

## **POLITICAL SCIENCE 399: WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP**

Dr. Melody E. Valdini & Traci Rossi  
E-mail: [mev@pdx.edu](mailto:mev@pdx.edu)  
Office: 650-M URBN  
Office Hours: Thurs 12:30-2:00 (or by appt)

Winter 2020  
TR: 10:00-11:50  
Room: KMC 580  
Website: <http://web.pdx.edu/~mev/>

**Course Description:** Why are there so few women leaders in politics, business, and in other formal positions of authority? This course offers a two-pronged approach to answering this complicated and multifaceted question: first, using interdisciplinary texts and an intersectional lens, we consider the scholarly literature on women's leadership. We examine theories from political science, sociology, and psychology that explain the limited number of women leaders, and engage perspectives from the US as well as other countries. The second element of this course offers the integration of theory and practice, and focuses on leadership training for students through workshops, community engagement, and other hands-on activities.

**Catalog statement:** This course provides an overview of scholarly theories on why/when/how women lead in politics, business, and law, utilizing a comparative perspective as well as an intersectional lens. In addition, this course includes a significant practicum element in which students develop their leadership skills and meet with current women leaders in various fields.

**Learning Outcomes:** At the end of this course, students will have gained:

- An understanding and ability to critically assess the divergent theories that explain the lack of women leaders.
- An understanding the effects of social and implicit bias, stereotypes, and discrimination on women's access to leadership opportunities.
- An understanding of intersectional identities and the socially-constructed nature of difference and power.
- A comparative perspective of the differences in women's access to power and leadership opportunities in countries across the world.
- Leadership skills useful across career paths (not just political office).

### **Course Assignments and Grading:**

25%= Discussion in Class/In-class Activities  
15%= Paper 1  
15%= Paper 2  
15%= Paper 3  
35%= Final Exam

Class attendance is required, and you will be responsible for all lecture materials. You are expected to do the reading for each week and be prepared to discuss the reading in lecture.

### **Description of the Course Assignments:**

Discussion/In-Class Activities: Significant time will be spent both discussing the readings as well as applying them in a workshop-like setting. This element of your grade will be calculated using your attendance, preparation, and participation in our discussions and

activities.

Paper 1: You can choose the day that you submit the paper, but you must write the paper on the topic/readings assigned for the day that you submit it. These papers should be written in a formal, scholarly voice, and should focus on taking the topic of that day a step past the assigned readings. That is, the ideal paper should briefly summarize the assigned readings for that day (no more than 2 pages), and then either apply the theories and ideas expressed in those readings to a different aspect or perspective of women's leadership. For example, if the readings focused on the United States, you might write a paper that explains how these theories might need to be altered if they were applied to another country. Another idea is to consider how those readings that either explicitly or implicitly focus on white women apply to the experiences of non-white women. In short, you should advance an original argument in this paper that uses the readings as a foundation but then goes beyond them (not just summarize the readings). This paper should be 5-7 pages, and is due at the end of Week 5.

Paper 2: Select a woman leader who is interesting or inspiring to you. This woman should be a public figure (i.e., not your mom, though she sure appreciates the thought), and can be from any country or any time period throughout history. This should not simply be a biography; instead, this paper should analyze the challenges this woman faced and her solutions for overcoming these challenges. Higher grades will be given to analyses that are well-researched, and all papers should engage as many of our course readings as possible. Avoid platitudes and keep the tone of the paper academic and professional; the core point of the paper is to advance a theory about how/why this woman was able to overcome challenges to her leadership, not to write a biography. This paper should be 5-7 pages, and is due at the end of Week 8.

Want some good books to get you started? Here is a good resource for books on women leaders: <https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/the-read-down/books-about-women-who-changed-the-world>

Paper 3: This paper is different from Papers 1 & 2 in that it is a personal reflection, not a scholarly contribution. In this personal reflection, think about your life story and identify areas where you have been perceived as a leader by someone in your community or consider a time when you voluntarily stepped into a leadership role. Consider how an invitation to lead impacted your leadership versus being asked to voluntarily step into a leadership role. In addition, using an intersectional lens, compare your success and challenges in your leadership journey and evaluate how it might compare to those in both dominant and non-dominant cultures. (For example, did the biases of others around you impact your success or challenges as a leader?). This paper should be 5-7 pages, and is due on the last day of class (March 12).

