

The 19th Amendment Centennial: A Lens for Gender and Political Empowerment
 Blogging a one-time-only course at Boston University
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Introduction, as the course began:

Having decided to commit self-torture by designing and teaching a whole new course for my second-to-last course before retirement, I decided to share the experience. Our investments in courses usually pay off through the successive iterations of teaching them. That won't happen here. Further, most of the time most of us teach courses for which there are many examples that go before us and after us. There is at least an oral tradition (and now Twitter network) within the community of faculty in the teaching area. Not in this case. A small number of us are doing special courses to mark the centennial of the 19th Amendment, and while these courses won't be taught again for another century, we are not teaching them just as a time marker. I am already finding there is much to share.

I intend to post reflections after each class. They are addressed to the community of scholar/ teachers of gender politics and women and politics, but also to a wider audience who might be interested in how this focus might have implications for teaching and research further afield in the study of democracy, democratic systems, and democratization, because I think there are many. And that is part of the story.....

The course title explains the point: *The 19th Amendment Centennial: A Lens for Gender & Political Empowerment*. This course is a study in the struggles, challenges, contradictions, and processes of democratization – an exploration of democratization that places gender on center stage. There are many vantage points and frameworks to use to understand the story of American democratization. Here, rarely enough, the center is gender and, specifically, women.

In this course we ask how and why the exclusion of women from most rights and obligations of citizenship seemed so normal for so long, and remains so widely *unremarkable*, by which I mean not worthy even of being remarked upon. Did the American Revolution, and the grand principles advanced by so many of its leaders, not have any implications for women? How does a group of people – *this* group of people – who have no political standing attain political rights and empowerment? What does it mean for *women* to struggle for their rights when women are (as much as men) differentiated and divided by class, religion, race, ethnicity, partisanship, and all the other situations and conditions that divide people? How could men deny their own mothers, sisters, wives, daughters the rights of citizenship and the respect of political standing? How could many women agitate against their own accession to political standing? How did the struggles for women's full citizenship relate to other things going on in politics? What, other than attitudes toward women, accounts for the politics of their exclusion and the dynamics of the process of including them? And what differences did this Amendment make – and not make?

We will explore some of the common myths relating to the 19th Amendment, for example:

- Women were not active in politics before the suffrage movement.
- Gaining the vote was the main, or most important goal of 19th century women's movements.
- The woman suffrage movement and, more broadly, women's rights movements were composed only of middle-class white women.
- The best-known leaders of the woman suffrage movement were racists intent on denying African Americans (including African American women) their rights and political standing. (But will explore the dynamics and impact of their racism and racism within these movements.)
- African American women didn't participate in the woman suffrage or women's rights movement.
- Attitudes and decisions about whether to support woman suffrage were only a function of attitudes toward women and gender.
- Women across the country were granted the right to vote by the 19th Amendment.
- Women didn't do anything with their right to vote for decades after they gained the right.

- There is no lingering legacy of the wholesale exclusion of women, regardless of their race, wealth, or other conditions of their lives, from fully meaningful citizenship and from political standing.

And more.

Week 1, January 2020

My students had required reading for our first meeting: the wonderful catalogue of the National Portrait Gallery exhibit, *Votes for Women: A Portrait of Persistence*. The first three chapters and the associated discussion served as a kind of trailer for the whole course.

Lisa Tetrault's "To fight by remembering, or the making of Seneca Falls," a brief version of her book, *The Myth of Seneca Falls: Memory and the Women's Suffrage Movement, 1848-1898* (University of North Carolina Press, 2014) focused our attention on historical story-telling. The "myth" of the title is the notion of Seneca Falls as the launching of a continuous movement for woman suffrage.

We explored how that story was constructed by the authors of the *History of Woman Suffrage* – Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Matilda Joslyn Gage and others (volume I published 1881) for particular political purposes, specifically, to breathe life into a social movement that was facing a frustrating low point. Writing this history involved two aspects: remembering and telling. *Remembering* is a conscious and a nonconscious process. My students and I talked about how that might work in historical memory – especially historical memory by advocates and activists. And we discussed *telling*: how we shape what we say, and to whom, and how. A point that Tetrault makes is that the telling is itself a political act – it was a movement tool. And not telling, not including, is also a political act. Once there is the remembering and the telling, how should we understand *reading and learning*?

We also spent some time trying to understand the relationship between historical and biographical time. We began by imagining Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony: just the sheer expanse of their lives and political careers over those long decades. Even if we start from the point in the mid-1860s when they were told women should hang back and wait their turn, they worked and waited and eventually died decades later, before there were real successes. We talked about what real life might have felt like for women and for men, and men and women of different social groups at different times in our history. And we talk about what makes different lengths of time feel "long" or "short," depending on whether they occur within our lives, a while before, or a long time ago.

An engaging twist on the problem of historical memory and re-telling. I played a video of Kerry Washington performing Sojourner Truth's speech, "[Ain't I a Woman?](#)" The students liked it, of course. But then we discussed the fact that no one really knows what the words in the speech were, because it was an observer who wrote it down. Moreover, it is often written as a transliteration of her supposed accent — apparently a version of a southern African American accent. Why is *her* speech transliterated to an accent when we don't usually preserve a speech text that way. And finally, why is it written that way, and why does every performance give her that accented when she was born and raised in northern New York, and her first language (or one of her first two) would have been Dutch because her owners were Dutch?

The second essay, Martha Jones' "The politics of black womanhood, 1848-2008" (pp.29-47), focused our story even more directly on the intersectionalities of race and gender in understanding the story of enfranchisement of "women." It provoked for our discussion a range of critical questions that we will explore more deeply throughout the semester. How and in what ways did African American women raise and press for their rights as women both within their own communities, especially churches, and within the wider society and context of racist oppression? In what ways has racist oppression been gendered? In what ways has

gendered oppression been “raced?” What are the historical dimensions of these struggles, thinking especially of changes from the Reconstruction to post-Reconstruction period and beyond?

We explored the article’s introduction to African American women’s actions with respect to pursuing woman suffrage – how and when where they done in concert with white women? How and when were they done in race-specific groups? What was the role of racism in these dynamics? What is the role of community-specific agendas among African American women? What is the impact of analyzing history as though women’s rights and African American rights are different, non-overlapping, and possibly conflicting goals? How did African American women use their voting rights as the franchise was extended for women in the North? How do we understand and account for racism without erasing the agency of African American women? How do we understand and account for the oppression of “women”, as differentiated as that group is across social groups, without erasing the agency of women? What does our reading about African American women’s political action teach us about gender and political action more generally? Because surely we shouldn’t think of accounts of white women as teaching us about “women,” while accounts of African American women teach us only about African American women.

Then, we read Susan Goodier’s “A woman’s place: Organized resistance to the franchise” (pp.49-67). This piece opens our discussion of resistance to woman suffrage, focusing in particular on *women’s* opposition. To understand gender politics and the history of woman suffrage in particular, we have to take understanding the perspectives and actions of *all* major groups of women involved. It simply doesn’t do to take “your own side” seriously and dismiss the others as dupes or stupid. What do we learn by attending to the “anti’s” seriously and closely?

Finally, given that the assigned reading was a beautifully-illustrated museum exhibition catalogue, I asked the students to identify and discuss their favorite illustrations in each chapter. A few they picked out: The famous illustration of Victoria Woodhull addressing the Judiciary Committee. (I passed around a picture on my phone of the gorgeous ceiling over what was that room but is now hallway in front of an elevator – thanks to my son for working with the congressional historian to identify the exact space.) A photo of Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton in which ECS looked less than happy to be photographed. A photo of Nannie Burroughs and other women gathering during a Baptist convention. A painting of the 1840 Convention of the Anti-Slavery Society.

Week 2: **Citizenship as Republican Motherhood Minus Rights**

It is not possible to understand the rise of women’s rights movements, including the suffrage movements, without first understanding the situation women faced in the historical lead-up to that period. This is especially important because we can be sure that very few students have any background in women’s history. They haven’t begun to imagine what it was like to be a woman – from any social group – in the 17th, 18th, or early 19th century. They don’t know how the law considered women as compared with or in relation to men, or how women spent their days, or what their relationship was to the political system or major events such as, even, the American Revolution.

The readings for this week included the first chapter of Rosemarie Zagari’s *Revolutionary Backlash: Women and Politics in the Early American Republic* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007) and 2 chapters of Linda K. Kerber’s *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America* (University of North Carolina Press, 1980). Zagari’s chapter has a very good discussion of the implications of the American Revolution for women; a useful brief explication of the period from 1790 to 1807, when women gained then lost the right to vote in New Jersey; and a consideration of women as citizens and rights bearing people in the Early Republic. The *Women of the Republic* readings provide a good introduction to the legal situation of women, especially the common law framework of coverture and the concept and reality of Republican Motherhood.

This week had two main goals – beside an introduction to the socio-political and legal situation of women up to the Jacksonian era, this class also offered a substantial exercise in thinking historically, following up on our discussion of historical story-making from the week before.

I developed and handed out a 6-page Timeline of Rights, Law, Policy, & Politics, listing simply dates and events. (See the Timeline: [Timeline19thAmendSp20](#)) I asked the students to divide themselves up into a few groups and spend 20 minutes reading and discussing the time line, identifying one or two interesting historical stories they detected, or identifying a couple of interesting questions or puzzles the timeline raises. When we reconvened together, each group presented its stories and puzzles. In each case I facilitated substantial discussions in which we pursued the stories and puzzles together, and through which I could draw some overarching points that will be important throughout the course.

