

POLI 405.02 Capstone Seminar
Gender Salience in American Politics
Fall 2022 MW 2-3:15p MYBK 316

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Office Hours: M 3:30-5p; Wed 9-10:30a; and by appointment

This capstone seminar is designed to explore new and unsettled territory in society, politics, and scholarship. We know that gender is a highly salient feature of American politics, but we are not very precise when it comes to conceptualizing, measuring, and evaluating the impact of gender. For example, when we talk about the gender gap in voting or wages or policy preferences, we say “gender,” but our variable typically measures “sex.” Sex and gender are inter-related, but gender is not fully determined by sex because not all men are masculine and not all women are feminine. Binary measures fail to capture the full spectrum of gender identities today; and by focusing primarily on differences between men and women we miss important variation in attitudes and behavior among men and among women. This capstone will begin by defining and differentiating sex, gender, and gender identity as theoretical and analytical constructs. Next, we will dive into the debates over how to disentangle sex, gender, and gender identity in political research by reading new work across a variety of topic areas. As we read and discuss this work together, each of you will identify an area to explore further in independent research papers and presentations.

The political science capstone seminar is the culminating experience in the major. Your work in this course will allow you to demonstrate your skill in critical analysis and effective communication as well as conceptualize and carry out independent research. You will have multiple opportunities to demonstrate these learning outcomes throughout the semester by leading class discussion, providing critical feedback on other’s written work, and most significantly on your individual research project.

Ultimately, this seminar is your space to explore ideas, assess the state of knowledge in our discipline, and critically evaluate the ways in which gender works in popular culture and the political universe. These issues are deeply personal, and the state of our current politics is grim when it comes to gender issues. Our shared goal this term must be to create a supportive seminar community so that we can work through this new terrain.

Required Course Materials

(both books are in paperback & available at the bookstore or Amazon)

Sally Hines, *Is Gender Fluid? A primer for the 21st Century* (Thames & Hudson, 2018)

Dan Cassino and Yasemin Besen-Cassino, *Gender Threat: American Masculinity in the Face of Change* (Stanford University Press, 2022).

Additional research articles as well as links to films and podcasts are available on OAKS.

Student Drop-in Office Hours and Ways to Contact Me

Please come see me! I have posted office hours every week and I encourage you to use them. You can find these at the top of this syllabus (Monday 3:30-5:00p; Wednesday 9-10:30a). During these hours I will be in my office and you don't have to have a problem or a specific question to come see me. I look forward to the opportunity to get to know you better and office hours are a great time to do that. On the rare occasions that I will not be available during office hours, I will do my best to let you know that in advance. That said, you should feel free to simply stop by during my office hours—no appointment necessary. If my posted hours do not fit your schedule, I will be more than happy to make an appointment with you. Please take the initiative to contact me if you have questions, problems, or if special circumstances arise. I am very accessible by email for quick questions. My office phone is 843-953-6531 (leave a voicemail with your name and return number). You can also text my personal cell at 843-860-1524. I have created a Remind account in case I need to notify you quickly. The link to enroll is in OAKS.

Name and Personal Pronouns

I want to use your chosen name and correct gender pronouns. My official class roll will not always provide this information, so please make a point to email me, speak with me after class, or stop by my office so that I can get it right.

Accommodations

If you are eligible for and need accommodation for a disability, please speak with me during the first two weeks of class so that reasonable accommodations can be arranged. If you have an approved accommodation, I encourage you to make full use of it in relation to our class so that you can be as successful as possible. If you aren't currently receiving services, but believe you might be eligible, please contact the [Center for Disability Services/SNAP](#) located on the first floor of the Lightsey Center, Suite 104.

Attendance and Preparation for Class

Regular class attendance and careful preparation for each class are essential to your learning and success. I do not always take formal attendance, but a strong class attendance record is highly correlated with strong academic performance. I also understand that life happens and sometimes you may have to miss class. You won't be penalized for occasional absences, but please get in touch and let me know you are OK if you miss more than one class in a week. During the first class session, I encourage you to exchange contact information with a classmate so that you have someone to share notes and materials with in the event you are absent. If you find yourself having trouble with any aspect of the class, please come and talk with me. College is challenging and everyone needs support and help to do their best.

Grades

Grades for individual assignments and the final grade in the course will be based on the following scale: 93-100 A; 90-92 A-; 88-89 B+; 83-87 B; 80-82 B-; 78-79 C+; 73-77 C; 70-72 C-; 68-69 D+; 63-67 D; 60-62 D-; below 60 F. If you have any questions about how your work is evaluated or the basis for a grade, please come and see me. I will post grades in the OAKS Gradebook for each assignment. I will submit a midterm grade by the College deadline.