Final Exam: The final exam is a take-home paper, typically 8-10 pages long. The exam instructions will be distributed on the last day of class, and a paper copy of your exam is due on March 15.

### **Policies:**

**Late-paper policy:** Because of the floating deadline, we will not accept Paper 1 late. Paper 2 and

3 can be submitted late, but there is a half-grade penalty for each day that it is late. For example, if it is one day late, the highest grade you can receive on the paper is an 'A-'

**Emailed Paper Policy:** Papers will not be accepted via email or D2L- only paper copies will be accepted.

**Academic Honesty:** Fair and effective education requires academic honesty, and any violation is a very serious matter. Unless otherwise indicated, all assignments in this course are *individual*, and no collaboration with any other person is permitted. In-class tests are *closed-book*, with no aids allowed. These rules will be strictly enforced. Any academic dishonesty will without exception be reported to the student's dean for disciplinary action.

**Title IX Statement:** Portland State is committed to fostering a safe, productive learning environment. Title IX and our school policy prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, which regards sexual misconduct — including harassment, domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. We expect a culture of professionalism and mutual respect in our department and class. Please be aware that as a faculty member, I have the responsibility to report any instances of sexual harassment, sexual violence and/or other forms of prohibited discrimination to PSU's Title IX Coordinator, the Office of Equity and Compliance or the Dean of Student Life and cannot keep information confidential. You may report any incident of discrimination or discriminatory harassment, including sexual harassment, to either the Office of Equity and Compliance or the Office of the Dean of Student Life. If you would rather share information about sexual harassment or sexual violence to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can contact a confidential advocate at 503-725-5672 or by scheduling on-line ([psuwrc.youcanbook.me](https://psuwrc.youcanbook.me)) or another confidential employee found on the sexual misconduct resource webpage. For more information about your obligations and resources for sex/gender discrimination and sexual violence (Title IX), please complete the required student module Creating a Safe Campus in your D2L.

**Access and Inclusion for Students with Disabilities:** PSU values diversity and inclusion; we are committed to fostering mutual respect and full participation for all students. My goal is to create a learning environment that is equitable, useable, inclusive, and welcoming. If any aspects of instruction or course design result in barriers to your inclusion or learning, please notify me. The Disability Resource Center (DRC) provides reasonable accommodations for students who encounter barriers in the learning environment. If you have, or think you may have, a disability that may affect your work in this class and feel you need accommodations, contact the Disability Resource Center to schedule an appointment and initiate a conversation about reasonable accommodations. The DRC is located in 116 Smith Memorial Student Union, 503-725-4150, [drc@pdx.edu](mailto:drc@pdx.edu), <https://www.pdx.edu/drc>.

- If you already have accommodations, please contact me to make sure that I have received a faculty notification letter and discuss your accommodations.
- Students who need accommodations for tests and quizzes are expected to schedule their tests to overlap with the time the class is taking the test.
- For information about emergency preparedness, please go to the [Fire and Life Safety webpage](https://www.pdx.edu/environmental-health-safety/fire-and-life-safety) (<https://www.pdx.edu/environmental-health-safety/fire-and-life-safety>) for information.

## **Readings**

**Books:** The following books have been ordered by the PSU bookstore- all readings are required.

1. Strachan, J. Cherie, Poloni-Staudinger, Lori M., Jenkins, Shannon, and Ortals, Candice. 2020. *Why Don't Women Rule the World? Understanding Women's Civic and Political Choices*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Press.
2. Orr, Marissa. *Lean Out: The Truth about Women, Power, and the Workplace*. 2019. Harper Collins Leadership: New York.

