

**Political Science 2255G – Women in Political Life
Brescia University College, Western University
Winter January – April 2015**

Instructor: Anne Marie DeCicco-Best, MA

Office:

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Class: Wednesday 6:30 – 9:30 pm, Room 135

Office Hours: Wednesday 5:30-6:30 pm by appointment (please book through email)

Course Description

This course explores various dimensions of women's participation in Canadian politics at all three levels – federal, provincial and local. Included is the historical nature of the women's movement and their under-representation in formal political positions. The course will look at the gender differences in opinion, political behaviour and decisions. It will discuss barriers women face on three fronts: what women face in mounting a successful campaign; barriers to overcome when running for office; and barriers when elected to government and possible remedies. The course will also deal with the role of the media and its influence on women in politics as well as the role of women in political life which exists outside the world of formal politics. While the primary focus is on Canada, the experiences of women in other countries may be delved into.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the course, students will be able to do the following:

- ✓ Identify the major barriers for women assuming positions of leadership at an elected level and possible actions to increase participation.
- ✓ Assess the past actions of women to increase their future representation in government and how this relates to progress in modern day society.
- ✓ Apply leadership concepts to women and politics.
- ✓ Explore the role of gendered media treatment and examine how both women and men can collaborate toward greater equality in how the media affect women in politics.

Grading

Discussion forum postings	10%
Participation	10%
Short bibliography and group presentation, Feb 4	20%
Written paper and group presentation, April 1	30%
Final exam	30%

Grading

Discussion Forum Posting

Two forum discussions will take place within the course and a question will be posted by the Professor a week in advance. Each posting should be a minimum 300 words. Each student should also interact and respond to at least two other students' posts.

Participation

The participation mark will be based on two considerations. One is attendance in class and the other is contribution to class discussions. Attendance will be determined by the taking of attendance. At the discretion of your Professor, any student who misses more than 25% of the scheduled classes will receive a participation grade of 0 out of 10 for the course. The Professor will be responsible for assessing the student's contribution to discussion in class. As such, this is an opportunity for students to actively engage with their colleagues, offering different perspectives and views. Asking questions, answering questions, sharing opinions, knowledge, ideas, stimulating discussion, respecting others; attendance: being here is not good enough, you must *contribute*. Each consideration will count equally towards the final participation mark.

Short Bibliography and Group Presentation - February 4, 2015

Students will present (group assignment) a short bibliography of a Canadian political woman, the struggles the woman faced to influence and participate in politics, and -her contribution to women's politics. Creativity is encouraged and all group members must participate in the presentation which should be a minimum 5 minutes long, but not longer than 8 minutes. At the end of the presentation, a short written version will be submitted electronically. The paper must include citations and a bibliography presented in a manner that conforms to an accepted academic style. Sources must go beyond a simple Wikipedia re-working and must go beyond simply reporting and describing. It is not acceptable to cut-and-paste from the Internet or to search on Google and write up someone else's work without proper citation. The expected length is 3 pages, double spaced and a minimum 1000 words. Names of the women will be provided on the first day of class and distributed at that time. Students who would like to explore a name not on the list must submit for prior approval by the Professor.

Written Paper and Group Presentation - April 1, 2015

Making political change.

Students will present (group assignment) their thoughts, ideas and beliefs on where we go as a society to increase the participation of women in political life. The focus should be on the next steps. All students must participate in the presentation and are encouraged to challenge

current status quo thinking of ideas that could have a positive impact on women becoming involved in any or all aspects of political life. The presentation should be a minimum of 5 minutes long, but not longer than 8 minutes. Be creative in the presentation. Don't limit yourself. At the end of the presentation, a short written version will be submitted electronically. The paper must include citations and a bibliography presented in a manner that conforms to an accepted academic style. The expected length is 3 pages, double spaced, minimum 1000 words.

Books

Required Text: Sylvia Bashevkin. 2009. Women, Power, Politics.

This course also relies on articles and materials made available through the class website.

****Please note, readings are subject to change and a final course outline will be posted no later than December 15, 2014.***

Weekly Outline

Week 1

January 7, 2015: Introduction, course outline, presentation details and assignment of groups.
Group exercise: *Great Canadian Women Quiz.*

Week 2

January 14, 2015: History of women in Canadian politics, including comparisons to other parts of the world.

