

# PS 231Q3: Sex, Power, and Public Policy

Fall 2023

## Quest 3

“I ask no favor for my sex. All I ask of our brethren is that they take their feet off our necks and permit us to stand upright.” - *Sarah Moore Grimke*

### About your professor

Dr. Amber Lusvardi  
She/her/hers  
Department of Political Science  
Student hours: MW 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.,  
Thursday 11 a.m.-12 p.m.  
[lusvardia@uwosh.edu](mailto:lusvardia@uwosh.edu)  
920-832-2856

### Course details

Sex, Power, and Public Policy  
Room 1553  
Course meeting times: MW 10:20-11:20  
a.m., Friday hybrid  
3 credits  
Explore category: Society

### Course Description from Catalog

Examination of controversial issues of gender that affect equality and power. Includes women's movement and the search for equality, justice, and freedom. Examines political and judicial policies that exemplify success and failure.

### Signature Question

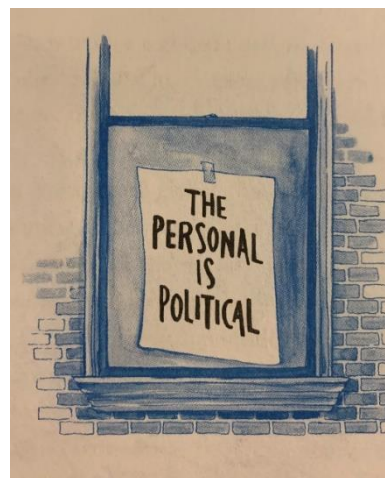
How do people understand and engage in community life?

### Additional course information

Students will be expected to learn about and engage with the concept of gender as an analytical tool to view the political world. This will be achieved through both theory and practice. As is expected for a Quest III Course, students will be engaged in activity outside of the traditional classroom. They will use their knowledge of gender as a key concept in which to engage the social world to facilitate and participate in gender and sexuality-themed institutions and events at UWO Fox Cities and the greater community.

### Student Learning Outcomes

- Connect knowledge to civic engagement and participation in civic life
- Identify and evaluate theories and assumptions relating to civic engagement and activism
- Learn how to effectively communicate issues at the intersection of gender justice and politics
- Develop and improve written and oral communication skills
- Develop ethical reasoning arguments
- Conduct critical and creative thinking
- Participate in community life through co-curricular activities with a community partner





**Struggling? Find me!**  
On Canvas  
Via E-mail  
In person: Sage  
4619 (Osh), M1502  
(Fox)

**Mental Health Help:**  
[uwosh.edu/counseling](http://uwosh.edu/counseling)  
Call/Text: 888- 531-2142  
Emergency: Text 988

The best predictor of student success is **class attendance.**

**Check Canvas:**  
Announcements  
Messages  
Rubrics  
Prompts  
Readings



## About Student Hours:

My student hours are time set aside specifically for you. We can discuss course content, any barriers you are facing, or broader questions about political science. I highly encourage students use this available time to discuss their class progress or college journey. If you are not available during my office hours, please let me know and I can accommodate you.

## Student Hours

11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays (Fox) and 11 a.m.-12 p.m. Thursday (Oshkosh) in person (preferred) or via Teams.

## University Studies Program

The University Studies Program (USP) is your gateway to a 21st century college education at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh. This Quest III course is the last in a series of courses you will take to introduce you to the campus and all it has to offer, the vibrant Oshkosh community, and the challenges and opportunities of academic life as you pursue a liberal education.

### *Signature question*

The University Studies Program (USP) is your gateway to a 21st century college education at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh. In these courses, you'll be exposed to three "Signature Questions" that are central to a UW Oshkosh education:

- How do people understand and engage in community life?
- How do people understand and create a more sustainable world?
- How do people understand and bridge cultural differences?

The Quest classes are designed to provide a solid foundation for the rest of your education here, no matter which major you choose. Your USP courses will also provide the opportunity for you to Explore and Connect as you begin your college education. For further information about the unique general education program at UW Oshkosh, visit the University Studies Program website at [uwosh.edu/usp](http://uwosh.edu/usp).

In this course, we will specifically focus on the question: *How do people understand and engage in community life?*

## Explore Courses and a Liberal Arts Education

### *Explore*

This course is an Explore course for the University Studies Program. The Explore classes are designed to provide a solid foundation for the rest of your education here, no matter which major you choose. For further information about the unique general education at UW Oshkosh and other USP courses that are available, visit the University Studies Program website at [uwosh.edu/usp](http://uwosh.edu/usp).

