Mainstreaming Gender in the Teaching and Learning of Politics

Introduction

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Gender and politics scholarship shows that a gender lens is essential for the understanding of politics in all its diversity. Concepts of democracy and peace, themes of race and inclusion, and methods of quantitative analysis and comparative analysis are all better understood if a gender lens is brought to bear. In this symposium of six essays, eight authors provide a range of accounts of how they teach and use gender in their teaching. Across a range of subjects, countries, and student levels, these scholars demonstrate rich pedagogical reflection and inspire us by example. They supplement their articles with syllabi, in-class exercises, and sample assignments available online. The result is inspiration and guidance for all politics fields to take on the challenge of integrating the insights of gender scholarship into our teaching.

To borrow from Cynthia Enloe (1989, 2014), when we do not pay attention to gender, we underestimate the amount of power necessary to maintain or transform politics. When we do not pay attention to gender we have an emaciated understanding of the range of ways in which power works in politics. This symposium picks up from "The Wahlke Report" commissioned by the American Political Science Association over two decades ago. The report recommended that political scientists incorporate gender into mainstream politics courses. The Wahlke Report argued that gender should not be "treated as a separate and unique problem to be dealt with in a particular course or two or by a particular faculty member" (Wahlke 1991, 53). Nor should it be dealt with in one or two lectures in the critical perspectives units of a class.

The reasons for this are manifold. First, as Macaulay (2016) and Evans (2016) note in their contributions to this symposium, integrating feminist and gender analysis into more courses in international relations and political science is an important way of reaching out to an increasingly diverse student population as well as an important means of addressing the gender gap within the professoriate.[1] Given the large number of female students in the discipline and the desire to attract minority women, the political science curriculum should demonstrate the potential for political science to provide insights into the world as they experience it. To avoid a descriptively inaccurate view of the world, students should be exposed to a range of subjects that includes gender and a range of scholars that includes women.

Second, if we teach gender as a marginal subject of study or do not teach it at all, we deprive students of proficiency in one of the most important analytical skills of the twenty-first century.

Third, if we treat gender marginally within our curriculum, then the curriculum itself contributes to the power of gender hierarchies by reinscribing them.

Fourth, if we do not teach students how to reveal and analyze the most pernicious forms of exercise of power, then political science is not an education for citizens of a democracy, but rather for followers of authority. As Melissa Matthes argues:

> The study and teaching of politics is part of how we learn to participate in political life: political science is a form of civic education. Including women—all women as well as all men—in the curriculum of political science ensures the vitality of our democracy (2013, 236).

By integrating gender into political science education, we prepare students—women and men—to be part of a democratic citizenry capable of transforming its most tenacious systems of power, of which gender is one of the most cross-cutting.

The first resource for integrating gender into our classrooms is the field itself. The size of gender and politics research sections in professional organizations such as the American Political Science Association (APSA), the European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR), and the International Studies Association (ISA) indicates that gender and politics scholarship is highly successful on both sides of the Atlantic.

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These organizations created spaces for critical intellectual exchange in a journal (*Politics & Gender*) and a bi-annual conference (European Conference of Politics and Gender). Moreover, gender and politics scholarship is increasingly published in highly ranked general political science journals, such as the *American Political Science Review* and the *European Journal of Political Research*. Gender and feminism have become part of a general political science research tradition.

Despite thriving gender and politics scholarship, in both the US and across Europe, including Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, and the UK, gender remains ignored or sidelined in core political science training (Abels 2016; Alonso and Lombardo 2016; Atchison 2013; Bonjour, Mügge, and Roggeband 2016; Cassese, Bos, and Duncan 2012; Evans and Amery 2016; Foster et al. 2013; Mazur and Appleton 1997; Mügge, Evans, and Engeli 2016; Sauer 2016). Even where the politics of gender is taught, it is not usually presented to students as mainstream political science. Offering gender only in explicitly gender and politics courses risks reaching only those students with a prior interest in gender and promises that all students graduate with an under-appreciation of the importance of gender in politics.