Reading 1: Sylvia Bashevkin. 2009. Women, Power, Politics. Chapter 2, Discomfort Zones, pgs. 21 – 52.

Resource: Women's participation in politics statistics (available through Owl)

Week 3

January 21, 2015: The under-representation of women in formal politics at all three levels: federal, provincial and municipal.

Reading 2: Manon Tremblay and Linda Trimble. 2003. Women and Electoral Politics in Canada. Chapter 6, Women's involvement in Canadian political parties, pgs. 91 – 107.

Reading 3: Inter-Parliamentary Union. 2008. Equality in Politics: A survey of women and men in parliaments. Chapter 2, Road to parliament: Less travelled by women, pgs. 13-26.

Resources: Under-representation of Women in Canadian Politics

Fundamental Facts: Elected Women in Canada by the Numbers, *as of June 2014*
(available through OWL)

Week 4

January 28, 2015: Gender differences in opinion and political behaviour and the decisions made by women in elected office.

Reading 4: Inter-Parliamentary Union. 2008. Equality in Politics: A survey of women and men in parliaments. Chapter 3, Women and men in parliament: Competing concerns or complementary agendas?, pgs. 29-40, 71 (table).

Reading 5: Julie Dolan, Melissa Deckman, Michele Swers. 2011. Women and Politics. Chapter 3, The gender gap in elections and public opinion, pgs, 55 – 80.

Week 5

February 4, 2015: Group Presentations – short bibliography of a Canadian woman in politics.

Week 6

February 11, 2015: Case studies of countries that are leading the way in increasing participation of women in politics and why they are successful in bridging the gap.

Special guest speakers' panel: local MPs, MPPs, city councillors

Resources: Women in Politics – case studies around the world (available through OWL)

Week 7

February 18, 2015: Reading week, no class, please use the time to continue working on group presentations and be mindful of the deadlines for the forum post question.

Week 8

February 25, 2015: Barriers women face in mounting a successful campaign; barriers to overcome when running for office; and barriers when elected to government. Exploring remedies to barriers women face in politics.

Reading 6: Inter-Parliamentary Union. 2008. Equality in Politics: A survey of women and men in parliaments. Chapter 2, Road to parliament: Less travelled by women, pgs. 27-28.

Reading 7: Julie Dolan, Melissa Deckman, Michele Swers. 2011. Women and Politics. Chapter 5, Women as candidates for elected office, pgs. 128 – 171.

Week 9

March 4, 2015: Women and the media

Reading 8 and 9: Sylvia Bashevkin. 2009. Women, Power, Politics. Chapter 3, Plus-perfect figure. pgs. 57-82 and Chapter 4, The impact of the media on political women, pgs. 86 – 122.

Reading 10: Manon Tremblay and Linda Trimble. 2003. Women and Electoral Politics in Canada. Chapter 12, Tough talk: How television news covers male and female leaders of Canadian political parties, and Chapter 13, Wham, bam, no thank you ma'am! Gender and the game frame in national newspaper coverage of election 2000. pgs. 194 – 226.

Week 10

March 11, 2015: Women's involvement outside of formal politics, known as 'small-p politics'.

Reading 11: Mark Charlton and Paul Barker. 2008. Contemporary Political Issues, Issue 10 - Should women focus on small-p politics, pgs. 251 -274.

Week 11

March 18, 2015: Applying leadership thinking to women and politics.

Reading 12: James Kouzes and Barry Posner. 2014. The Student Leadership Challenge, 2nd Ed, Chapter 1, Introduction: When people are at their best as leaders, pgs. 3-17; Practice 2: Inspire a shared vision, pgs. 65-87.

Week 12

March 25, 2015: Group presentations - Making political change.

Week 13

April 1, 2015: Where do we go from here and the next steps? How do we get women to count?

Reading 13: Inter-Parliamentary Union. 2008. Equality in Politics: A survey of women and men in parliaments. Chapter 6, Conclusions: Defining a future agenda. pgs. 81-84.

Reading 14: Sylvia Bashevkin. 2009. Women, Power, Politics. Chapter 6, What to do, pgs. 143-177

Week 14

April 8, 2015: final thoughts and questions, preparation for exam

Final Exam Date and time to be confirmed.