Some of the questions the students identified:

- Instead of things just getting “better and better,” sometimes rights that were there were taken away – why? (Discussion: “progress” as a bad framework for understanding history. What specific situations led to increase or decrease in rights?)
- Rights were granted first in the Midwest/West – especially Territories: Why?
- Utah: Why did they grant women rights so early and why did the federal govt take them away?
- *Bradwell v IL*: Weird that women started getting degrees and qualifications, but then weren’t allowed to use them.
- Also in terms of education: Why is Mississippi the first place where women could get degrees (and they were granted limited voting rights very early there) when Mississippi otherwise has been so anti-egalitarian? (Discussion: Always note *who* is responsible for increase or decrease in opportunities or rights: Fed? State? Local? Which branch? Private bodies like religious organizations?)
- *Muller v Oregon* 1908: What was the big deal about 10-hour workdays for women? (Discussions: Different views of advancing women: pure equality vs protecting them from the special brutalities imposed on women ; i.e. equality vs equity. Also: Changes in women’s status and opportunities were often moved not primarily because of views of gender, but because of other issues such as, in this case, governmental intrusion in the labor market or, in other cases, party advantage.)
- Why did women get to vote in school elections in so many places first?
- Why was the vote often limited to *taxpaying* women and what was the significance for women?

We then moved to a combined lecture/discussion on gender, the law and policy to get a baseline for women’s situation before the suffrage movement. Although we mainly covered the common law, we took some time to note the variety of legal frameworks existing in the colonies and Early Republic, and conditions that would create variations in how the legal system affected women.

We worked our way through a classic discussion of the law of coverture and its implications using the famous passages in Blackstone’s *Commentaries*. The point was to make clear that even focusing on free white women, regardless of class or wealth, the law of coverture meant married women could not own their own property other than the clothes on their back, could not make contracts, seek employment without their husband’s permission, or have a right to keep any earnings from their employment. If a woman no longer resided with her husband, *either* because she left him or he left her, she was assumed to have abandoned him and if they were still married she still lived under the law of coverture, as she did if her husband was, say, lost at sea but they had not proof of his death. She had no rights over her children. She had rights only to the widow’s portion (1/3 of his property) at his death, which meant, if the property was a farm, she had to sell her portion – that is, her source of income. There was no such thing as rape in marriage because she had given her consent at marriage. He had a right to “correct” her, as they did their children, so his brutality against her would have to be very extreme indeed for anyone to protect her. Because of all of this, a “free” woman’s

situation depended very much on the beliefs, attitudes, behavior, and whims of her husband, although he could make no binding contracts with her to circumvent the law because, by law, they were one person, indivisible.

We moved next to a consideration of women's social roles and gendered expectations, emphasizing two aspects that are very important for understanding women's standing and potential in politics: women in public, and women and communication. The main point is that women were not supposed to appear in public unaccompanied by men except in very circumscribed circumstances, or they would be regarded as deeply suspect. Moreover, there was a limited range of subjects women were able to discuss acceptably, and they were certainly not supposed to presume to teach or inform men. This, obviously, makes it very difficult to have an impact on public decision-making.

The remainder of the class was supposed to begin to look at women's political roles relating first, to elections, and then the broader subject of republican motherhood but, not surprisingly, we were out of time. Next week!

Week 3: Women's Political Activism to the Civil War

Most discussion of the woman suffrage movement, or even the broader women's rights movement, tends to take that activism out of context. Perhaps there is some discussion of leaders who previously participated in the abolition movement, but the rich development of political activism tends to be invisible. This week's work was designed to fill out the story of women's activism to help the rise and particular politics of the woman suffrage movement make sense. (See the week's slides [here: PO50519thAMActivismPreCivilWarPPT.](#))

I have noticed in recent years that our students have learned a particular version of the linkages among race, class, gender, and feminism that is both misleading and based on misunderstandings of race, class, and gender in historical context which, in turn, mangles the story. Specifically, their lack of historical thinking *overall* leads them to imagine race, class, and gender being defined and functioning very much as they do in 21st century America, and especially 21st century urban America. This week, therefore, laced the exploration of women's political activity in antebellum America, especially in the abolition movement, with a focus on understanding the day-to-day realities of gender, race, and class across some of the great differences of region, urban-rural differences, and time.

We began with a review of the legal framework of coverture, but this time I asked them to consider how this framework affected different groups of women: wealthy white women, middle-class white women, poor white women, enslaved African Americans, free African Americans, indentured servants. Their inclination was to say that wealthier white women were different from others in that they could use "their property" or "their wealth" to avoid the impact of coverture, until I reminded them that under the law they didn't own property regardless of their family's wealth. The result was a revelation to many of them, understanding how dependent free women were on the good graces of their husbands, and the degree to which the law protected their husbands' power over them more than it protected them at all. At the other end, despite some of their sensitivity to racism and enslavement, they had to come to understand how enslaved people lived outside of protections of law. We explored varieties of conditions, such as indentured servants, and the poor who were committed to poor farms. And we thought about regional and urban/rural differences.

So, we discussed, how did the lives of women, a day of "women's roles" look in these early days, and how did they compare across class among free women. Someone mentioned cleaning, so we talked about what it would take to clean clothes, including the processes of getting the water, making the fire to heat the water, and the washing. We thought about what the detergent would be like, and how they got it. We talked about

the weight of the wet clothes, especially the woolens. And how they made those clothes – spinning, weaving, sewing, etc. We discussed the presence of servants, and the differences between who might have or be a servant in those days compared to now. And we all resolved not to think about electricity-driven appliances or heating before the advent of electricity.

We briefly looked at changes from the colonial period to the 1830s and 40's, noting the ways in which “women’s sphere” became increasingly important, and discussed why that would be the case. Think about the irony of Hannah Adams (1775-1831) who wrote, in her book published in 1832, “We hear no longer of the *alarming*, and perhaps justly obnoxious din, of the ‘rights of women.’ Whatever [women’s] capacity of receiving instruction may be, there can be no use in extending it beyond the sphere of their duties.” This, at exactly the time when women were beginning to launch themselves into petitioning campaigns on behalf of abolition.

Finally, before we turned to women’s political activity, we probed the meaning and rationale of *republican motherhood*, whereby women’s role’ as mothers, wives, keepers of the home were transformed into citizenship and nation-building acts. Once again, it is important to understand these stories of women not just as *gendered* stories, but to put them in broader context. In this case, we mulled over the perceived fragility of a sense of nation, nationality, and unified citizenship in this country, so recently independent, and one in which people saw themselves fundamentally in terms of their varying religions, communities, and states. Leaders worried – for good reason – about whether it would persevere. So taking the role of instilling the sense of nation and country in one’s children was no small thing, limited though it was. We explored the dimensions of republican mothers through pictures and prints (displayed on the slides).

As we moved into discussing the antislavery movements, there was one more stop for fundamentals to make before proceeding. Students had a number of questions in the weekly blogs about their readings relating to the relationship between African American and white abolitionists, and especially between African American and white women abolitionists.

And so, on to political activity. Much of this course is about the controversies and struggles over voting, so we reviewed the meanings and structures of elections and parties in the Early Republic, including especially the variety of limitations placed on voting, and the rationale for those limitations. Most of the limitations – some of which still had advocates late in the 19th century, were based on the idea that voters should be free, independent individuals with a clear stake in society who could take their vote seriously, could consider the issues for themselves, and not be swayed merely by the power over them of people with more resources, or who employed them.

The students and I together explored a set of maps that showed, respectively, the county-by-county distribution of enslaved people and black people in 1830, 1850, and 1860; and the county-by-county distribution of black people in 1910 and 1920. We also look at a map of 2010. The major conclusions that were new to them: Before the Great Migrations of the 20th century, the proportion of African Americans in the population outside the slave states was, by and large, miniscule. Certainly before the Civil War and outside a very few cities, the likelihood that white people would encounter African Americans as people who lived anywhere nearby was small. This means that in organizations that were based in relatively small geographic areas, like a town (or certainly anything smaller), the likelihood that there could be a race-integrated organization even if one wanted one was relatively small in large number of places. The students were also unaware of what a large proportion of the population African Americans were in most of the slave states, and thought about what it meant to have a half or more of a population in some areas enslaved by the minority.

Finally, we turned to women’s activity in the abolition movement, a discussion that will continue next week. They broke into smaller groups to discuss the major required reading for the week, Susan Zaeske, *Signatures of Citizenship: Petitioning, Antislavery, and Women’s Political Identity* (University of North Carolina Press, 2003). I charged each group with agreeing on at least one “big point” (or question) from the reading and at least one

“small point” (or question) from the reading that was worth sharing with the whole class. The discussions in all the groups I heard were really good, as were the points they brought back to the whole: The shift from a more “moral” to “political” conception of their anti-slavery activity. The variety of ways in which this activity pushed them toward and prepared them to organize for their own rights. The degree to which fighting for abolition was regarded as so radical, and engaging in this as a woman was even more radical. The difficulty of integrating these activities into their understanding of how they should act as women, even when they felt passionately about the cause. How women who lived so far from the South and knew so few African Americans, especially formerly enslaved people, could take this cause on and devote so much energy to it. And more. Many of the students also integrated into their understanding an optional reading some had done, a chapter from Jane E. Dabel, *A Respectable Woman: The Public Roles of African American Women in 19th Century New York* (New York University Press, 2008).

With this discussion, we are ready to see the rise of a woman’s rights and woman suffrage movement next week.

Week 4: The Rise & Early Transformations of the Suffrage Movement

The rise of an independent woman suffrage movement is a fascinating story of transformation of the anti-slavery movement and the ensuing conflict within interlinked social movements over priorities, values, and strategies, all conditioned by national and regional politics and the rise of the American party system. Today we went back to the anti-slavery movement to chart an overview of women’s involvement and the impact of the movement on women, then focused on the rise and transformation of the woman suffrage movement up to its break-up and dormancy beginning around 1870.