**Articles:** In addition, there will be articles online. You can access these articles via Dr. Valdini's website, or via any computer with a PSU connection. (hereafter referred to as "ONLINE ARTICLE")

**Library Resources:** One of our research librarians, Emily Ford, created a very helpful website that will help you find materials for writing Paper #2. Please use this resource when writing that paper: <https://guides.library.pdx.edu/ps399>

**Class Schedule:**

Tues, Jan 7: Introduction, overview, and logistics (TR)

Thurs, Jan 9: Disrupting Women's Leadership Narratives (TR)

ONLINE ARTICLE: "What Does it Mean to Take Women's Leadership Seriously?"  
Amanda Bittner

Tues, Jan 14: Patriarchy and Feminism (MEV)

1. Strachan et. al, Chapter 1
2. ONLINE ARTICLE: Musto, Michela. "Brilliant or Bad: The Gendered Social Construction of Exceptionalism in Early Adolescence." *American Sociological Review* 84, no. 3 (2019): 369-393.

Thurs, Jan 16: Don't Hate the Player, Hate the Game (TR)

1. Orr, Chapter 7, Chapter 8

\*\*Guest Speaker: Emily Evans, Women's Foundation of Oregon

Tues, Jan 21: Public Opinion Gender Gap (MEV)

1. Strachan et. al, Chapter 3

Thurs, Jan 23: Bridging the Gaps (TR)

1. Orr, Chapter 6
2. ONLINE ARTICLE: Bode, Leticia, "Closing the gap: gender parity in political engagement in social media

\*\*Guest Speaker: (TBD)

Tues, Jan 28: Stereotypes (MEV)

1. ONLINE ARTICLE: Cassese, Erin C. "Intersectional Stereotyping in Political Decision Making." In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*. 2019.
2. ONLINE ARTICLE: Brescoll, Victoria L. "Leading with their hearts? How gender stereotypes of emotion lead to biased evaluations of female leaders." *The Leadership Quarterly* 27, no. 3 (2016): 415-428.

Thurs, Jan 30: Claim Your Identity (TR)

1. Orr, Chapter 2

Tues, Feb 4: Political Ambition (MEV)

1. Strachan et. al, Chapter 4

Thurs, Feb 6: Being a Boss (TR)

1. Orr, Chapter 1

\*\*Guest Speaker: (TBD)

Tues, Feb 11: Balancing Act (TR)

1. Orr, Chapter 10

Thurs, Feb 13: Women Candidates for US Political Office (MEV)

1. Strachan et. al, Chapter 5

Tues, Feb 18: Women Legislators (MEV)

1. Strachan et. al, Chapter 6

Thurs, Feb 20: Eye on the Prize (TR)

1. Orr, Chapter 9

\*\*Guest Speaker: Shari Dunn, Executive Director, Dress for Success

Tues, Feb 25: Women Presidents, Prime Ministers, and Governors (MEV)

1. Strachan et. al, Chapter 7

Thurs, Feb 27: Women in Politics 2.0 (TR)

1. ONLINE ARTICLE: Cornell University Roper Center, *Madame President: Changing attitudes about a woman president.*

\*\*Guest Speaker: Helen Hirschbiel, CEO, Oregon State Bar

Tues, March 3: Women Judges and Lawyers (MEV)

1. Strachan et. al, Chapter 8

Thurs, March 5: Gender Imbalances + Scales of Justice (TR)

1. ONLINE ARTICLE: Olson, E. "A Bleak Picture", New York Times
2. National Association of Law Placement (NALP). (2018). 2018 *report on diversity in U.S. law firms*

\*\*Guest Speaker: (TBD)

Tues, March 10: Women in Power – Group Dynamics (MEV)

1. ONLINE ARTICLE: Belle Derks, Colette Van Laar, Naomi Ellemers, 2016. "The queen bee phenomenon: Why women leaders distance themselves from junior women" *The Leadership Quarterly*, Volume 27, Issue 3, Pages 456-469.
2. ONLINE ARTICLE: Tali Mendelberg, Christopher F. Karpowitz, 2016. "Women's

authority in political decision-making groups” *The Leadership Quarterly*, Volume 27, Issue 3, Pages 487-503.

Thurs, March 12: Conclusions and Review (TR)

1. ONLINE ARTICLE: Zheng, Kark, and Meisler. 2018. “How do Women Handle the Gendered Norms of Leadership.” *Harvard Business Review*

Tuesday, March 15: Final Exam Due (submission instructions given on last day of class).