

Summer Term 2025

Gender and Political Representation

Seminar Dates

The seminar takes place every week on Wednesday from 16:00 to 18:00 (c.t.). The first session takes place on 09 April 2025 and the final session will be held on 21 July 2025. The seminar is directed to undergraduate students and will take place in English.

Course Overview

Up until today, women remain underrepresented in political offices. According to the United Nations, the global average of female parliamentarians is approximately 27%, and only 30 countries are led by women. Women's path to political power is severely constrained and issues important to female voters often play a subordinate role in political decision-making. Our seminar starts with a critical review of why female representation matters in politics. Afterwards, the seminar is build along two blocs. First, we search for explanations for the gendered power asymmetry. We will deal with norm transmission and discuss how institutions and voters discriminate against women. Second, we will address the effectiveness of different tools designed to reduce gender inequality. While the course is mainly focussing on gender inequalities, at times, we will bring in other factors that intersect with gender, such as ethnicity.

Credits can only be granted if participants read and engage with the readings before the seminar and pass the seminar requirements.

Learning Outcomes

The course will familiarize you with key concepts in the study of gender and political representation. You will learn what we mean by 'representation' and how different types of repre-

sentation matter for our understanding of female underrepresentation in politics. Moreover, you will acquire an understanding of social norms and their transmission through socialization and culture. Empirically, you will engage with different explanations of gender inequality in politics and understand how societal legacies, the demand-side (voters) and supply-side dynamics (political actors) contribute to it. From the empirical literature we are reading, you will get a general picture of the current state of gender equality in politics. Finally, you will be able to critically evaluate instruments that aim to tackle gender equality, understanding their potentials and challenges. Through reading and discussion, you will get a glimpse on different methodological approaches to assess gender equality.

The individual sessions look at gender equality from different angles to offer you various perspectives on how to study it. While being exposed to these different sub-dimensions will give you a basic insight into the discipline, what you will have learnt is invariably linked to your own interests, so your input in the seminar shapes your individual learning outcomes.

Requirements

The amount of credits granted depends on the programme you are enrolled in. Keep in mind that each ECTS amounts to about 30 hours of working time. The final mark is composed of the following components. A successful seminar participation requires the following tasks to fulfil (estimated hours based on $7 \text{ ECTS} * 30 = 210$)

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| • regular attendance and active participation in discussion | 18 hours |
| • questions on three empirical articles | } 192 hours |
| • connecting thoughts essay | |
| • term paper (graded) | |

Attendance and Questions on the Readings

Students should regularly attend the seminar. In case you miss a session, please inform me about your absence. Attendance requires active participation in class which presumes careful reading of the literature. Most of the sessions are based on one main reading and several complementary readings. The main reading is compulsory to for everyone, the complementary readings contain further information for your term paper. In one session of your choice

(except for sessions 1-4 and 14), you must read the main **and** one of the compulsory readings to prepare a ‘Connecting-Thoughts’ essay and serve as the expert and moderator of a group discussion in the respective session (more below).

When reading the empirical paper: There are different reading techniques but you should always take notes – either during or directly after reading the text. Focus on the core message of the author. Try to identify the puzzle and the question an author presents, their arguments, and the general methodological approach (for a first read, do not get lost in the details!). Then always ask yourself whether you can follow the argumentation. On which point do you disagree and why? Once you are able to summarize the core idea of a paper within two minutes, you are ready to go. If you have problems in understanding the text, write them down and we’ll try to clarify them in class.

For three sessions of your choice (except for week 1, 14 and 15 and the session in which you prepare your ‘connecting thoughts’ essay), you are asked to write down three different questions about the readings. You are, in general, free to choose in which sessions you would like to submit your questions, but for a better distributions across sessions, the number of students submitting questions to a seminar session is limited to two. These can be informed by the questions you had on the readings but should not be comprehension questions about the text (these can and should be raised separately in class). For instance, while your written questions should not ask what the main results of the article are, you could ask about the wider implications of a research finding for gender equality or political representation etc. Each question should clearly relate to an article which was assigned for the class.

‘Connecting-Thoughts’ Essay

During the term, you are asked to prepare one ‘Connecting-Thoughts’ essay that is used to stimulate in-class discussions. The session you prepare your essay for is up to you – with the exception of sessions 1-4, which focus on concepts, and session 14 that is our wrap-up session.

While you are usually only obliged to read the main reading(s), for the ‘Connecting-Thoughts’ essay, you must read at least one of the complementary readings, too. In preparation to the seminar, you are required to write a short essay on the complementary reading, briefly summarizing its results, before evaluating how it connects to the main reading.