We began by looking again at the anti-slavery movement, picking out high-level themes from our discussion of Zaeske’s *Signatures of Citizenship* that would help us enter our discussion of the rise of the woman suffrage movement. We discussed four questions:

- How did women, especially white women in the North, get involved in the anti-slavery movement? Why did male leaders welcome their involvement, but not include them in leadership?
- What was the path they took from considering slavery as a *moral* issue to developing a more *political* consciousness about slavery? How did these different frameworks shape how they understood what they were *doing* in their antislavery work, and how did that relate to their understandings of appropriate women’s roles?
- Practicalities: What were their experiences? What skills and resources did it take? Imagine women in this era of a restricted woman’s sphere reaching out to ask people for signatures on petitions, explaining the issue to them.
- What were the impacts of involvement in the antislavery movement on their own political identity, sense of citizenship, understanding of their relationship to the ideas of the American Revolution and American political values?

This week’s discussion launched from our reading of Faye E. Dudden, *Fighting Chance: The Struggle over Woman Suffrage and Black Suffrage in Reconstruction America* (Oxford University Press, 2011).

Both women’s history and African American history are often treated as though they are *sui generis*; they stand outside of “normal” history and considerations, and they are only about itself – African American history is about African Americans; women’s history is about women. In contrast, I believe it is important to understand the social movements we are discussing as cases to further our understanding of core aspects of the history of American democracy; to place them in a broader historical context; and to study them through a framework of what social scientists have learned about the dynamics of social movements. I therefore

proceeded with a brief lecture on the nature of social movements, in light of which we will proceed to examine the rise and transformations of the woman suffrage movement.

My lecture emphasized 4 points and their implications. (1) Groups and individuals who have the power and resources to use conventional political structures and processes do not launch social movements. (2) Social movements usually take off because of some precipitating event – especially an event that politicizes what was not previously understood as political, and that creates a motivation for different groups and organizations to work together over shared concerns. (3) Social movements are not single, particular organizations. Social movements contain and link together different organization as well as people who are not members of particular organizations. (4) Finally, and most important, social movements are *coalitions* of groups and individuals with overlapping but different issues, priorities, and approaches to action.

The nature of social movements as coalitions almost always means they are fundamentally fragile, always threatened by the centrifugal forces of their differences in a context of limited power and resources. It is useful to analyze the different groups and organizations within a social movement in terms of:

- Shared vs different social bases, including those deriving from geographic location
- Shared vs different specific issue concerns;
- Shared vs different priorities, even where they share issue concerns;
- Shared vs different preferred strategies/tactics

Given this, it is amazing, frankly, when social movements rise and become sustainable for a significant period of time.

Social movements cannot be understood out of context, especially contextual features that change over time. These changes, in turn, may heighten the significance of what is different across coalition partners, as compared with what is shared. Stressors such as insufficient resources or other crises may create the need for creating sharper priorities for the use of available resources or reconsidering their repertoire of strategies and tactics increase the potential for combustion of the coalition.

How, then, can we apply this framework to the antislavery and woman suffrage movements? What examples could we see in the 1830s – 1870 period? The students readily found many examples in discussion, and led them to a very nuanced discussion of critical periods in this history, especially with respect to the 1840 split in the abolition movement and the conflicts within the antislavery/woman suffrage alliance and the woman suffrage movement itself.

One important implication of the idea of a social movement as a coalition is that the common tendency to define the woman suffrage movement in terms of a single organization – the NWSA and its leaders (Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton) or even the NWSA and the AWSA is wrong. It is especially misleading in discussions of African American women in the woman suffrage movement, by defining their organizations as somehow outside of or different from the woman suffrage movement. A social movement considered as a coalition involves groups and individuals who may work together explicitly, or may work together in parallel.

Thus, in terms of race and the woman suffrage movement, we will examine where we find race integrated groups, organizations, and actions and where we find race segregated groups, organizations, and actions. We will look at where there are conflicts along race lines within the woman suffrage and antislavery movements. And we will consider the variety of orientations intersectionally across race and gender in issues, priorities, and actions.

Before we turned to specifics of the woman suffrage movement history we considered a couple of other framing problems and concerns:

We have to be very careful about certain critical core terms, all of which are used or interpreted with different meanings at different times, making all the difference in the world in discussions of the politics of rights and citizenship:

- “Man.” When does this mean male? Or human? Or a citizen? Or a male citizen?
- “Women,” “Woman suffrage,” “Woman suffrage movement.” Does this mean all or any woman? Some women only? Which women?
- “Universal suffrage.” This is sometimes meant to refer to all adults, sometimes all male adults, sometimes all white male adults.
- “White,” “Black,” “Negro.” Depending on context, these terms referred to race, sometimes to race and gender.

Understanding these terms in context – as used in documents, speeches, etc. – takes great care, and makes a lot of difference.

It is also important to understand how deeply unpopular the antislavery movement and antislavery activists were, even where people did not approve of slavery itself. Participating in the movement was challenging and often dangerous, especially for women. It was dangerous for women both because the abolition movement was unpopular and because most people did not approve of women becoming active in politics. Likewise, the woman’s rights movement and woman suffrage movement was deeply unpopular. Throughout the period we are discussing, the very idea of women voting was widely regarded as so out of the question, so unnatural, proposals for woman suffrage could be safely ignored – not even attacked. Thus, there was nothing “conservative” about being part of the abolition or woman suffrage movement, ever. The deep racism we will see in parts of the woman suffrage movement, shows that people can engage in politics that is radical on some dimensions, and retrograde in others.

I prefer that historical “names” not be abstract, but have faces. We therefore took a few minutes to look at a gallery of images of some abolition and suffrage leaders the students have read a lot about in this early period and understand them as people; in chronological order: Lucretia Mott, Sojourner Truth, William Lloyd Garrison, Wendell Phillips, Josephine Griffing, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucy Stone and Henry Blackwell, Frederick Douglass, Susan B. Anthony, Mary Ann Shadd Cary, George Francis Train.

Finally, we launched into the launch of the woman suffrage movement. We began with a discussion of how the movement arose in the first place.

Given that the woman suffrage movement grew out of the antislavery movement, and that race issues were such an important part of the story of the rise and early transformations of the movement, I wanted the students to deal seriously and deeply with questions of sexism and racism in this period, and how they understand it. I therefore asked them to spend a few minutes thinking over the following questions. I asked them to sketch some notes on what this question brought to their mind and how they resolved it. I told them I would not ask them to share their notes, or their self-reflections:

What do you think should have been the most important priority after Emancipation:

- Universal suffrage (meaning gender & race inclusive)
- Black male suffrage
- White female suffrage

When we moved to discussion, I asked them to talk about how various leaders they read about answered these questions and why.

The discussion was rich and sophisticated, opening deep consideration of the variety of ways that racism and sexism played substantial roles in both movements and their transformations. With respect to sexism, the exclusions and/or relegation of women to foot soldier positions in the antislavery movement were deep and broad – part of the 1840 split in the abolition movement was over the role of women. We thought through what it would have felt like for women who had been active in antislavery for a decade, two, or three who had grown in their political consciousness to be told to that women should wait, subordinating their aspirations to others.

We talked about the choice among most African American (and white) male antislavery activists to prioritize extending the franchise to African American men but not women. We considered again the ways in which manhood and citizenship were so fundamentally tied, so that denying men their citizenship rights is “emasculating.” What is the equivalent for women? We also focused on the sexism (as we would understand it now) among women activists themselves, who adhered to many or most of the norms of the early 19th–century sphere of women – who were reluctant to speak in public or exert leadership or engage in overt disagreement and conflict with men, accepting the norm of deferring.

With respect to the racism of many white people in the antislavery and woman suffrage movement, we began by probing how it could be that someone would devote years, even decades to risky behavior fighting the existence of slavery, yet be manifestly (to our eyes) racist. (We compared the idea of men who respect many women, would be against many forms of gender discrimination, and yet be manifestly – to our eyes – sexist.) We explored the racist statements of Stanton and others – their timing, the text, the situation to understand the workings of the racism in the movement.

Contrary to many claims today, their point was *not* that the priority should be to enfranchise white women first. It was to say that it made no sense to them that inferior (i.e. uneducated, illiterate, etc.) mostly non-white but also white men (“Think of Patrick and Sambo and Hans and Yung Tung...” making laws for us.) The formulation they used was usually to say that not one more man of those categories should be granted the vote before women were – women who included so many more deserving citizens.”

We also explored some of the reasons why many white antislavery activists limited their understanding of the goals of that movement to ending slavery, while African American and many white antislavery activists saw a much broader emancipation agenda that would fight for equal rights. It was clear to everyone in class that this analysis does not make the racism (or ethnocentrism, or class priority views) “better” or less vile. But it is important to understand the dynamics of both the sexism and racism that were so fundamental to these movements.

Earlier we talked about the importance of context: All of this was conditioned also by some critical things going on in the larger political system – most especially, (1) sectionalism, the Civil War, and Reconstruction; and (2) the rise of the American party system. For reasons we have read about, it is not possible to understand the politics of the social movements we are discussing without understanding the movements’ ties to the Republican party, and the way both the Republican and Democratic parties used and played the movements, exacerbating the divides and conflicts within them.

We ended the class with a return to the politics of coalition, including bringing it down to the personal human level in the relationships among Frederick Douglass, Susan B. Anthony, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, so full

of conflicts over these questions, but also so linked in coalition and even friendship throughout their lives. How does that happen?

Next week we will track in detail the particulars of the rise and early transformation of the woman suffrage movement, then explore the wide range of ways that women were active in politics throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries up to the 19th Amendment. It is crucial that we understand that the suffrage movement was far from the only political game in town for women and politics.

Week 5: Women’s Political Activism during the “Woman Suffrage” Era

This week we continued with the topic from last week – the rise and transformation of woman suffrage movement – then turned to a discussion of some of the varieties of ways women were active in and had influence on politics (other than suffrage activism) from the Civil War up to the ratification of the 19th Amendment.

Using our reading of Faye Dudden’s *Fighting Chance: The Struggle Over Woman Suffrage and Black Suffrage in Reconstruction America* and a [Suffrage Timeline detailed](#) of the major events of the rise and transformation of the woman suffrage movement, we sought to understand it within a framework of understanding coalition politics in context, as discussed last week.

We began by outlining a set of questions that would frame our year-by year (1833-1870) discussion:

- How did a social movement seeking woman suffrage arise?