Recognizing that gender analysis is a skill and not yet a mainstreamed skill in undergraduate or graduate training, we offer this symposium to demonstrate straightforward and creative ways to incorporate gender—a fundamental, pervasive and politically negotiated dimension of societal inequalities and power relations—into the teaching of all subfields of political science.

SUMMARY OF THE SYMPOSIUM

This symposium offers concrete and broadly applicable practical tools that inspire political science faculty to mainstream gender into their courses. The point of all of these courses is not to add "women's issues" to the list of interesting subjects or to add "feminist theory" to the critical theories section of the syllabus (Di Stefano 1997). Instead, these essays inspire us to incorporate gender as a fundamental and politically negotiated dimension of societal inequalities and power relations into all aspects of classroom instruction. Each essay takes one course as its case and describes how it is being taught, including readings and assignments. All but Fiona Macaulay's "Gender Day" are mainstream political science courses. "Gender Day" is a day-long (or two afternoons-long) introduction for first-year Peace Studies undergraduate and masters' students.

The first three essays focus on semester-long introductory courses for first-year students. Amy Atchison's (2016) essay discusses an introductory political science course for nonmajors. She uses three units—gender and intersectionality, political behavior and the gender gap, and women and societal rebuilding in the wake of armed conflict—to engage students in both puzzles in political science that relate to gender and the use of gender as an analytical tool.

Tània Verge (2016) illustrates effective teaching of introduction to quantitative methods. Although the ways in which research questions are selected and the data is collected and analyzed can lead to gender-biased and incorrect conclusions, quantitative methods courses are generally taught in a gender-blind fashion. Verge argues that teaching gender in quantitative methods courses through real-life gender-related topics and research questions, the use of sex-disaggregated data, and gender-sensitive teaching strategies brings about a virtuous circle: statistics anxiety is significantly reduced while the development of gender competence equips students to undertake more refined analyses that are also more critical of social inequalities.

In an introductory course on international relations (IR), Rebecca Evans adapts a text that openly dismisses critical and feminist approaches to IR. Using the example of Dan Drezner's (2011) *Theories of International Politics and Zombies*, she rejects the approach of merely adding a feminist IR unit to the end of an introductory course. Rather, Evans uses feminist analysis of zombie movies as a rejoinder both to Drezner's reading of zombie movies and to his dismissiveness of feminist IR.

The next two essays provide concrete examples of how to integrate gender into thematic courses. Rosalyn Cooperman, Melina Patterson, and Jess Rigelhaupt (2016) mainstream gender in the teaching and learning of race politics by revisiting important political events to emphasize the contributions of women as key political actors. The Civil Rights Movement (CRM) is often taught from the perspective that emphasizes the actions of a select group of leaders—all male—as responsible for its success. Their Race and Revolution first-year seminar provides an important opportunity to broaden students' knowledge of key themes, events, and people in the CRM and to appreciate the agency and role African American women played in the fight for civil rights. Modules from this course may be easily incorporated, in part or whole, to other courses on American political behavior, race, and gender in politics.

Amy Mazur's (2016) Comparative Public Policy course teaches advanced undergraduate students the tools of Comparative Policy analysis. Students learn the policy process

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model approach to policy formation in postindustrial democracies, with a focus on a series of explanatory variables/hypotheses (institutions, politics, economics, culture, extra national forces, etc.). They apply the model in an intense semester-long research project in which they compare and contrast feminist policy and environmental policy formation across Canada, the United States, Germany, Australia, and Great Britain. At the end of the semester, students present their individual and group findings in a mock policy conference on "Whether Institutions Matter in Environmental and Feminist Policy." Gender is placed front and center through learning about and then researching the politics of feminist policy formation as compared to environmental policy formation in the larger context of democratic performance.