Liberal arts courses provide students with knowledge of the world in reference to themes such as culture, nature, and society. The explore category for this course is *society*.

### *Liberal education*

Liberal Education is an approach to learning that empowers individuals and prepares them to deal with complexity, diversity, and change. It provides students with broad knowledge of the wider world (e.g. science, culture, and society) as well as in-depth study in a specific area of interest. A liberal education helps students develop a sense of social responsibility, as well as

strong and transferable intellectual and practical skills such as communication, analytical and problem-solving skills, and a demonstrated ability to apply knowledge and skills in real-world settings. (AAC&U, <http://www.aacu.org/leap/what-is-a-liberal-education>)

### **Early alert**

After the third week of classes, you will receive a grade for your overall progress in this course and each of the courses you are taking in your first semester. This process is called “Early Alert.” The registrar’s office will send you an E-mail during the fifth week of classes reporting on academic performance and attendance for each of your classes.

Early Alert is designed to help you evaluate your study skills and your class attendance so that you know if you are on the right track. If you need to make some changes, there are resources available to support your academic success. These Early Alert grades are not permanent and will not appear on your transcript.

### **The Community Engagement Project**

This course is designed to increase your awareness of gender as a lens through which to view the political world and the greater social world. As such, your community engagement project is designed to partner you with on-campus and off-campus opportunities to reflect on the theory you have learned in class and apply it in a community-based context. In particular, the community engagement project seeks to offer the opportunity to educate and support others on issues related to gender and sexuality. You will be expected to spend between 14 and 20 hours engaged in this project.

The first opportunity for community engagement will be through Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin (advocacy branch), which provides information and access for women’s health and reproductive justice issues in the Fox Valley.

An additional community engagement option will be available at The Intersection on the Fox Cities campus (room 1221). The Intersection is a space on campus created to be a supportive and inclusive environment for all students, particularly members of historically excluded or structurally marginalized groups. The Intersection provides resources to help with success in college as well as a welcoming space for students to spend time on the Fox Cities campus.

### **Required textbook**

None – all readings will be accessed via Canvas

### **Grades**

Your final grade will be based on a first-week writing assignment, all requirements and assignments related to the community engagement project, reading annotations, zine creation, final project, and final self-assessment.

There is a five-day grace period on all assignment submissions. After that, *no submissions will be accepted* without first meeting with me.

### **Assignments**

First-week writing assignment (20) - I will provide you a prompt on our first day of class to help you reflect on how to best be a successful student during this semester. You have a week to complete your two-page typed response.

Community Engagement Project (200 total points, breakdown below): This is the most substantial portion of your overall grade during the semester. Completion of your community engagement hours is required for success in the course. You can choose between the two engagement partners for class: Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin and The Intersection on the Fox Cities campus.

*Hours completion* (100): Minimum of 14 volunteer hours engaged in work with either the Planned Parenthood project or The Intersection completed prior to Dec. 8. You will keep a weekly detailed hours log.

*Process letters* (50): A process letter is a form of self-reflection and self-evaluation about the work you are completing on the community engagement project. Through a series of three process letters you will answer the following questions about your work: How is the work I am doing informing how I understand class material? Conversely, how does class material help me understand the work I am doing? What have I found challenging about this work? What could I be doing to improve this experience? How can I put that idea into action?

*Portfolio* (20): Put together a portfolio that demonstrates your contribution to the community engagement project. It could be items you designed or wrote, reflections on experiences, or other relevant evidence of your work.

*Final presentation* (30): Each student will give a 5-7 minute presentation proposing a project that you think would improve equality and inclusion either on our campus or in the Fox Valley broadly.

Annotation of readings (100): You have one or two readings assigned each week that will be posted on your Canvas page. Each week, you will write comments and questions on the readings through Canvas annotations. Your annotations are worth 10 points each week.

Zine creation (100): You will create a fully designed, informative 'zine on either a topic related to gender policy or an activist previously or currently engaged in a struggle for equal rights. The audience for the zine is University of Wisconsin Oshkosh students. The completed zines will be made available at The Intersection at Fox and the UWO Women's Center.

Extended quizzes (2 x 25): You will have two essay-style quizzes, one at midterm and one at the end of the semester.

Final Self-assessment (50) – This final assignment will ask you to evaluate your own learning over the course of the semester. To consider: What are the most important concepts you learned this semester? How do they help you understand the social world? What is something you did that you are proud of?