The woman suffrage movement arose largely from within the antislavery movement. Our discussion ranged around the evidence we found last week of how many women’s experiences within the antislavery movement gave them new skills and experiences, shifted their understandings of their potential political and social roles, and gave them an increasing awareness of the limitations they faced because of gender limitations and discrimination by law and social norms and within the antislavery movement and organizations. Their primary support in the early days was from within the antislavery movement, even when they were excluded from membership in some of it and from leadership in most of it. Important parts of the women’s rights/ woman suffrage movement was so much a part of the antislavery movement that in its earliest days, with considerable disagreement among women about what women’s rights they should pursue and how, the major point of agreement within the *women’s rights* movement was the need for *abolition of slavery*.

- How and why did it become an independent movement?

The question here is how did the women’s rights/ woman suffrage movement transform itself from being essentially a part of the antislavery movement to becoming its own movement. For the answer to this we look deeply at the political turmoil surrounding the passage of the 14th and 15th Amendments, the Kansas campaign, and the campaigns in New York and Washington, D.C. Ultimately, of course, women realize that in their struggle for women rights, especially the vote, no one is going to fight for them the way they will themselves. Even if they remain in coalition with the post-emancipation antislavery movement (as most woman suffrage advocates did in this period, although in different ways), like other political organizations they could not just depend on another movement or a particular political party, but had to establish their own organizations and develop their strategies and tactics. We tracked this in detail, examining especially the roles of both sexism (on the part of both men and women in different ways) and racism (on the part of many of the white antislavery and woman’s suffrage leaders) in these dynamics.

- How does our understanding of the dynamics of coalitions apply to this process?

It is difficult to understand the politics of this period without understanding both the antislavery movement and the women's rights/woman suffrage movement as coalition within themselves and across. We compared the 1840 split within the abolition movement and the fissures and ultimately breaks of the 1850s-1860s that occurred in the history of the American Anti-Slavery Society, the American Equal Rights Association, and the ultimate formation of the National Woman Suffrage Association and the American Woman Suffrage Association. All of these are much more complicated than often pictured.

One of the most fascinating aspects of the coalitional aspects of these movements is the degree to which both the deep sexism and racism of the period, and of so many of these actors created the dynamics of fissure and breakup while at the same time many of the leaders struggled nevertheless to continue to work in some form of coalition.

- What contextual factors shaped the rise and transformation?

We looked at the impact of changing technology, regional differences, religion, but most of all the rise of the Republican vs Democratic party system and the special relationship between the Republican party and the antislavery movement. As party competition became more important, and linked especially to the struggles over rights for African American men, much of the situation these movements faced and their opportunities came from the actions of political parties and party leaders whose stance toward these movements came from their interest in winning elections. Increasingly political parties became more crucial in the coalitional aspect of suffrage expansion, and even some of the internal dynamics of the movements.

- Were women selfish to demand rights for themselves?

Perhaps an odd question, but one of the age-old expectations of women is that their lives are devoted to the service of others, that is they take care of themselves, ever put themselves first, they are being selfish. So in principle, was it selfish for women to want rights for themselves?

- Women were told to “wait their turn.” When did folks decide it was “women’s turn?”

The tactical and strategic issues in the period of struggles over the 14th and 15th Amendments, then what many woman suffrage leaders hoped would be the 16th Amendment, plus the struggles in the Kansas, New York, and Washington, DC campaigns came to a head in the conflict between on the one hand, some of the woman suffrage leaders, who believed that Reconstruction would be deep and wide, completing the ideals of the American Revolution by incorporating African Americans and women into full citizenship and who believed that strengthening the coalition of continued emancipation for African Americans and the rights of women would be strategically and tactically most effective, and on the other hand, the leaders who thought that increasing rights for African American men was much more important, more likely, and that keeping women's rights in the picture would weaken the effort and lead to its defeat.

Encapsulated by Wendell Phillips' claim that this was “the Negro's hour” (by which he meant black men), and the cutting off of the funds and newspaper coverage on which the woman suffrage movement had depended, the woman's suffrage advocates were cut out on the premise that their turn would come later. But as voting rights for African American men spread, in the South during Reconstruction, and in other locations, African American women, along with all other women, were left behind, left to fight in independent woman suffrage movements.

In our walk through the early woman suffrage movement timeline we also devoted attention to a number of other major questions. One of the most important was the nature of the sexism, racism, and ethnic slurs (the latter in the Frederick Douglass' expression at outrage in the defeat of black suffrage in New York) in the various turns of the movements and the role they played. (“drunken Irishmen and ignorant Dutchmen,...the tools of the negro-hating Democracy of this city, many of whom would sell their votes for a glass of

whiskey.”) Those who are familiar with the racist views and expressions of Elizabeth Cady Stanton in particular have often interpreted her arguments (and Anthony’s) to say that they believed that white women should be given the right to vote before any African Americans.

In actually reading those statements and the events, it seems more accurate to conclude something else: They remained, almost consistently throughout this period, advocates of voting rights for African Americans *and* women, noting that extension of the right to vote on the basis of race did nothing for African American women – a point that both Josephine Griffing and Sojourner Truth also made. Their argument was that they could not understand the argument for extending the right to vote to African American men (or other ethnic/racial minority men) before *any* women. They were opposed to the dominant legislative views – and views of many antislavery movement leaders – that the vote should be extended to men first. Their stated rationales, of course, were based in appalling racist views and rhetoric.

We also explored the rationale offered by Frederick Douglass for prioritizing black men, that “With us the matter is a question of life and death.” “When women, because they are women, are hunted down through the cities of New York and New Orleans when they are dragged from their houses and hung upon lamp-posts; when their children are torn from their arms and their brains dashed out upon the pavement; ... then they will have an urgency to obtain the ballot equal to our own.” As some women pointed out, the same was true of black women, to which Douglass responded that that was because of their race, not sex. The complication is that, as many scholars have pointed out, race violence is also gendered, and black women remained subject to sexualized race violence.

But also, in the 19th century, few people would recognize, and even fewer would speak of the prevalence of privatized violence against women, sanctioned for so long within the family by laws that tolerated domestic abuse and would not recognize rape within marriage. Woman’s rights advocate did fight for some legal changes to protect women, but some woman suffrage advocates may well have recognized what feminists would be likely to understand in our day: those without political rights and power are subject to violence by those with political rights and power.

In the end, we cannot know whether a strong coalition would have had any impact positive or negative on the expansion of rights at that time. But we do know the opportunity for woman suffrage, if it had existed, was gone by 1870. The 15th Amendment and the expansion of the vote for African American men did nothing for African American women. And once Reconstruction was finished, in the 1870s, and Jim Crow roared in full force, the 15th Amendment also did nothing for African American men in the former Confederacy.

We then turned to the topic scheduled for this week: Women’s political activism from the 1870s until ratification of the 19th Amendment. The point was to emphasize two major themes. First, the woman suffrage movement was not the only game in town with respect to women’s political activism. Second, it is important to explore how women, with their expanding education, roles, and political consciousness, could engage in politics and have an impact despite lacking the right to vote.

I assigned a list of 14 different books and articles considering different groups, activities, periods, etc – from which they were each supposed to pick a book or small handful of articles and be prepared to discuss them and teach others what they learned in class. I like this mode of teaching – taking an underlying theme or problem, and letting them pick their specific readings according to their interests.

We began with an in-depth discussion of Estelle Freedman’s classic “Separation as strategy,” to consider the benefits and drawbacks of women’s separate organizing, and at different period of history. I shared with them the context in which Freedman wrote this piece, in the 1970s, and what was going on then. The discussion

was excellent, and they were able to apply it to the other articles they read, and back to our work on the suffrage movement.

We then considered some different pieces on the women's club movement, including those that considered differences between women's clubs and work both in white and in black communities. We turned from that to some pieces on Ida B. Wells, focusing especially on her anti-lynching campaign and the work she did in transatlantic activism. As always, and still astounding to me every time, most of the students did not know about the anti-lynching campaign or Wells' leadership and activities.

We ran out of time (no surprise), so next week we will begin by completing our tour through work on women's activism, then move on to the state-by-state suffrage campaigns.

Week 6: State-Level Woman Suffrage Campaigns across the Country

First up on this week's agenda was finishing the discussion from last week. The theme was women's political activism throughout the period from roughly 1870 until the ratification of the 19th Amendment other than suffrage movement activism per se. Different students had read articles focusing on different times, different groups of women, different types of activity, with different aims. The particulars this week included Ida B. Wells and the anti-lynching campaign, including her work in England; women in the Southern Farmers' Alliance; the organization of women workers in the WTUL and its relationship to broader labor issues; a comparison of women's and men's club activities in Chicago at the turn into the 20th century; the women of Hull House; the work of Hull House women and the Children's Bureau; the food protests of women in New York's Lower East Side in 1917 and the relationship to socialist organizing; and the public work of Catholic sisters.

How could we discuss so many, such diverse groups and actions? That was the point. As the students picked out the highlights of the works they read (and those we discussed last week), we were able to see how deep, broad, and diverse was the activism of women in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, even when they couldn't vote. We considered the opportunities and constraints on different groups of women and the situations they faced. We had a good discussion of the connections between "women's roles" and popular conceptions of women and the work they did in public, most notably updating our earlier discussion of "Republican motherhood" with the concept of social housekeeping so important in the context of this period's urbanization and urban problems. And we asked, again and again, why they hadn't hear of most of this before, and what that meant.

Finally, on to the theme for this week: The state-by-state campaigns for suffrage in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The discussion was based largely on their reading of Corrine M. McConnaughy, *The Woman Suffrage Movement in America: A Reassessment* (2013).