****Please see the end of the syllabus for other important policies and resources****

Course Assignments

Our work this semester will include the following:

Gender Observation This short assignment is designed to tune your attention to seeing gender in the world around you and to help you start thinking about your research topic. For one week, keep a log of the ways gender influences norms, attitudes, behavior, policies, and practices. Be mindful of the ways we have delineated sex, gender, and gender identity as you make your observations. In a reflective essay, share with me what you see, hear and experience. What gender-related issues or questions arise from your observations? This assignment is worth 10% of your final grade.

Class Discussion Leaders The capstone is a seminar, so by definition there is little to lecture about and lots to discuss and process together. This only works if you come to class prepared. I've divided the material into roughly five sections. For each section, 3 of you will prepare to lead the discussion—drawing out the essential questions and making connections between the text, research articles and contemporary culture/politics/policy issues. In particular, I'm interested in the ways you find to apply the concepts and questions raised in the reading to gender issues in the world around us. If you want us to read additional articles or look at visuals or film etc., you'll need to let us know in advance. I'll give you a chance to choose when you want to lead the discussion. This role is worth 15% of your final grade.

Writing Group The primary outcome of the course is an individual research project. We will work on this in stages and at each stage you will meet with your writing group to get critical feedback and discuss your progress. The first meeting of your writing group will be to brainstorm ideas for individual projects. Subsequent meetings will involve providing feedback through a peer editing process. This assignment is worth 15% of your final grade.

Individual Research Project The capstone paper is meant to be a significant investigation of a research question of interest to you. I imagine these papers in the 15-20-page range, although this may vary depending on your topic. Although a formal paper is required, you may choose to get more creative for your presentation. You will work on your research project in stages with frequent feedback from me and from your writing group. Although we will take some class time for writing groups to meet, the bulk of your research project will be completed outside of class. This assignment is worth 60% of your final grade.

Calendar of due dates: (submit written work in OAKS)

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| Gender Observations (10%) | Due September 5, 2022 |
| Writing Group (15%) | September 7 October 3 November 9 |
| Individual Research Project (Total 60%) | |
| Proposal with Research Question (5%) | Due September 14 (copy to me; copy to WG) |
| Literature Review (10%) | Due October 5 |
| Rough Draft (15%) | Due November 14 |
| Research Presentation (5%) | November 21, 28, 30, December 5 |
| Final Paper (25%) | No later than December 9 |

Course Topics and Reading Assignments

Introductions & Ideas about Gender

August 24

Reading:

- “What’s your pronoun?” (pdf in OAKS)
- “The problem with pronouns” (pdf in OAKS)
- A Guide to Gender Identity Terms ([link](#) in OAKS)

1. Conceptualizing Gender—an expression of sex?

August 29-September 5

Reading: *Is Gender Fluid?* (Introduction and Chapter 1)

Listen: NPR’s [Hidden Brain](#), “Nature, Nurture and our Evolving Debates about Gender”

Research Article(s):

- “Sex isn’t Gender: Reforming Concepts and Measurements in the Study of Public Opinion”
- “Gender, Sex, and Trust in Government”

Popular Culture/Politics/Policy Issue:

General Electric v Gilbert (1976), Pregnancy Discrimination Act (1978), FMLA (1993)

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| September 7 | Writing Group in class—Brainstorming topics for Individual Research |
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| September 12 | Library Research Visit |
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2. Conceptualizing Gender—culturally constructed?

September 14-21

Reading: *Is Gender Fluid?* (Chapter 2)

Research Articles:

- “The Application of Social Role Theory to the Study of Gender in Politics”
- “Beyond the Gender Gap: The Role of Gender Identity”
- “The Politics of Men’s and Women’s Traditional Masculinity Ideology in the United States”

Popular Culture/Politics/Policy Issue:

Oklahoma’s “Failure to Protect” Laws (NPR, ACLU investigation), Female Trump voters, Ladies restroom origin

3. Diversity in Gender Identity

September 26 – October 5

Reading: *Is Gender Fluid* (Chapter 3)

Watch: The Codes of Gender--Identity & Performance in Popular Culture (episode 1) [Kanopy]

Research Articles:

- “Scaling Up: Representing Gender diversity in Survey Research”

“The Scientific Gaze in American Transgender Politics: Contesting the Meanings of Sex, Gender, and Gender Identity in the Bathroom Rights Cases”

“Digging Deeper into the Gender Gap: Gender Salience as a Moderating Factor in Political Attitudes”

Popular Culture/Politics/Policy Issue: Anti-Transgender action by state legislatures; Trump’s ban on military service for Transitioning Transgender people and Biden’s reversal

October 3 Writing Group Meeting (Professor Ford away)

4. Intersectionality, Gender, Gender Activism October 10 – 17

Reading: *Is Gender Fluid* (Chapter 4 and Conclusion)

Research Article:

“The Intersectional Dynamics of Descriptive Representation”

“Intersectionality Undone”

