

**UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA – LINCOLN | Department of Political Science
POLS/WMNS 338: Women & Politics**

Rachel Urban

Autumn 2024 (In-person)

Class times: MWF, 1:30-2:20p [13:30-14:20] (CST) in Oldfather 309

CONTACT INFO

Office: Oldfather 1013

Email: rachelurban@huskers.unl.edu → I check my email at least once per weekday, and aim to respond within 24 hours – but no promises on weekends! During this course, I will let you know if there will be specific blocks of time where I may/am not be available/able to respond.

Office Hours: Wednesdays, 2:30-3:30pm via In-person/Zoom (linked [here](#)) or by appointment.

COURSE INTENT

How are women represented in politics in different areas in the world? What are the consequences? How do elected women affect or influence various policies and issues? We will study these questions in different contexts throughout the world! This will require, however, challenging assumptions about what we think we know about representation in politics and policy change. We will philosophically and practically discuss what stereotypes, roles, and the intersectionality of gender, race, and class means for women, politics, and policy.

In this class, will aim to:

- Better understand intersectional approaches to women's role in politics & policy.
- Use various medias + scholarly work to encourage critical thinking.
- Engage in class discussions.
- Build academic/professional and policy writing skills.

Module objectives/questions:

1. Module 1: Origins of Identity, Gender, Intersectionality & Electability

- a. How have our conceptions of roles and stereotypes shaped what we think of women in politics today?
- b. What is intersectionality? How does it affect politics formally and informally?

2. Module 2: Women in Governing Institutions (Representation)

- a. How do racism and sexism privilege *and* disadvantage women in politics?
- b. Are women underrepresented in politics? Why or why not?
- c. Why does having women in office matter?

3. Module 3: Women's Policy Impact

- a. How do women influence state, foreign, or international policy?
- b. What did you learn from the guest speakers? Compare and contrast the questions you (as a class) asked them with what we have learned thus far.

4. Module 4: Other Minority Representation (LGB+)

- a. Do sexual minorities face the same political struggles that women do? Why/not?

5. Module 5: Women & Conflict

- a. Why might women engage in traditional or non-traditional violent conflict?

6. Module 6: Climate Change as an Intersectional Problem

- a. How might acknowledging climate change as an intersectional issue/wicked problem help or harm solutions (i.e., future policy)?

COURSE MATERIALS

There are no required books for this class. ALL the *required* readings and materials will be posted in the Modules. Canvas and this syllabus (available on Canvas) will be your best friends! As an asynchronous class, you will need reliable access to an electronic tool (e.g., computer/laptop, tablet, etc.) and a stable internet connection to meet the requirements to complete this class. If you do NOT have access to a trustworthy electronic tool, contact HuskerTech (linked [here](#)) about how to obtain one for the course. (Keep in mind this may be trickier if you are traveling.) If Husker Tech cannot help or your internet is unstable, contact me so we can figure out a solution!

I do *HIGHLY RECOMMEND* Strunk, W. & White, E. B. (1918). *Elements of Style*. [4th Ed.] Pearson. I am NOT making this a required book because every point they make is available online. However, you all are held to the same standard of writing in the English language. If you are interested, Kindle versions are about \$1. Hardcover and Paperbacks on Amazon range from \$6-\$11.

A course material that is **not recommended is ChatGPT**. Instructors to know if you have used it and **any assignments determined to have used it will not receive any points.** See the *Academic Honesty* policy at the end of the syllabus.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING

Materials and Class Discussion: I've elected to have a mix of materials: reading (usually an academic paper or book chapter), documentaries, podcasts, and guest speakers to encourage critical thinking. I will usually have a corresponding lecture (15-20 minutes) and a following class discussion. I may include supplementary (unrequired!) news articles or short videos and suggest readings as well.

These discussions may be generally insightful thoughts about the topic itself, critiques about the methodological approach, or policy implications or applications of the research in the real world. If you make any critiques, you must also (try to) suggest solutions! Finally, debates are welcome, but remember to be respectful and professional.

Weekly Reflections: On Fridays, especially in Weeks 2 through 9, rather than quizzes or exams, we are going to work on professional (policy and academic) writing skills. A 500-word reflection (about two-pages double-spaced) on one of the week's questions (above) is due every Sunday at 11:59PM, but you may submit earlier! This is short as I do not believe that length determines quality work. Thus, these reflections must be well-written with a thesis statement (answer the week's question), with organizing sentences about the body, and a conclusion. Formatting is a traditional 12-point, Times New Roman font with 1-inch margins. I don't care about spacing – single or double spaced (personally I prefer 1.15) – it must be 500 words!