We began by reviewing an important question: Why/how did the efforts for constitutional change end around 1870? We once again tracked the fracturing of the equal right coalition due to many forces: (1) The increasing gender conservatism among male African American organizational leaders in and after the 1850s and the increasing association of citizenship with masculinity among white and African American men, as discussed by Laura Free (*Suffrage Reconstructed: Gender, Race, and Voting Rights in the Civil War Era* (2016)). This made many equal rights advocates less inclined to support woman suffrage. (2) The disagreement over the likely impact of advocating for a more comprehensive agenda of universal suffrage, including women, in the pursuit of what became the 14th and 15th Amendments. (3) The activation of racism key segments of the woman suffrage movement (notably Stanton, Anthony) whereby they resisted the prioritization of African American men with some argument lodged in racist logic. (4) The growing strength of a party system and its relationship to the equal rights coalition whereby the terms of possibility were increasingly set by the parties. As a reaction to Republican leadership mostly turning its back on woman suffrage, some suffrage leaders

resolved to coalesce with any party that supported them – and when they worked with Democrats, that appalled antislavery leaders who (a) remained Republican loyalists and (b) hated the association with the pro-slavery party. By the time the dust had nearly settled on the 15th Amendment, an independent woman suffrage movement had arisen, but any opportunities for a 16th Amendment, or even coalition support for a 16th Amendment eliminating gender-based barriers to voting had evaporated.

So, what did the women's rights/woman suffrage movements look like from 1870 to the end of the 19th century? Famously, the former coalition had fractured into two national organizations, the National and American Woman Suffrage Associations, and we discussed the differences between those. But as we have seen in discussions of women's political activism in the late 19th/early 20th centuries, a broken coalition does not mean activism and organization disappears; rather, it unties or loosens the linkages. There was a multiplicity of organization aimed at expanding women's roles and opportunities in society and politics. And as women became increasingly involved in many different aspects of political and social activity, more and more found the lack of the franchise a barrier. And as Corrine McConnaughy underscores, as woman suffrage organizing grew across the country in many states and locales, they were not necessarily connected at all, or to any serious degree with any of the national organizations. Thus there continued to be a woman suffrage movement, but it was less coordinated and connected across the country organizationally, less centrally led.

We briefly looked at the growth of legislative proposals for woman suffrage of various types (municipal, school, presidential, full) and the spread of successful legislation. Clearly the efforts and successes picked up speed at the end of the 19th century and especially after the turn of the century, so we turned our consideration to how to explain the instances and rates of success and failure, relying heavily on McConnaughy's analysis and conclusions.

We outlined each of these major hypotheses, considered examples from woman suffrage history, but concluded that in the end, none of these actually explained why legislators – men with voting rights – extended or did not extend voting rights to women as a result of their deliberations and legislative processes:

- Ideology: attitudes toward women's rights; public cultures of support or rejection for gender equality.
- Organizational capacity of women's movements: How large were they? What were their resources?
- Strength of opposition movements
- Threats of violence or disorder

Each of these explanations plays a role, but they only get us to the door of the state legislature – not inside the deliberative process. (Although we notes, there was not much threat of violence or disorder, unless one considered women voting disorderly – which some people did, in terms of the proper order of hearth and home.)

But considering the incentives and disincentives of legislators – their specific motivations – does offer more help, especially if we distinguish between the two forms McConnaughy discussed:

- Strategic enfranchisement: would extending the vote to women specifically benefit a legislator's party in terms of electoral support? Would women be expected to vote disproportionately for the dominant party?
- Programmatic enfranchisement: Are key portions of the voting public, or third parties or other groups in coalition with the legislator's party, possibly being a support to it or part of the opposition have as part of their platform of policy demands the enfranchisement of women?

Strategic enfranchisement depends on an assumption that women would be a voting bloc. Few legislators probably believed that in the first place, largely because of the stereotype that women would follow their husbands. But as states began to enfranchise women it became that women were every bit as diverse in their political views and partisan allegiances as men.

Therefore we pursued the details of programmatic enfranchisement through the data and evidence we read about, comparing the different states, and relating this back to the actions of Congress back in the old (1860s) days.

Week 7: The Campaign for the 19th Amendment

And finally, in week 7 of the course, we focus on the campaign for the 19th Amendment. By now it should be clear that a crucial story of the 19th Amendment is how much of the 19th-century story of the struggle for gender equality in citizenship was only indirectly related to the amendment itself. And a substantial part of ending gender discrimination in the franchise was accomplished by states, individually. Of course, a substantial part of the story of the ratification of the 19th Amendment is *also* a story about state-by-state action, and that is partly what we discussed this week.

There are many ways we could have covered the final campaign for the Amendment. I chose to continue the theme of this campaign as an example of struggle for and resistance to the expansion of democracy, and to use the frameworks we explored in the first week of the course, looking especially at alternative storytelling, the significance of intersectionality, and understanding resistance. We also carried forward the theme from the previous week, on state-by-state campaigns, and the alternative explanations highlighted by Corrine McConnaughy's research.

For these reasons I did not ask the students to prepare by reading a common book. Instead, they had their choice of one of four possibilities:

- Dawn Teele's *Forging the Franchise: The Political Origins of the Women's Vote* (2018). This is a very original comparative study of the U.S., France, and the U.S. to understand how political strategies and tactics of women's movements provided incentives to politicians in competitive environments to win the vote. How does the story look when we use a comparative politics framework? What do we learn about the U.S. by not just looking only at the U.S.?
- Rosalyn Terborg-Penn's *African American Women and the Struggle for the Vote, 1850-1920* (1988). Although the entire course is based on an intersectional understanding of gender, this book offers students an opportunity to read the story through a lens that puts African American women at the center. Although many of our readings incorporate both African American and white women (as well as other social groups) into the analysis, it is important for the students to learn from an approach that is centered on African American women and the whole African American community.
- Susan Ware's *Why They Marched: Untold Stories of the Women Who Fought for the Right to Vote* (2019). This offers the story of the national woman suffrage movement through vignettes focusing on 19 very diverse individuals and groups involved in the struggle. These vignettes shift the center across social groups, locations, and personalities. The writing often looks over its shoulder to the present time, which has benefits and drawbacks. But above all it gives students and opportunity to think about the range of specific people who were engaged – what opportunities and constraints they faced, and what they chose to do. It is impossible to read this and conclude that the movement was a monolithic group of a particular type of woman.
- Elaine Weiss' *The Woman's Hour: The Great Fight to Win the Vote* (2018). This is a nail-biter story of the ratification fight in Tennessee, the state that put the 19th Amendment over the top. This is not just

the story of Tennessee, however, but about one of the many state-level campaigns in which those not allowed to vote sought to secure the vote from those who could. It also makes clear that this is a deeply *political* story, involving partisan struggles and the linkage to many interests and interest groups.

When I arrange for the students to do different readings, I clarify to them how this works pedagogically. We are studying a problem – the campaigns for and against the passage of the 19th Amendment. The story – and the class discussion – must encompass a wide range of forces and their interaction. By reading different works they bring to the classroom expertise in different aspects of the story and analysis, and the class discussion is devoted to bringing these together to create a higher-level understanding.

We began with an image-motivated discussion of resistance to woman suffrage. It is important for the students to understand how deeply misogynist the culture surrounding the woman suffrage movement was, and how profoundly inappropriate large segments of the population – perhaps a majority – found the idea of women voting. For this I turn to material culture, offering them a long series of slides depicting anti-suffrage caricatures found in postcards, political materials, sheet music, etc., and then some showing the images used by suffragists.

I drive home the point that the tropes found in the caricatures are instantly recognizable to them – the idea that politically engaged women have been rejected by men or should be are ugly, unloved, ignore their children and “henpeck” their husbands; and of course men themselves who support suffrage are not masculine. The pro-suffrage images offer classic depictions of liberty, justice, and women warriors.

We then turned to a third iteration of the timelines I have been using in class. Although we are not focusing primarily on chronology, chronology is important. We walked through a Late Suffrage Timeline to reach conclusions about different phases of the historical run up to the ratification. What were the paths the campaign took? What were the impacts of surrounding major events (like recessions, war, immigration) and changes in political and partisan leadership?

Finally, we discussed the students readings of their various books, giving them a chance to share the insights they gained on the 19th Amendment campaign from the particular stories they read, and trying to create a bigger story from their different readings.

Week 8: Women & Mass-Level Electoral Politics & Power Since the 19th Amendment

Well, the world has changed. Spring break is over and this is the first week we worked remotely using Zoom in the new C-19 world. Thanks to all my students who were great partners in this new venture. Proud to work with them.

Now that we have the 19th Amendment in place (in this course), we look at the significance in the post 1920 world, the remaining gendered gaps in empowerment, and the processes of the continuing struggles.

This week we attended to the classic question: Now (a large number of) women have the vote; what did they do with it. We began by clarifying once again this important point: The 19th Amendment did not “grant women the right to vote.” This is true in two important sense. First, a substantial portion of American women already had the right to vote because of the state actions we studied. Second, the 19th Amendment did not technically give the right to vote; it said that that right could not be “denied or abridged on account of sex.” The Amendment changed nothing for those whose vote was still being denied or abridged on account of race, literacy, grandfather clauses, lack of funds for poll taxes, age, or any other basis on which the

franchise was limited. (Note – most people accept it as natural that people under a particular age should not be able to vote – but that is “denying or abridging” the right to vote.) So we focus this week on the voting behavior of women who were allowed to vote.

The new book by Christina Wolbrecht and Kevin Corder, *A Century of Votes for Women* (2020) served as the preparation for this class. Many students were also fortunate to hear Professor Wolbrecht discuss this book when she visited at the beginning of the semester.

We began with a general, theoretical discussion about how we might understand what kinds of *impact* the 19th Amendment might have had. It became clear in our survey of possibilities that some potential impacts might be measured relatively easily, and others not so much. In some cases impact became much easier to measure later in history, for example after the development of survey research. This is important to think about to understand not just what impacts there might be, but how we know how much, if any, impact there was.

Obviously one potential impact of the 19th Amendment would be – and was – that women who were allowed to vote did vote. Of course one major question *A Century of Votes for Women* looked at was *how much* did women vote, especially compared with men, or men similarly placed. But there are other potential impacts to explore as well.