The essays should be no longer than two pages (12 font size, 2.5cm margins, 1.5 spacing).

Summarizing the complementary reading should be no more than 3/4 page. You should introduce its research question, the main argument it seeks to test, a short acknowledgement of its methodology, before turning to the core result of the paper. Thereafter, you should highlight how it relates to the main reading. Do both readings come to similar conclusions or are there misalignments between them? Do we learn something from the complementary reading we did not know from the main one (e.g., in terms of the methods it is using or its results)?

During the seminar session, you are serving as the expert and moderator on the readings. This implies that you are leading a small-group discussion that deals with the other students' questions on the paper. Moreover, you are asked to provide the class with input and a critical evaluation of the complementary reading.

Research Paper

In case you need a grade, you are supposed to draft a research plan on one of the topics we covered (6,000 words \pm 10%, font size 11/12, 1.5 spacing, justified text, margins 2.5cm). Please list the number of words on your title page. The paper is due 30 September.

The research plan should follow the basic structure of an academic paper, except for the analysis part. It requires you to apply the knowledge you have learnt in previous sessions. At the core of your paper should be a research question you would like to study. You should outline the societal and academic relevance of the session. You should then review the existing literature on which base you develop your own theoretical framework formulating testable research hypotheses. Moreover, you should propose a research design that is comprised of a data and method section. In the data section, you should refer to and describe potential data sources you could use to study your hypotheses. In the method section, you need to elaborate which kind of method you would apply to test the hypotheses.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism and ghostwriting are forbidden. Written assignments may be checked for plagiarism using the plagiarism software Turnitin.

Students are required to use referenced work in their assignments with proper documentation and citation. To facilitate the citation workflow and prepare for future assignments in the programme, students are encouraged to use reference software. The University of Münster provides access to Citavi via AcadCloud on a reduced price. Alternatively, students can use

the open-source software Zotero. When in doubt about proper citation, please refer to the Leitlinien zum wissenschaftlichen Arbeiten provided by the Department of Political Science.

You need to be transparent about the usage of AI tools at the end of your submitted writings (Which tools did you use? Which prompts did you issue?). AI can be a helpful tool for coding, language editing and information retrieval. Still, please keep in mind that you are expected to submit original work which is based on your *own* ideas. Thus, a term paper written by AI cannot be accepted.

Inclusiveness

To promote inclusiveness, this seminar aims to use gender-inclusive language. Participants are invited to share their pronouns with the class.

To allow for a dynamic feedback culture, students are encouraged to regularly submit (anonymous) feedback via Google Forms (link tba) or by sending me a mail.

Readings and Timetable

Introductory Readings

The following readings are not compulsory. However, they can guide you through the process of writing and provide you with a broader perspective on the future of democracy.

On the comparative method:

1. King, G., Keohane, R. O., & Verba, S. (1994). *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research, New Edition*. Princeton University Press
2. Cunningham, S. (2021). *Causal Inference: The Mixtape*. Yale University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1c29t27>

On gender:

1. Paxton, P. M., & Hughes, M. M. (2007). *Women, politics, and power: A global perspective*. Pine Forge press
2. Waylen, G. (Ed.). (2013). *The Oxford handbook of gender and politics*. Oxford Univ. Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199751457.001.0001>

On writing:

1. Powner, L. C. (2014). *Empirical Research and Writing: A Political Science Student's Practical Guide*. CQ Press

Week 1: Introduction [09 April 2025]

There is no need to prepare anything from your side. We will talk about the structure of the seminar, expectations and your pre-knowledge on the issue.

Burn-Murdoch, J. (2024). A new global gender divide is emerging. *Financial Times*. Retrieved March 7, 2025, from <https://www.ft.com/content/29fd9b5c-2f35-41bf-9d4c-994db4e12998>

Financial Times: 'The Long Walk Towards Gender Equality in Politics' (Video)

Judith Butler: 'Berkeley professor explains gender theory' Video

Week 2: Overview and Concepts [16 April 2025]

In this session, we will assess the current state of gender inequalities in politics. Moreover, we will engage with crucial concepts in the study on gender in political science.

Compulsory readings

1. Paxton, P., Kunovich, S., & Hughes, M. M. (2007). Gender in Politics. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 33(Volume 33, 2007), 263–284. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.33.040406.131651>
2. Celis, K., Kantola, J., Waylen, G., & Weldon, S. L. (2013). Introduction: Gender and Politics: A Gendered World, a Gendered Discipline. In G. Waylen, K. Celis, J. Kantola, & S. L. Weldon (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Gender and Politics* (p. 0). Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199751457.013.0034> – up until p.13 in the .pdf
3. Hawkesworth, M. (2013). Sex, Gender, and Sexuality: From Naturalized Presumption to Analytical Categories. G. Waylen, K. Celis, J. Kantola, & S. L. Weldon (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Gender and Politics* (p. 0). Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199751457.013.0001> – up until p.8 in the .pdf

Complementary readings

- 1.