Don't worry if you have not done any policy writing! Fridays are going to be our "writing" days set aside for learning how to write for a policy audience, writing your weekly reflections, and final paper drafting.

Final "Paper": We're going to do something a little different for this class! Instead of writing a research paper *solely* based on academic readings and extra research at the end of class, you will first watch a documentary (from the list below) early in the semester. The goal is to inspire you in a specific policy direction and to recommend realistic (and creative!) policy solutions – NOT summarize the documentary and/or what it suggests.

Write a 2,000-2,500-word policy recommendation about a problem that the documentary inspired you to research, as well as what we've discussed in class. [What is the policy problem and why? What should improve? How/in what ways?](#) Anything over will receive **a 1-point deduction from the final grade for every additional 50 words**. There is no citation maximum, however, you must have at least ten citations. **Use the Rubric and the document dedicated to this assignment to guide you!**

Documentary & Topic Briefs: Part of your grade is discussing your documentary decision with the class. Think of this as a casual, short brief (<5 mins, ~1 paragraph) **by Friday, Week 4 or 5**. This will serve as a way for me to know you have decided on your

documentary and a way for you to start thinking through which policy avenue you are interested in. We can all be useful to help each other in narrowing your thoughts if you don't have a direction. Make sure to state:

- Your chosen documentary, when it was released, and the director.
- What you think your possible policy problem will be (remember the 5 Ws!).

The docs are available through Netflix, Amazon Prime, Hulu, Max, and Public Media (PBS) – with one free streaming option (no subscription required). If you don't have access to a service that has the film you want, we can have a 'watch party! **Post what you're thinking of watching** (more on this later) and we can plan from there. If you find a documentary not on the list, email me with a small description of the connection you believe it has to our class content for my review. I may add it to the documentary list for everyone else as well! (Part of this consideration will be which streaming service it is on as not everyone has access – including me! I have Amazon and Max.)

Documentary List:

- *Knock Down the House* [Netflix, available on YouTube!] [{Link}](#); Trailer [{Link}](#)
 - o 2019, 86 mins, Directed by Rachel Lears
 - o Representation; US Domestic Party Politics
- *Represent* [PBS Passport] [{Link}](#); Trailer [{Link}](#)
 - o 2020, 86 mins, Directed by Hillary Bachelder
 - o Midwestern women; Representation; US Domestic Party Politics
- **Not Done: Women Remaking America* [Amazon, PBS Passport] {Passport [Link](#)}; Trailer [{Link}](#)
 - o 2020, 55 mins, Directed by Sara Wolitzky
 - o Women's movements; Political movements
- *First Five* (Series) [Max] [{Link}](#); Trailer [{Link}](#)
 - o 2023, 111 mins, Directed by Kelly Reichardt
 - o Former Finnish Prime Minister Sanna Marin & her all-women cabinet
 - o Women in leadership; International Relations/War & Peace; Pandemics
- *Becoming* [Netflix subscription] [{Link}](#); Trailer [{Link}](#)
 - o 2020, 89 mins, Directed by Nadia Hallgren
 - o Michelle Obama; Role Model; Perseverance
- *Chisolm '72: Unbought & Unbossed* [Amazon Subscription] [{Link}](#); Trailer [{Link}](#)
 - o 2004, 77 mins, Directed by Shola Lynch
 - o First African American Congresswoman & Presidential Candidate Shirley Chisolm; Intersectionality
- *Free Angela and All Political Prisoners* [Peacock] [{Link}](#); Trailer [{Link}](#)
 - o 2012, 112 mins, Directed by Shola Lynch
 - o Social Justice; Intersectionality; Women's movements

- **Latino Vote: Dispatches from the Battleground* [Amazon, PBS Passport] {Passport [Link](#)}; Trailer [Link](#)
 - o 2020, 55 mins, Directed by Bernardo Ruiz
 - o Intersectionality; Minority voters
- *To the End* [Hulu]; Trailer [Link](#)
 - o 2022, 103 mins, Directed by Rachel Lears
 - o Climate change; Policy change; Women's movements

*I purchased for 'free' on Amazon in 2023. You may still be able to. Seems like they are/were having the promotion since we're in an election year. If it isn't going anymore or you don't have access to a subscription to watch it for free, I can stream it.

Participation: Participation in this class is tracked through our class discussions; thus, this requires your attendance. Zoom & online discussions will only be used as our first line of defense in cases of my absence, illness, and severe weather (perhaps other unforeseen circumstances), but I tend to follow UNL policy. What can I say... → [meme. Please understand my sarcasm.]