Did the inclusion of women in the right to the franchise change their levels of political interest, knowledge, and awareness? This semester we studied women’s political involvement before they had the right to vote – in movements such as antislavery, the women’s rights, woman suffrage, and temperance movements, but also in their churches, clubs, and other organizations, and even in political parties. So it wasn’t that no women would have had political awareness, knowledge, etc. and then suddenly they did. But it is certainly plausible that gaining the right to vote changed these cognitive aspects of citizenship to some degree for some women. Did the inclusion of women in the right to vote change women’s understanding of the nature of their citizenship? If many women came to see voting not just as a right but as their citizen obligation, we have clearly left behind the old-fashioned version of republican motherhood.

Did the inclusion of women in the right to vote change anything broader about cultural understandings of gender and politics? Surely we witnessed a decline in the view among both women and men that elections are simply not an appropriate focus for women. But many students also speculated that with women voting, cultural stereotypes would drive those who had an interest in engaging women in politics to begin to define a realm of “women’s issues” more clearly.

Did the inclusion of women in the right to vote change their involvement in campaign activities (not just voting) and their types of political engagement? We imagined plausible scenarios that would lead women’s engagement in voting also to have an impact in their engagement in other means of influencing public policy. And finally, there is the question the consequences of inclusion in the electoral franchise for partisanship and for vote choice. Were there distinct gendered ways in which women related to political parties or chose their candidates?

Before we turned to specifics, I also offered three further elements of a good framework for thinking about and analyzing the impact of the 19th Amendment on women and women’s use of the franchise:

- We have to pay attention to the difference between *speculation* about women’s political views and behavior versus their *actual* views and behavior. We noted how much it is still true today that pundits, journalists, and political folk still make gendered assumptions about women’s political behavior and attitudes, often without a shred of evidence. That speculation itself has an impact on the political world, however.
- It is important to consider a *developmental* approach to understanding the short- and long-term impact of the 19th Amendment on women’s consciousness, understanding, attitudes, and behavior. As one

person in the class noted quickly, when the 19th Amendment was ratified, there were women who had lived under the old system for very long lives and there were young women with very different experiences and attitudes – those of the “Roaring Twenties,” for example. And soon there were women who had never experienced lacking the right to vote. I explained a *developmental* approach as attending both to historical and life course processes, and the relationship between those two. The 19th Amendment was not just a flip of a switch that affected all women in the same way, even among those who actually did gain the right to vote.

- We also have to take account of a *contextual* approach to understanding the impact of the 19th Women, as well as men, are politically affected by things like economic conditions (booms, depressions, recessions), wars, major political events, technological and other disjunctures, and, need we say it, epidemics. Gender does not affect people regardless of these major factors – these interact with gender to create impacts.

The next phase of our discussion picked up on a clear conclusion of the Wolbrecht and Corder book, and indeed, all of political science research on gender and elections: There is not now and never has been anything like a homogeneous “women’s vote.” There is not now and never has been a women’s voting block. So, I asked: Does this mean that gender does not have an impact on women’s use of the vote?

The class discussed the wide variety of ways that gender can affect political views and behavior without actually creating block votes. I discussed the results of political psychology research that shows that neither gender nor gender identity have constant impacts on the way people think and act politically, but that these identities (like other kinds of social identity) have an impact when they are triggered by events or situations. This is why we don’t see a constant “gender gap,” but a variable one. I discussed the recent research that shows that even underlying sexist (or racist) attitudes may not have an impact on political preferences unless they are triggered by the specifics of electoral races. We explored the conditions under which gender identities – of women and men – might be triggered and come into play.

I next ran a combination breakout discussion/experiment with the students. I sent them into two different “breakout rooms” (thank you, software), and asked the two “rooms” to discuss different questions. One got this: A lot of research shows that women are more likely to vote Democratic than men. Why do you think this is the case? The other “room” got this: A lot of research shows that men are more likely to vote Republican than women. Why do you think this is the case?

When they got back from their groups and reported, what I expected happened: The group that had been asked why women were more Democratic than men basically reported through many stereotypes of and over-generalizations about women – their compassion, views of abortion and “women’s issues,” and assorted other “special” things about women that make them different from the baseline – namely men. The group that had been asked why men were more Republican than women basically reported through many stereotypes and over-generalizations about men – their lack of compassion, their protection of their privilege, their devotion to traditional order, etc. It was easy to show them how using one or another gender as the standard or norm against which the other is compared (and it is usually men who are the norm or standard, with women needing “explaining”) distorts analysis and led them to rely on stereotype and generalization. We discussed what it meant to ask the question another way: Research has shown that there are gender differences in partisanship. Why do you think this is the case? It takes two to create a difference.

The remainder of the class served as an application of these different points. First we looked at the period of the World War II using the Wolbrecht and Corder book. Then, to examine the post-World War II period, I used a set of graphs constructed largely out of American National Election Data as well as some exit polling to understand changes in gender differences in partisanship and in vote choice, and gender differences within partisanship. (See the slides for this class.)

We first looked at Democratic party identification in presidential election years, 1948-2016. Among the observations we made and discussed: (1) the slight tendency for men to lean more Democratic than women before the 1960s; (2) the bigger observed partisan change among men than women in terms of the decline in Democratic partisanship first, as part of the transition of substantial number of white Southerners from the Democratic to Republican party given the changing civil rights agenda of the Democratic party and second as part of the “Reagan revolution” that drew many working class white people from the Democratic to the Republican party as a result of the rhetoric about the impact of interference with the economy through welfare policy, and interference in the labor market through affirmative action. We discussed why men might have been more affected than women by these circumstances. We also discussed (3) the resulting development of the “gender gap,” but the fact that it varies from year to year, and (4) the divergent impact of the 2016 election period. We also looked at a graph Gender differences in partisan identification with the Republican party to see the story from the other side.

We considered the same question of gender differences in partisanship using cross-national comparative data across a wide range of countries, showing that while women identify more with the more liberal party in many countries, that is true to a varying degree; and men identify more with the more liberal party in some countries, and to varying degrees. We discussed why that might be the case.

Just to be clear, not all gender differences in electoral choice are related specifically to party. I shared data from exit polls during the 2016 primaries that show that in every state, regardless of whether Clinton ultimately won or Sanders won, there were gender differences in candidate support, with women more supportive of Clinton and men more supportive of Sanders. Given everything else we know, it made little sense to suggest that this was because men were generally more liberal in their views. Of course many people leapt to the conclusion that this was because women in particular supported the female candidate. But do we have much evidence that the gender of the candidate generally shapes women’s political choices? And (again, a question of stereotyping versus analysis), if we do not assume that men’s choices are the standard or norm, and it is women’s votes that need explaining, might we equally hypothesize that men were especially supportive of Sanders because he was a man? How would we know which of these hypotheses was true? Finally, we looked at gender differences in the vote, leading up to the often-asked question of why white women’s votes broke in favor of the Republican candidate for president in 2016.

I started by showing a graph of the relationship between partisanship and vote for the Democratic candidate from 1952 to 2016. Except in landslide elections (1964, 1972), as a rule the vast majority of Democrats vote for Democrats and the vast majority of Republicans vote for Republicans, regardless of what else is going on. The first thing we need to know to understand how people are voting is their party identification. We have already seen gender differences in party identification, so we should have a good idea of what the gender differences in the vote will look like. And, of course, when we look at gender differences in the vote we do see the development of the “gender gap” from the 1980s on. Using a series of tables from the 2016 exit polls, we can see some of the explanation of gender differences in the vote, but we can also see why it is not surprising that while substantial majorities of African American women (and men) voted Democratic, white women split fairly evenly, with a slight edge going to Donald Trump. The different patterns of partisanship across the different racial groups was crucial, although we also see a large impact of education. At the same time, a gender difference in support for the Democratic and Republican candidates shows up in each racial group, especially among white and black voters. There also was a large gender difference within education levels among white people. We discussed the fact that neither white women (or men) nor black women (or men) showed much tendency to vote independently of their partisan identity, which is a more stable, persistent orientation toward politics.

Finally, we turned to congressional elections so we could take account of the post-Trump congressional election. Looking at gender differences in congressional vote from 2008 to 2018 we see substantially parallel lines with a pretty substantial gender difference in vote depicted in fairly parallel lines, with two notable exceptions. Men turned away from Democratic candidates in 2014 to a greater degree than women did. And

women turned toward Democratic candidates much more than men did in 2018. A look at some of the exit polling data suggests there may be some new movement taking place now, with white women, and especially white college-educated women moving more toward the Democratic party in the Trump era. The 2020 elections will tell us more.

Week 9: Women in Government Since the 19th Amendment: Elected & Appointed Offices

This week continues our discussion of the impact of the 19th Amendment and women's enfranchisement, this time turning from women, partisanship, and voting, to women in elected and appointed office in the century since the Amendment was ratified. What progress has been made? This was also our second week as an online class.

We opened by looking at another one of my timelines – this one, drawn largely from Center for American Women in Politics (thanks!) information, lists the “firsts” of women in office. The Timeline is attached at the end of this post. The students took some time to remark on things they noticed, and asked questions, many of which led to further discussion, or to my offering more contextual or follow-up information. As the discussion died down I followed up by asking whether they were impressed. I mean, look at all those “firsts.” Isn't that great? When they seemed a little reluctant about reaching conclusions, I gave them mine: I am not at all impressed. Far from it. What the time line shows is how much continuing friction there is in our “democratic” system that continued – and continues – to strain women out of the sauce. And, we noted, a “first” does not mean women's participation in that particular way has become normal. No, not impressed.