The final essay by Fiona Macaulay describes a student-focused method of incorporating gender across the Peace Studies curriculum. "Gender Day" is a one-day experiential learning model for first-year students that gives students the tools to bring gender analysis into their future classes and the confidence that such engagement is a welcome and important part of Peace Studies. Her article analyses the impact of Gender Day, an annual, immersive teaching event obligatory for all incoming students in the Department of Peace Studies. Designed in response to a staff–student consultation, Gender Day consists of three sequenced elements. The course uses 1) an experiential session, paired with small group discussions, 2) an introduction of basic theoretical concepts about sex, gender, and sexuality and their inter-relationship, and 3) activity-based gender analysis in politics, international relations, and peace/conflict studies. Afterwards students write a reflective report on what they have learned, with some related research. Analysis of seven years of these reflections underscores the importance of: making gender teaching obligatory, especially to engage men; requiring reflection as well as academic writing; the potential and challenges of discussing gender in a multi-cultural setting (especially around issues of sexuality, and non-binary concepts of gender); helping students see that their personal is political; acquiring a gender lens, as an analytical tool and a precursor to later normative discussions (on feminism, equality issues).

As we have already indicated, these articles are accompanied by online resources, many of which are ready to be used off the shelf or adapted with minimal effort. Combined, the articles and supplementary material contain subject, reading, and activity suggestions. Further, they are written in a way that inspires readers' own pedagogical creativity.

Each of these contributors utilize different degrees of feminism and different kinds of feminism. All use gender analysis. They differently engage with the literature on the gender differences in learning styles and anxieties. Together, they provide inspiration for conversations within departments, across and within subfields as to how to mainstream gender in political science curriculum.

CONCLUSION

The authors of this symposium and their departments recognize that students (of all genders) should be acquainted with the basic knowledge that all politics is gendered and that the study of politics may also be gendered. While it is possible to introduce theory, quantitative methods, comparative analysis and the civil rights movement as if gender is an optional subject area and category of analysis, gender and politics scholarship shows that to do so causes students to misunderstand the power dynamics of politics. These authors recognize what is gained by teaching gender in a mainstreamed way and inspire us by their example to do so as well.

Their approaches vary, but together they show that it is possible to teach the need for feminist analysis without teaching theories of gender and feminism. Atchison and Macaulay make gender and intersectional theory accessible to first time audiences. However, it is possible to teach feminist topics without using feminist theory. For example, in teaching the introductions to political science (Atchison) and to quantitative methods (Verge), Atchison and Verge mainstream gendered subjects like the gender gap in voting and the gender gap in pay. Such inquiry may provoke feminist analysis, but feminism is not a prerequisite. Likewise, without incorporating gender theory, Mazur teaches comparative policy analysis by comparing feminist and environmental policy processes across industrial democracies. In teaching quantitative methods and the civil rights movement, Verge and Cooperman, Patterson and Rigelhaupt show why leaving out women renders our understandings of politics and political events incomplete.

In these, and in the other inspiring ways that unfold in each essay, our contributors pave the way for non-gender scholars, that is, for those who do not themselves publish in fields related to gender and feminism, to teach gender-related material. In so doing we all can contribute to the enriching of our discipline (cf. Mershon and Walsh 2014). Of course, gender is not the only understudied power dynamic in political science. Most notably race also is often relegated to a specialty area or to a unit within a semester. Many of the contributions to the symposium explicitly teach about the power of gender in a way that reveals how other systems of power may work or how they may work through gendered power. As the field with the expertise in the study of power, political science can be at the forefront of cultivating in our students the ability to understand all aspects of power, including race, heteronormativity, class, ability-centricism, *and gender*. This symposium contributes to that potential by focusing on gender.

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NOTE

1. See, for example, the 8-part gender gap symposium edited by Erik Voeten and published on the *Monkey Cage* blog, September 30 – October 4, 2013.

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