## **Grading Scale**

Your final grades are calculated by points earned/total points.

100-97 - A+	76-74 - C
97-94 - A	73-70 - C
93-90 - A	69-67 - D+
89-87 - B+	66-64 - D
84-86 - B	63-60 - D
80-83 - B	59 and below - failing
79-77 - C+	

## Course schedule

All readings will be posted on Canvas.

Sept. 6, 8: Introduction to the class and concepts

Sept. 11, 13: What is feminism? What is gender?

Sept. 13: Class visit from Marianne Radley, Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin

Readings:

hooks, bell. (2000). *Feminism is for Everybody*. Chapters 1-3.

Hawkesworth, Mary. (2013). "Sex, Gender, and Sexuality: From Naturalized Presumption to Analytical Categories." *The Oxford Handbook of Gender and Politics*.

Sept. 18, 20: Intersectional feminism

Readings:

Combahee River Collective. (1977). The Combahee River Collective Statement.

Collins, Patricia Hill, and Valerie Chepp. (2013). "Intersectionality." *The Oxford Handbook of Gender and Politics*.

Sept. 25, 27: Representation in Politics

Readings:

Pitkin, Hannah. (1967). *The Concept of Representation*. University of California Press. Ch. 1 Introduction (pp. 1-13).

Dovi, Susanne. (2002). "Preferable Descriptive Representation: Will Just Any Woman, Black, or Latino do?" *American Political Science Review*, 96(4), pp. 729-743.

Oct. 2, 4: Gendered Representation

Reading:

Swers, Michelle. (2002). *The Difference Women Make: The Policy Impact of Women in Congress*. University of Chicago Press. Ch. 1 (pp. 1-19)

Oct. 9, 11: Women's Political Ambition

Readings:

Fox, R. L., & Lawless, J. L. (2004). Entering the arena? Gender and the decision to run for office. *American Journal of Political Science*, 48(2), 264-280.

Holman et al. (2021). Girls learn early that they don't have much of a place in politics. *The Conversation* Oct. 25.

Oct. 16, 18: Who can be heard?

Readings:

Alcoff, Linda. (1991). "The problem of speaking for others." *Cultural critique*

Spivak, Gayatri. (1988). "Can the Subaltern Speak?" *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (eds). London: Macmillan.

Oct. 23, 25: Gender and Policy – Abortion

Readings:

Price, Kimala. (2022). "Women of Color Want Reproductive Justice – Not Just Abortion Rights." *Washington Post Monkey Cage*.

Roberti, Amanda. (2021). Empowering Women by Regulating Abortion? Conservative Women Lawmaker's Cooptation of Feminist Language in US Abortion Politics. *Politics, Groups, Identities* 10(1): 139-145

Oct. 30, Nov. 1: Gender and Policy – Welfare

Readings:

Hancock, AM. "Contemporary Welfare Reform and the Public Identity of the 'Welfare Queen.'" *Race, Gender & Class*, 10(1), 31–59.

Tharenou, P. (2013). The work of feminists is not yet done: The gender pay gap—a stubborn anachronism. *Sex roles*, 68(3), 198-206.

Nov. 6, 8: Gender and Policy – Prostitution and Pornography

Readings:

Cawston, A. (2019). The feminist case against pornography: A review and re-evaluation. *Inquiry*, 62(6), 624-658.

Dworkin, A. (1993). Prostitution and male supremacy. *Mich. J. Gender & L.*, 1, 1.

Nov.13, 15: Sexuality and Policy

Reading:

Rich, Adrienne. (1999). Compulsory heterosexuality. *Culture, Society, and Sexuality*, Chapter 11.

Week of Nov. 20: Reading week, Thanksgiving break

Nov. 27, 29: Gender Identity and Policy

Reading:

MacKinnon, Catharine A. (2023). "Exploring Transgender Law and Politics." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*.

Dec. 4, 6: The Future of Gender Policy

Reading:

Cohen, Nancy L. (2020). Toward a Feminist future: A Political strategy for fighting backlash and advancing gender equity. *Signs: Journal of Women and Culture and Society* 45(2)

Dec. 11, 13: Final project presentations

*Note: If substantive changes are made in course syllabus, such as changes in schedule or assignments, notification will be provided in a timely manner and a revised syllabus made available*

### **All About YOU**

bell hooks writes in *Teaching to Transgress*, “The professor must genuinely value everyone’s presence. There must be an ongoing recognition that everyone influences the classroom dynamic, that everyone contributes. These contributions are resources” (8). In this spirit, I affirm that without exception every person is a valued member of this class. Your experience and contribution as a member of this class is important to me. If you are experiencing barriers that are preventing you from being a fully present member of this group, please come speak to me.