Our next step was to look at some data on change and comparison, starting with changes in the presence of women in Congress, by party. The data, familiar to women and politics scholars, show very little progress and virtually no partisan difference until the 1980s. Sixty years after the 19th Amendment no more than 10% of the members of Congress were women. Clear change occurred during the elections of the first “Year of the Woman,” 1992, when the number of women elected to Congress increased, but dramatically more so among the Democratic party. To give a little perspective on the partisan aspect of women's entry into elective office I discussed the earlier part of the 20th century, when Republican women tended to have more success than Democratic women in gaining state legislative seats, attributable in part to the processes of political recruitment in those days and the different structures of the parties.

The presence of Democratic women in Congress has continued to grow substantially, while Republican women have made far less progress. After they made some stabs at trying to explain this, I discussed some of the primary reasons we might look to: Recent research shows that Republican women have more trouble getting support within their party than Democratic women do. There has been a tremendous rise in the existence of organizations dedicated to encouraging women to compete for office, and training them to help them do so – and most, if not all of the large-scale efforts are aimed at Democratic women. We also discussed the Trump effect, both on the gender culture of the Republican party and on the mobilization of Democratic women to enter the fray. But, despite this progress, we noted that women are still not much even a quarter of the members of Congress.

For a little comparative perspective, I gave them a list of the different countries of the world in order of what percentage of their lower houses of the national legislature are women. The data come from the Inter-Parliamentary Union. In those data, only Rwanda and Bolivia have a majority of women (61% and 53%, respectively); in all the rest women are a minority. Only 9 countries are listed as having between 40-49% women. We scanned through slide after slide showing the “next” 15 in rank order, and finally found the United States, following the 2018 election listed at 79th. But, I pointed out, that's significant improvement over the situation after the 2016, when the U.S. was tied at 100th. We discussed various possible explanations

for the percentage of women in different national legislatures, and asked how that might be – or not be – understood as a measure of democracy.

We then surveyed the presence of women in different types and levels of elective office in the United States, from the local level through the national, including both legislative and executive offices. We compared the different states in terms of the presence of women as state legislators, governors, and members of Congress and again, speculated about why we saw those differences and whether there were any patterns. Although I don't have good answers, much of the object of this discussion was to help them think in social scientific ways: What are our hypotheses? What evidence do we have? What evidence would we need to be able to become more confident in our conclusions? Part of my goal is always not just to teach "the subject" but to teach thinking in a social scientific way.

Next up was a set of graphs and tables showing data on the federal workforce. When student think about "people in government" they usually think about elective office – and maybe some appointed political offices, but it is also important to understand the federal workforce. There are good data by gender and race, job category, agency, and comparison with the civilian workforce. We explored those data to examine the significance for understanding gender, government, and governance.

We ended with two Big Questions.

The first: Why are we stuck in terms of the number of women in elective office? Why, with 51% of the population, are women such a small percentage of those in office? Where is the friction? Here, they discussed and speculated; I brought in findings from research on gender and recruitment to office.

The second: Why does the number of women in office matter? This, of course, leads to a subject long near and dear to my heart (Sapiro, 1981): gender and representation, including especially the question of descriptive representation.

The "Firsts" Timeline: [TIMELINEHOWLONG](#)

Week 10: The Continuing Struggle for Full Citizenship for Women: 1919- present

This week we pursued one major question: The 19th Amendment did not complete the struggle for full citizenship for women, even for those who attained the vote because of it. So what were the continuing gaps in the rights and qualities of citizenship for women compared with men after 1919?

We pursued this by discussing five different works the students had the option of reading, each of which raised different questions about the fulness and qualities of women's citizenship, and the continuing efforts to attain citizenship for women that was equivalent to men's. These were, in order of discussion:

- Virginia Sapiro. 1984. "Women, citizenship, and nationality: Immigration and naturalization policies in the United States." *Politics & Society* 13:1-26.

When we studied the history of the suffrage movement, we covered the fact that at the time of the rise of that movement, certain aspects of the culture and law surrounding gender in the United States was actually become more restrictive in important ways than it had been. One example was that although the married women's property acts began to recognize "free" married women as independent persons, capable of owning property, Congress specifically made women's citizenship and nationality contingent on her husband's, ultimately stating that an American woman who marries a foreigner would lose her American citizen and be considered by the U.S. to have taken on the nationality of her husband, regardless of what that other country

thought. This article explores the process by which women's nationality and citizenship became independent of her husband, first by removing the legal notion that an American woman who marries a foreign man loses her American citizenship, and second, by making her ability to pass her nationality on to her children not contingent on the nationality of her husband. In the course of this discussion we considered why the legal contingency of nationality and citizenship was relevant to all women, regardless of the nationality of their spouse – or even regardless of their marital status. The answer is that while the *effect* of an American woman marrying an American was to leave her citizenship intact (and that of her children), the fact remained that that citizenship was contingent not on the facts of her own birth (in terms of *jus soli* or *jus sanguinis*), but on the condition of her marriage.

- Rebecca De Wolf. 2017. "The Equal Rights Amendment and the rise of emancipationism, 1936-1946." *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 38 (2): 47-80.

For the National Women's Party, the obvious next step after the 19th Amendment was to enshrine gender equality in the U.S. Constitution. One or another version was introduced into Congress regularly from 1923 until it went out to the states for ratification, only to die in 1982. The students assumed opposition to an ERA was a simple matter of opposition to gender equality. But the story of feminist opposition to the ERA is a critical one for probing the complications of the meaning of equality and inequality, and its apparent connection to sameness and difference. It is not easy for students to understand why, for example, protective labor legislation was defended by women who otherwise seemed to be feminists. This reading opened up an opportunity for exploring the realities of women's economic and labor vulnerabilities, especially among the large segment of women who were in the labor force who represented additional dimensions of vulnerability – being working class, recent immigrants or migrants, or women of color. Although protective labor legislation did not cover all classifications of women equally – and tended to protect women out of stereotypical men's jobs, and into stereotypical women's jobs – the opportunity to talk about these issues about women's experiences and conceptual equality is valuable. We discussed "equal treatment" in common law property states. Where ownership of property followed title, and the majority of women did not have employment or income, and did not have their name on titles to property, equal treatment could be disastrous for women. We concluded with a discussion of the shift in the parties to the debate about the ERA in more recent decades, and the basis for opposition to it.

- Margot Canaday. 2009. *The Straight State: Sexuality & Citizenship in Twentieth Century America*. Princeton University Press, Ch. 6, "Who is a homosexual: The consolidation of Sexual identities in mid-twentieth-century immigration law, 1952-1983."

Turning once again to immigration and nationality law to understand the gendered nature of citizenship, we explored the struggles in immigration law to define homosexuals, homosexuality, and/or "homosexual acts" as conditions to exclude people from the United States. For many students in the current era, it is very challenging to grasp how profoundly homophobic American law and culture have been. This article provoked a very good discussion on the differences among defining homosexuality as character, as acts, as tendencies ... and what the implications are for defining good citizenship variously as character, as acts, as tendencies. I eventually led them into a discussion of the relevance of this for *gender* and citizenship. Especially because these immigration laws affect men much more often than women, and was manifestly about sexuality rather than gender, why include this here? The answer has to do with the degree that conceptions of gender and of sexuality are so inextricably intertwined. The students picked up on the examples of men excluded at the border for wearing an earring, or a woman excluded for wearing short hair and trousers. Although in this course we are not delving into issues of performativity, gender, and sexuality as we do, for example, in my Gender and Politics class, this reading introduced a more modern, contemporary approach to understanding gender than we used earlier in the course. And that issue – of who is defined as a woman or a man (or not) represents another continuing struggle of full citizenship.

- Chana Kai Lee. 2001. "Anger, memory, and personal power: Fannie Lou Hamer and civil rights leadership." In *Sisters in the Struggle: African American Women in the Civil Rights-Black Power Movement*. New York University Press, Ch. 9.

My students knew about the Civil Rights Movement generally, but some weren't sure exactly when it happened, they were not aware of some of the significant turning points, like Freedom Summer, they didn't know about Fannie Lou Hamer, and they had no idea about gender relations within the Civil Rights Movement or gendered aspects of the Movement. The students who chose this as one of their readings seemed riveted by it, and clearly gained layers of understanding from it.

This chapter raised many important points about women's full citizenship. In what ways were the roles and actions of people in the Civil Rights Movement gendered? To what degree were women fully respected as participants and as leaders? The students were especially fascinated by Hamer's worries about the impact of young white women who arrived during Freedom Summer and didn't understand the implications of their socializing publicly with African American men. Hamer worried that white Southerners would seek retribution against black men for what would be regarded as dishonoring white women. We linked this perception to our earlier discussion of Ida B. Wells and the anti-lynching campaign. We also linked her worries about white women interacting with black men, causing a backlash against the voter registration drive, to white suffragists' concern about bringing race integrated suffrage groups to the South. This was a very productive discussion of the interrelationships of gender, race, and politics.

- Ashley D. Farmer. 2017. *The Remaking of Black Power: How Black Women Transformed an Era*. University of North Carolina Press, "Epilogue."

This chapter moved our discussion to a radical wing of race emancipation movements – Black Power and the Black Panthers. Here again we discussed gender relations within a race-focused movement. The gender issues are especially interesting because of the emphasis among Panthers on family and community. How did women pursue their gendered issues in the context of a race-focused movement that needed a united front? We returned to the issues of social movements and coalition politics, especially the problems of conflict of priorities within those movements for emancipation. Who is supposed to "wait their turn?" How can the coalition politics of emancipatory movements deal with multiple oppressions simultaneously and effectively?

Week 11: The Rise of the Renewed Women's Movement and Its Coalition Politics

Our students know very little about the reinvigoration of the women's movement that began in the 1960s and 1970s – they know almost as little as they do about the suffrage movement, and their stereotypes and misconceptions of it are equally dominant. For older faculty it is crucial to remember that our juniors and seniors were born around 2000 and may have come to political consciousness after the election of Barack Obama. Their *parents* may have been born around the time the women's liberation movement was rising, but they won't remember it. The notion of a "third wave" is often attributed to Rebecca Walker's work in the very early 1990s – our students weren't yet born then either, although some of their mothers may have felt themselves part of that. But in any case, to teach our students about the 1960s/70s re-rise of the women's movement is to teach them ancient history.