“Masculine Republicans and Feminine Democrats: Gender and Americans’ Explicit and Implicit Images of the Political Parties”

Popular Culture/Politics/Policy Issue: Candidates & Elections

“The Gender Gap Obscures More about Politics Than it Reveals”

5. Masculinity and Gender Threat October 19 – 26

Gender Threat: American Masculinity in the Face of Change

Reading: Chapter 1 - 3

Chapters 4-7

October 31 & November 2 Paper Conferences with Professor Ford (no class meetings)

November 9 Writing Group Meeting in class

November 14 – Rough Draft Due

November 14 or 16—Making Effective Presentations Session

Research Presentations—November 21, 28, 30 and December 5*

*If we don’t need all four days, we’ll use one for on more Writing Group meeting

Final Paper Due no later than December 9

College of Charleston Policies and Resources

Academic Integrity and the Honor Code

This subject is very important. When you enrolled in the College of Charleston, you agreed to abide by the Honor Code. I expect you to abide by that code and indeed it is the only way for you to maintain the integrity and value of your degree. I expect that the work you do for this class is entirely your own. I expect you to cite material properly and to ask questions if you are unsure of when and how to cite sources. Since you will be engaging in independent research, you will need to develop protocols to keep track of your sources when you draw directly or indirectly from the ideas and words of others. The [Political Science Citation Guide](#) is a good reference. If I suspect work has been plagiarized, I will forward the case to the Honor Board. Students found to have plagiarized will fail this class and may face other penalties. A copy of the College of Charleston Honor Code and all related processes are found in the *Student Handbook* at: <http://studentaffairs.cofc.edu/honor-system/studenthandbook/index.php/>

OAKS

OAKS, including the Gradebook, will be used for this course to provide the syllabus, selected course materials, grades on assignments, as well as posted announcements or changes to the course plan. Please get in the habit of checking OAKS frequently during the week.

Plan for Academic Continuity during Hurricane

In the event of an interruption of campus operations/closure, the College of Charleston is prepared to shift in-person classes to online instruction to maintain academic progress. If the College temporarily closes, this does not necessarily mean that classes are discontinuing. In most disciplines, instruction will proceed in an online environment. Students should be prepared for direct communication from their instructor for each of their classes via CofC's email system and via OAKS. Most faculty members will engage students through OAKS, our university's Learning Management System. Students are expected to log in to OAKS daily during an interruption of campus operations. We recognize that during an evacuation, access to digital resources may be limited. Faculty will adjust assignments and due dates to accommodate students' needs in response to evolving conditions.

Library Research Consultation & Writing Lab

The Research Librarians and Archivists in Addlestone Library and Avery are among the most valuable academic resources at the College! You may (and must for this class) schedule an appointment to meet with a librarian in-person or virtually for assistance. <https://libcal.library.cofc.edu/appointments/>

In addition, located in the Center for Student Learning (CSL) housed within Addlestone Library you will find the Writing Lab. Trained writing consultants can help with writing for all courses; they offer one-to-one consultations that address everything from brainstorming and developing ideas to crafting strong sentences and documenting sources. For more information, please call 843.953.5635 or visit <http://csl.cofc.edu/labs/writing-lab/>

Attendance Verification

Only students officially registered (graded or auditing) for this course may attend class. During the week following the drop/add deadline, the professor will verify student enrollments in this course. Any student appearing on the class roll but determined not to have attended the class even once will be removed.

Food/Housing Resources

Many CofC students report experiencing food and housing insecurity. If you are facing challenges in securing food (not being able to afford groceries or get sufficient food to eat every day) and housing (such as lacking a safe and stable place to live), please contact the [Dean of Students](#) for support and you can find additional information about [food and housing assistance](#). You can visit the Cougar Pantry in the Stern Center (2nd floor), a student-run food pantry that provides dry-goods and hygiene products at no charge to any student.

Mental & Physical Wellbeing:

At the college, we take every students' mental and physical wellbeing seriously. If you find yourself experiencing physical illnesses, please reach out to Student Health Services (843.953.5520). And if you find yourself experiencing any mental health challenges (for example, anxiety, depression, stressful life events, sleep deprivation, and/or loneliness/homesickness) please contact the [Counseling Center](#) or Students 4 Support (text "4support" to 839863).

Important Institutional Deadlines

Monday, August 29 Last day for Drop/Add for full semester courses

Monday, October 3 Last day to submit an undergraduate application to graduate Fall 2022 in December

Thursday, October 13 Midterm Grades

Friday, October 28 Last day for students to withdraw ("W") from full semester classes

November 7-8 Fall Break (no classes, College remains open on Monday)

Wednesday, November 23-27 Thanksgiving Holiday (no classes)

Monday, December 5 Last day of classes

Tuesday, December 6 Reading Day

Wednesday, December 14 Final Grades Due

Saturday, December 17 Commencement