so, how was this reflected?
- (3) Was gendered language evident in the candidates' own description of their campaigns –and themselves? What is the evidence?
- (4) Is there evidence that reporting about the appearance and behavior of the candidates was highly gendered?
- (5) Were the strategies utilized by Hillary Clinton to reach voters significantly different from those of her male counterparts?
- (6) If gender stereotypes were present, did they increase or decrease as the candidate field narrowed?
- (7) Is there evidence in national polls that the American electorate considered Hillary's Clinton gender in their analysis of her qualifications to be President?
- (8) Based on your research, what are your conclusions about the role of gender stereotypes in Hillary Clinton's primary campaign loss? What is the evidence for this view? Against this view?

Your research paper should not exceed twenty (20) double-spaced pages in length, excluding references, charts, graphs and other attachments.

Footnotes and citations should conform to the standards of the Modern Language Association (MLA).  
<http://library.uww.edu/GUIDES/MLACITE.htm>

### **Written Assignments**

The following assignments are short essays designed to provide an opportunity for you to think through and share your analysis of a particular topic or issue related to gender and elections. These assignments are basically your own opinion and/or commentary based on the readings.

The first assignment requires you to read and compare perceptions of Hillary Clinton as a feminist candidate as described by two feminist writers in Thirty Ways of Looking at Hillary Clinton.

The second assignment requires you to analyze the phenomena of a self-avowed and nationally recognized feminist being elected to the top leadership of the male dominated United States House of Representatives.

**Assignment # 1** – Read Essays # 1 “Yellow Pantsuit” and # 16 “Elect Sister Frigidaire” in Thirty Ways of Looking at Hillary Clinton. Compare the definitions of Clinton as a candidate for President by the two writers. Does either writer define her as a feminist candidate? If so, what attributes of feminism are assigned to her? Do you agree with the authors' portrayal of Hillary Clinton as a candidate for President? Why? Why not?

Assignment # 2 –Women represent less than 17% of the 435 member U.S. House of Representatives. In 2006 Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) was elected Speaker making her the first woman in history to hold this position in the U.S. Congress- and 3<sup>rd</sup> in line of succession to the presidency. What role, if any, did gender play in the election of Speaker Pelosi? What other factors account for her extraordinary success in this male dominated political body? How is she defined as a political leader in comparison to former Speaker Dennis Hastert (R-IL)? Does the election of Nancy Pelosi by members of Congress – the “people’s representatives”- refute or challenge the notion that gender is a defining characteristic in electoral politics?

You are required to read and cite at least five (5) journal articles, political analyses by recognized journalists and/or polling reports by national polling organizations in preparing your essay on Speaker Pelosi.

References and citations should conform to the Modern Language Association (MLA) Standards.

**All assignments are due at the close of class on the day designated. Assignments received after the close of class (whether by e-mail or hard copy) will be deemed to be late and will incur an automatic late penalty of 10 points and a 5 point penalty for each day following.**