Week 3: The Case for Women's Representation [23 April 2025]

Are women better represented by women in legislatures? In this session, we clarify different types of representation and their meaning for the study of gender in politics.

Compulsory readings

1. Mansbridge, J. (1999). Should Blacks Represent Blacks and Women Represent Women? A Contingent "Yes". *The Journal of Politics*, 61(3), 628–657. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2647821>

• Complementary readings

1. Pitkin, H. F. (1967). *The Concept of Representation*. University of California Press
2. Wolkenstein, F., & Wratil, C. (2021). Multidimensional Representation. *American Journal of Political Science*, 65(4), 862–876. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12563>

Week 4: On the Transmission of (Gender) Norms [30 April 2025]

Gender inequalities persist for a long time. To build the foundation for the next week, we will introduce the concept of norms and learn more about their transmission via socialization.

• Compulsory readings

1. Bicchieri, C. (2017). Diagnosing Norms. C. Bicchieri (Ed.), *Norms in the Wild: How to Diagnose, Measure, and Change Social Norms* (p. 0). Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780190622046.003.0001>
2. Cavalli-Sforza, L. L., Feldman, M. W., Chen, K. H., & Dornbusch, S. M. (1982). Theory and Observation in Cultural Transmission. *Science*, 218(4567), 19–27. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.7123211>

- **Complementary readings**

1. Kågesten, A., Gibbs, S., Blum, R. W., Moreau, C., Chandra-Mouli, V., Herbert, A., & Amin, A. (2016). Understanding Factors that Shape Gender Attitudes in Early Adolescence Globally: A Mixed-Methods Systematic Review (A. R. Dalby, Ed.). *PLOS ONE*, 11(6), e0157805. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0157805>

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Week 5: Causes of Inequalities: Culture and Legacies [07 May 2025]

Societal transformations can have a long-lasting impact. The introduction of the plough has commonly been perceived as an innovation that has extended and manifested gender inequalities. Does it have a (still) lasting effect on gender and politics?

- **Compulsory readings**

1. Alesina, A., Giuliano, P., & Nunn, N. (2013). On the Origins of Gender Roles: Women and the Plough*. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 128(2), 469–530. <https://doi.org/10.1093/qje/qjt005>

- **Complementary readings**

1. Mackie, G. (1996). Ending Footbinding and Infibulation: A Convention Account. *American Sociological Review*, 61(6), 999. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2096305>
2. Kulkarni, P. (2017). Can Religious Norms Undermine Effective Property Rights?: Evidence from Inheritance Rights of Widows in Colonial India. *British Journal of Political Science*, 47(3), 479–499. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123416000363>

Week 6: Causes of Inequalities: Institutions [14 May 2025]

As North (1990) puts it, institutions are the rules of the game. As such, they shape human behaviour. Many constitutions and laws we oblige to have been written primarily by men. In this session, we evaluate how candidate selection rules are biased towards men.

- **Main reading**

1. Verge, T., & Astudillo, J. (2019). The gender politics of executive candidate selection and reselection. *European Journal of Political Research*, 58(2), 720–740. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.12312>

- **Background readings**

1. Singh, S. P. (n.d.). Compulsory voting increases men's turnout most. *American Journal of Political Science*, n/a(n/a). <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12954>

Week 7: Causes of Inequalities: Demand-Side Explanations [21 May 2025]

Are female representatives held to the same standards as their male counterparts? This week deals with gender biases on the demand-side, the level of the voters.

- **Main reading**

1. Anderson-Nilsson, G., & Clayton, A. (2021). Gender and policy persuasion. *Political Science Research and Methods*, 9(4), 818–831. <https://doi.org/10.1017/psr.m.2021.4>

- **Complementary readings**

1. Alexander, A., Charron, N., & Off, G. (2024). For every action a reaction? The polarizing effects of women's rights and refugee immigration: A survey experiment in 27 EU member states. *European Journal of Political Research*, 63(4), 1557–1577. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.12664>
2. Bauer, N. M., & Carpinella, C. (2018). Visual Information and Candidate Evaluations: The Influence of Feminine and Masculine Images on Support for Female Candidates. *Political Research Quarterly*, 71(2), 395–407. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1065912917738579>

3. Breyer, M. (2024). Backlash or Progressive Mobilization? Voter Reactions to Perceived Trajectories of Women's Representation. *Comparative Political Studies*, 00104140231223745. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00104140231223745>

Week 8: Causes of Inequalities: Supply-Side Explanations [28 May 2025]

The 'glass ceiling' in politics is not only caused by gendered candidate selection effects but also by the decision of women to run for office. We will deal with the obstacles they face which may prevent that there is a sufficient pool of female politicians.