We will talk more on this (Zoom-ing and I'm sure sarcasm) in class!



Grading Breakdown:	Points	% Scale
Syllabus Quiz:	10	5
Class Discussions:	100	20
Weekly Reflections (7):	105 (15 per reflection)	25
Documentary & Topic Brief:	10	5
Final Paper Draft 1:	10	5
Final Paper Draft 2:	15	10
Final Paper Draft 3:	25	15
Final Paper:	25	15
<i>Total:</i>	<i>300</i>	<i>100%</i>

Final Grading Scale:

A+	97.00%	B+	87.00%	C+	77.00%	D+	67.00%	F	<60.00%
A	94.00%	B	84.00%	C	74.00%	D	64.00%		
A-	90.00%	B-	80.00%	C-	70.00%	D-	60.00%		

If you are concerned about your grade or deadlines, talk to me sooner rather than later!! We can make a plan to get you through this class!

ADDITIONAL COURSE POLICIES:

Schedule: Our current schedule is not set in stone and may be subject to change. I want to curate the best learning experience for you!

Illness: If you are ill, please communicate with me (I don't require details) so we can create a plan for you to catch up. I don't want you to fall behind! It can happen quickly.

Accessibility & Accommodations: Please contact me regarding any accommodations you may need to help you get through this class to curate your learning experience (for example, any mental health, chronic, or temporary medical conditions). I am here to support you in any way that you need! To establish reasonable accommodations in your unique situations, **you may need to register with Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD)** in 117 Louise Pound Hall and can be contacted at 402-472-3787 and by email (ssd@unl.edu). (Linked [here](#).)

Late Work: Deadlines should be respected, and officially late work will receive full letter-grade deductions for each day late, unless you have previously spoken to me. Again, I really don't want anyone to fall behind!

Recording of Class Materials: No in-person classroom sessions will be recorded. However, past sessions from the online version of this course may be available on Canvas in some cases (e.g., severe weather, illness). Any work and/or communication that you are privy to as a member of this course should be treated as the intellectual property of the speaker/creator and is not to be shared outside the context of this course. Students may not make or distribute screen captures, audio/video recordings of, or livestream, any class-related activity, including lectures and presentations, without express prior written consent from me or an approved accommodation from SSD. If you have (or think you may have) a disability such that you need to record or tape class-related activities, you should contact SSD (see above section). If you have an accommodation to record class-related activities, those recordings may not be shared with any other student, whether in this course or not, or with any other person or on any

other platform. Failure to follow this policy on recording or distributing class-related activities may subject you to discipline under the Student Code of Conduct (linked [here](#)).

Academic Honesty: I have a zero-tolerance academic dishonesty policy. Students who commit acts of academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary action, including but not limited to receiving a zero on the assignment or fail the course, and are granted due process and the right to appeal any decision. Please refer to the Student Handbook, the University's Code of Conduct and the Office of Undergraduate Studies' documents on academic integrity and for the University's policies on plagiarism, cheating and other forms of academic dishonesty. If you have any questions on citations and sourcing in your assignments, I am happy to answer them. If you have any additional questions (about how to include proper and complete citations, how to use your own words to discuss an author's work, etc.) I encourage you to talk with me rather than risk the penalty associated with failing to maintain academic honesty.

Diversity and Inclusion: I am going to work hard to create a comfortable yet professional space here to discuss our sensitive topics. I do not tolerate hate speech, discursive, or insensitive language.

Stressed or Overwhelmed??: UNL offers a variety of options for students to aid them in dealing with stress and adversity. **Counseling and Psychological & Services (CAPS)** is a multidisciplinary team of psychologists and counselors that works collaboratively with Nebraska students to help them explore their feelings and thoughts and learn helpful ways to improve their mental, psychological, and emotional well-being when issues arise. CAPS can be reached by calling 402-472-7450 or their website <https://caps.unl.edu>. **Big Red Resistance & Well-Being (BRRWB)** provides one-on-one well-being coaching to any student who wants to enhance their well-being. Trained well-being coaches help students create and be grateful for positive experiences, practice resilience and self-compassion, and find support as they need it. BRRWB can be reached by calling 402-472-8770 or going on their website <https://resilience.unl.edu/big-red-resilience-well-being>.

All other UNL course policies: All other policies can be found on the [UNL Registrars webpage](#). If you cannot find something, you may use this [search engine](#), or I try can help you find them!