

PS2225—Women and Politics, Fall 2017
Analytic Paper/Essay
Due November 1

General Directions: Choose one of the following topics. Every paper, regardless of topic, needs to incorporate course material. Pay attention to the specific citation requirements for the topic you choose. All papers need to use specific content of the cited readings to make an analytical point in the essay. You may also cite lecture or film material, but such citations do not take the place of reading citations. Papers will be graded for content as well as presentation. Be sure your writing is clear and concise, that the essay is well-organized, and that you follow the rules of grammar. Please proofread!

Topic 1

Interview someone who is at least twenty years older than you and who you believe was important in your own gender socialization (examples: parent, grandparent, aunt or uncle, close family friend). Ask them about their ideas about the roles men and women should play in society and politics. Ask them about their political histories. Now reflect on how their ideas and experiences have shaped your political ideas and experiences. Write an essay of **no more than 5 pages, double-spaced** that explains how this person had a gendered influence on **your political development** (your political ideas or behaviors – the essay is about you, not them!). Be sure that your essay explains your relationship with this person and why you believe s/he has been important in your political development.

Examples but not exhaustive lists of what you might ask your interviewee:

Gender Role Ideas

- Are there particular kinds of work that men or women are best-suited for? What are those? Why?
- What makes someone a good mother? A good father?
- Should men and women be equal? What would that mean?
- How should family decisions be made? Should a particular member of a family have more say over some sorts of decisions (examples: Should whoever makes more money have more say in finances? Should women have more say in decisions about childrearing?)
- Are there activities that are appropriate for boys and not girls? Girls but not boys?

Political Histories

- Does s/he vote? When did s/he first vote?
- Does s/he identify with a political party? Did s/he always identify with that party? What draws her/him to that party?
- Has s/he ever participated in politics in other ways? (Protested, written letters, made campaign contributions, etc.)? What did s/he do and why did s/he do it? If s/he has never done any of these things, why is that?
- Does s/he pay attention to politics? Follow campaigns? Follow news on specific policies or issues? What and why?

Topic 2 – Note: You may turn in your posts as you complete them (one at a time) if you wish!

Time to blog! Write two “blog posts” reacting to a current political news event related to gender and politics. Each post must use at least two course readings to make your analytic points, and you can’t double-count (you can use the same citation more than once, you can’t count it more than once). **Each blog piece must be 800 words or less.**

Your aim is to explain, from the vantage point of social science, why a particular political event happened the way it did and/or what the expected political implications of that event are. In particular, you are using the lens of gender to add the analytic clarity.

Remember that blog posts like this aim to draw the “general public” audience into a more sophisticated understanding of politics. Your writing should be particularly concise and lack academic jargon (even as you use academic ideas). White space is really important to drawing in and maintaining readership. So is the title of your blog piece. Think carefully about all of these elements of successful blogging.

Also, blogs rely on hyperlinks, not parenthetical citations. You will need to do this, too. (You’ll be turning this in electronically so I can click on those links.)

Examples of this sort of blogging can be found on The Monkey Cage blog (now at the Washington Post).

Here’s one analyzing the Romney/Obama debate in 2012:

<http://themonkeycage.org/2012/10/why-romneys-debate-win-may-be-a-loss-among-female-voters/>

Here’s one analyzing the Megyn Kelly – Donald Trump conflict at the first GOP debate this year:

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2015/08/13/donald-trump-wins-megyn-kelly-wins-girls-lose/>

Here’s one analyzing the political implications of pundit comments about Hillary Clinton’s demeanor in her Democratic victory speech:

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2016/03/17/heres-how-it-helps-hillary-clinton-when-male-pundits-tell-her-to-stop-shouting-and-smile/>