- **Main reading**

1. Bernhard, R., Shames, S., & Teele, D. L. (2021). To Emerge? Breadwinning, Motherhood, and Women's Decisions to Run for Office. *American Political Science Review*, 115(2), 379–394. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055420000970>

- **Complementary readings**

1. Thomsen, D. M., & King, A. S. (2020). Women's Representation and the Gendered Pipeline to Power. *American Political Science Review*, 114(4), 989–1000. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055420000404>
2. De Bruycker, I. (n.d.). Access for all? Socio-demographic biases and interest group access to the European Parliament. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 0(0), 1–25. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2024.2409822>
3. Erfort, C. (2023). Gendered targeting: Do parties tailor their campaign ads to women? <https://doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/5vs9b>
4. Erzeel, S., & Celis, K. (2016). Political Parties, Ideology and the Substantive Representation of Women. *Party Politics*, 22(5), 576–586. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068816655561>

Week 9: Gender Quotas and Other Institutions [04 June 2025]

In the following weeks, we will deal with different mechanisms that seek to tackle gender equality. In this session, we will deal with electoral rules – gender quotas and direct democracy.

- **Main reading**

1. Kim, J. H. (2019). Direct Democracy and Women's Political Engagement. *American Journal of Political Science*, 63(3), 594–610. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12420>

- **Complementary readings**

1. Betz, T., Fortunato, D., & O'Brien, D. Z. (2021). Women's Descriptive Representation and Gendered Import Tax Discrimination. *American Political Science Review*, 115(1), 307–315. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055420000799>
2. Clayton, A. (2021). How Do Electoral Gender Quotas Affect Policy? *Annual Review of Political Science*, 24(1), 235–252. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-041719-102019>

Week 10: No Session (Whitsun Holidays) [11 June 2025]

There is no session scheduled in this week.

Week 11: Role Models [18 June 2025]

The underrepresentation of female legislators creates a vicious cycle. As we have established by now, a lack of female voices severely harms the quality of representation. However, there are more subtle implications: the lack of role models.

- **Main reading**

1. Ladam, C., Harden, J. J., & Windett, J. H. (2018). Prominent Role Models: High-Profile Female Politicians and the Emergence of Women as Candidates for Public Office. *American Journal of Political Science*, 62(2), 369–381. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12351>

- **Complementary reading**

1. Foos, F., & Gilardi, F. (2020). Does Exposure to Gender Role Models Increase Women's Political Ambition? A Field Experiment with Politicians. *Journal of Experimental Political Science*, 7(3), 157–166. <https://doi.org/10.1017/XPS.2019.21>

Week 12: No Session (EPSA Conference) [25 June 2025]

There is no session scheduled in this week.

Week 13: Language [02 July 2025]

In our final substantive session, we will talk about how language may shape inequalities. In this regard, we talk about the development and politicization of gender-inclusive language. For this purpose, we can have a chat with Anica Waldendorf, author of the study we read in anticipation.

- **Compulsory readings**

1. Waldendorf, A. (2024). Words of change: The increase of gender-inclusive language in German media. *European Sociological Review*, 40(2), 357–374. <https://doi.org/10.1093/esr/jcad044>

- **Complementary readings**

1. Colombo, F., & Widmann, T. (2025). Voters Affective and Threat Response to Gender-Inclusive Language: Evidence from German Politicians.

2. Hetjens, D., & Hartmann, S. (2024). Effects of gender sensitive language in job listings: A study on real-life user interaction. *PLOS ONE*, 19(8), e0308072. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0308072>

Week 14: Your Projects and Wrap-Up [09 July 2025]

This session serves the purpose to summarize what we did during the term, and discuss your open questions.

Week 15: No Session (Exams) [16 July 2025]

There will be no session in this week.

References

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- Alexander, A., Charron, N., & Off, G. (2024). For every action a reaction? The polarizing effects of women's rights and refugee immigration: A survey experiment in 27 EU member states. *European Journal of Political Research*, 63(4), 1557–1577. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.12664>
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- Singh, S. P. (n.d.). Compulsory voting increases men's turnout most. *American Journal of Political Science*, n/a(n/a). <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12954>
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