### **All About Others**

The scholar Brené Brown says (paraphrased) that we cannot understand other people’s point of view by pretending to walk in their shoes. This is insufficient because we are only imagining what they have experienced. It is better to actually listen to other people. Listen to them and believe them about their experiences. This is where understanding begins.

### **On Language**

Each person in this course is a valued member of the group and you should feel free to share your experiences as they are relevant to this class. No student in this class is ever expected or believed to speak for all members of a group. Do be thoughtful and inclusive in your language when adding to class discussion.

### **What About My Technology?**

You will never be required to bring a laptop or tablet to class. I discourage students from the use of laptops or tablets in my courses due to the extensive research that shows it to be a hindrance to learning and a distraction to classmates (see Dontre 2020). It is your choice whether to use your laptop/tablet while we are taking notes, but it should be stowed away at other times. As engagement and discussion are important, please refrain from wearing headphones during class.

In other words: *Hi! Don’t be the problem.*

### **Note to Poli Sci Majors**

Political Science majors should take Political Methodology (245) in either their sophomore year or the first semester of their junior year. Political Science 245 is a prerequisite for the senior capstone, Political Analysis (401), and cannot be taken concurrently. If you are currently a political science major or if you think you will be one of our majors in the future, it is important that you save your graded coursework from this class. If you have questions, please see me or any faculty member after class.

### **Student Right to Know**

Students are advised to see the following URL for disclosures about essential consumer protection items required by the Students Right to Know Act of 1990: <https://uwosh.edu/financialaid/consumer-information/>



**Disability Statement:**

This course is for all UWO students, including those with mental, physical, or cognitive disabilities, illness, injuries, impairments, or any other condition that could negatively impact one's equal access to education. If, at any point in the term, you find yourself not able to fully access the space or content of this course, please contact me by email, phone, or during office hours to discuss your specific needs. I am happy to discuss how to best accommodate you. You are also encouraged to contact the Accessibility Center in Dempsey Hall 215 or at [accessibilitycenter@uwosh.edu](mailto:accessibilitycenter@uwosh.edu) for further assistance.

**Caregiver statement:**

I recognize that some of you may be caregivers to others (siblings, children, partners, parents, etc.) and that places an added consideration to your availability. If you are a caregiver, please reach out to me if there are additional ways that I can support you.

**Grievance Statement:**

The Department of Political Science is committed to offering you a high-quality classroom experience, and we take your feedback very seriously. If you have concerns about anything related to this course, assignments, or teaching method, you are encouraged to first speak with your instructor directly. If you are not comfortable speaking with the instructor, you are invited to speak with the Chair of the Department of Political Science, Dr. James Krueger. He can be reached at [kruegerj@uwosh.edu](mailto:kruegerj@uwosh.edu). Should he be unable to resolve your concerns, he will guide you to appropriate resources within the College of Letters and Science.

**Academic Honesty**

A college education is intended to develop your skills, knowledge, and confidence. Graded assignments are designed to work on these items. Thus, to gain the skills, knowledge, and confidence of a college-educated person all graded work is to be your own. When you are directed to work alone, an assignment or test must be done by you, its primary ideas are to be your own, and any outside materials should be dealt with properly (quoted when using someone's words, and cited when quoting or referencing them in any other way). When your teacher directs you to work in teams, the work is to be done by the team.

**Artificial Intelligence statement**

Increasingly the use of AI programs such as ChatGPT are used to assist in generating ideas and responding to writing and editing prompts. However, the goal of our course is to be intellectually curious and grow our writing and critical thinking skills. As such, I expect anything written for class to be generated by you from the idea stage to the writing stage.

**Course Prerequisites:**

None – this course is open to students at any level and in all majors and is the first in a series of introductory courses in Political Science.

**Mental Health Support**

The Counseling Center is available to you 24/7. The Counseling Center at Fox Cities is in room 1848 in person every Wednesday. Counseling services are available at other times 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. through telehealth, make an appointment at 920-424-2061. After hours, call 920-424-2061 and choose option 2 or text 1-888-531-2142. You can chat with a counselor through [uwosh.edu/counseling](http://uwosh.edu/counseling)