I began this class by retracing our work from early in the semester on social movement theory, emphasizing yet again the importance of social movements as coalitions and networks, and the significance of that framework for understanding the rise of social movements, their historical patterns, and the threats to their survival and success. Just as NWSA was not "the suffrage movement," no single organization – not NOW or any other – was "the women's movement." And just as the suffrage movement encompassed many different organizations and networks that revolved around different issues and priorities, different styles and tactics, and different social groups, so, even more, did and does the contemporary women's movement.

The student preparation for this week was reading *Feminism Unfinished: A Short, Surprising History of American Women's Movement* (2014), by Dorothy Sue Cobble, Linda Gordon, and Astrid Henry. I like assigning this book because it focuses on three different 20th century time periods in feminist movement history: before the rise of the “Women’s Liberation Movement,” the 1960s/1970s phase, and the “third wave.” When I have used this before students are often surprised at how much activism there was between 1920 and the Women’s Liberation Movement. They are fascinated by the “younger” phase, although that one, as I emphasized above, is now old to them.

I begin with problematizing the idea of “waves.” I have never liked or used this terminology in reference to the history of feminist movements, because I believe it oversimplifies and is very misleading. The first “wave” lasted an extraordinarily long time, involved generations of women, and was much more diverse as a period in feminist history than the wave idea allows for. The second “wave,” as it is generally told, skips over 40 years of rich history. But that “wave,” also is more complicated as a period of feminism than its use often credits. As my students have learned it, there is a sort of homogenizing effect, where there is little difference between the *Feminine Mystique* and the women that inspired and the Redstockings, and feminist organizations of African American women or lesbians are virtually inconceivable given the stereotypes they have received. And the “third wave,” apparently suddenly invented more fluid sexuality and intersectionality.

Before we had a full discussion, I screened *She's Beautiful When She's Angry* (2014, <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt3319508/>), an excellent documentary available through amazon.com . It runs about 1.5 hours, which is perfect for my 3 hour, 45 minute class. The documentary offers an amazingly comprehensive look into the rise of the 1960s/70s women’s movement, and for all the prominent figures who were still alive at the time of filming, those women narrated and talked about the segments in which they were featured. When I have shown it to classes before, they find it a revelation, especially with respect to what a broad coalition the movement was.

After it finished I used the breakout rooms feature of zoom to give them a bit of time to discuss among themselves in small rooms what they found most interesting or surprising as they thought about their reading and the documentary, or they could talk about what was similar and what was different between the coalition politics of women’s movements in the 19th century and the end of the 20th century. We only began the discussion – and will continue it next week, but the race politics segments fascinated them, as did the story of Jane. They were also struck by the theme of the education within the movement – explicitly, for example, by the Boston Women’s Health Book Collective, but also in the myriad other ways feminists studied, learned and educated themselves, including through consciousness-raising groups, founding periodicals, and through their other action plans.

More next week.

Week 12: The Continuing Struggle for Equality and Empowerment in Private” and “Public” Life

As we approach the end of the Centennial Course it is time to think about today. What are the issues that continue to reveal the gaps in equality and empowerment? For this week I simply selected a basket of readings that pointed to some interesting directions. Any number of issues might have been appropriate for that basket, but I picked some that I know from other courses stimulate good discussions, and some that cover problems that are undeniably central to contemporary questions of gender, equality, and empowerment. The readings and some points from the discussion follow:

- Gertrude Schaffner Goldberg. 2009. “Feminization of poverty in the United States: Any surprises?” In Goldberg, ed., *Poor Women in Rich Countries: The Feminization of Poverty over the Life Course*. NY: Oxford University Press, Ch. 9.

What are the aspects of domestic gender roles and private and public divisions of labor that leave women in “rich countries” more vulnerable to poverty than men? In what ways are women, even from relatively privileged backgrounds in terms of race and class more vulnerable to poverty? What are the gendered dimensions of homelessness? How do vulnerabilities to poverty change over the adult life course? How well do public policies address the issues of poverty, and take account of their gendered dimensions?

- Nancy Hirschmann. 2012. “Disability as a new frontier for feminist intersectionality research.” *Politics & Gender* 8:396-405.

This is simply a very new idea for most of our students although, obviously, not all. We began with a discussion of what constitutes a disability. I asked how many of us can’t see without glasses or lenses. The answer is most of the class. Are we disabled? They agreed we are not. I asked how many are not allowed to drive without their glasses or lenses. Most. I asked again – are we disabled? We discussed the variations in our capabilities and why some, and not others, are regarded as disabilities. We discussed the long-time convention of understanding male capabilities as the norm, and women’s departures from that norm as disabilities, and norms about what constitutes a “real” woman in relation to ideas of disability.

- Loretta J. Ross and Rickie Solinger. 2017. *Reproductive Justice: An Introduction*. Berkeley: University of California Press Ch. 2: “Reproductive justice in the twenty-first century.”

The idea of reproductive justice, as compared with reproductive rights, was new to most of the students, and they found it a very useful way of thinking about these issues, and especially bringing an intersectional analysis to questions of gender and reproduction. By considering rights to have a child at the time of one’s choosing, not to have a child, and to care for one’s child, and to place these aspects of life choices into a context of justice and equality cast a very different light on questions of reproduction, both in contemporary and historical settings. We discussed the questions of “capability” and “fitness” raised by the story of Carrie Buck and the Supreme Court case, *Buck v. Bell* (1925), as well as poverty policies (and their racial dimensions) that imposed sterilization on women. We discussed whether parental leave and child care policies could be understood under the rubric of reproductive justice.

- Virginia Sapiro. 2018. “Sexual harassment: Performances of gender, sexuality, and power.” *Perspectives on Politics* 16:1053-66.

I chose my own recent piece on sexual harassment because of the themes of sexual harassment as power performances embedded in other structures and performances of power. The students found this analysis useful. I was especially gratified because (led by a theater student), they were intrigued with the discussion of actors performing scenes from David Mamet’s *Oleanna*, for which I had the scenes related to harassment played by a male as professor and female as student, then by a female as professor and male as student, then by a male as professor and male as student. Not only did the scenes look very different performed that way, but the actors found it extremely difficult to perform the scene exactly the same way when the characters were embodied by different genders. (I enjoyed this discussion especially because one of the reviewers of the original manuscript wanted me to exclude that section of the paper because the discussion seemed irrelevant and because I wasn’t able to have the scenes played a 4th time, with two women.)

- Jami K. Taylor and Daniel C. Lewis. 2014. “The advocacy coalition framework and transgender inclusion in LGBT right activism.” In Jami K. Taylor and Donald P. Haider-Markel, eds. *Transgender Rights and Politics: Groups, Issue Framing, and Policy Adoption*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, pp.108-32.

Although we have seen the theme of what constitutes a “real” woman or “real” man throughout the period we have investigated, these questions, of course, take on new and more pressing importance in this era of increasing recognition of transgender people and transgender rights. We explored some of the dimensions of transgender identity and politics for our study of women, equality, and empowerment. We considered the history of feminist interpretations of gender and women, including the Michigan Womyn’s Music Festival’s

policy of admitting only “womyn-born womyn,” and some of the current controversies about women’s sports. The students found intriguing parallels and echoes among (1) white-dominated woman suffrage organizations that adopted the tactic of excluding women other than white women from meetings held in the South because of not wanting to face racist backlash; (2) the fear of some leaders of the National Organization for Women in the early days about the “Lavender Menace,” a view that incorporating lesbian issues into the feminist organizations prime issues because of fears that it would be a diversion, creating backlash from the very homophobic society; and (3) questions about whether trans issues should be incorporated into the LGBTQ movement and politics both because it is a different issue and because it is a diversion from the primary emphasis of the movement.

- Laurel Weldon. 2015. *When Protest Makes Policy: Social Movements Represent Disadvantaged Groups*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, Ch. 4, “Inclusion, identity, and women’s movements: State policies on violence against women of color,” pp. 109-28.

This chapter considers a question that has been an underlying theme throughout the course: What are the implications of intersectionality for women’s political organization, and especially for the potential impact of women’s political organization where there are independent organizations of women of different conditions or identities, for example, based on race? Weldon’s analysis of social movement organization and policies on violence against women shows that “when organizing strategies recognize social divisions, social movements are strengthened” (p.127). This leads us to think back through the history of women’s organizing on behalf of women, but incorporating the divisions and differences among women. A good place to end this week’s discussion.

Week 13: Challenges, Questions, Changes for the Centennial of the renewed Women’s Movement (1968-2068 or 2120)

To end the course we did some of the obvious things – look back at what we did, think about what we learned, think about the implications of the past for the present and future.

But most of the discussion revolved around the final reading for the course, selections from Rebecca Traister, *Good and Mad: The Revolutionary Power of Women’s Anger* (Simon & Schuster, 2018). It was clear from the blog posts this week that many of the students resonated strongly to this reading. They found it a good avenue to use to understand their feelings of anger – one said it was “healing.” A couple of the students considered it in light of having to live at home during the Covid-19 pandemic, and dealing with parents whose views were very different from their own. One thought her father was egging her on with his own right-wing views, then would goad her when she got upset by asking why she got so emotional about it. We first discussed anger in both an abstract way, and in the context of the book. What *is* anger? What is emotion? What does it mean to “control” one’s feelings? To be criticized for showing anger? We discussed neuroscientific and cognitive research on anger and other feelings, which shows that emotions are visceral, bodily responses involving breath, pulse, blood flow, etc often relating to “fight or flight” reactions. The emotions have to be understood, named, interpreted to make sense, and that is done particular through cultural and social phenomena.

We turned to the difference between *feeling* emotion and *communicating* it – which led us to a discussion of how much the communication of emotion is socially and culturally shaped, and is contingent on where people sit in orders of prestige and hierarchy. People lower in hierarchy rankings are thought to be too emotional, display their emotions too much, while those higher in the hierarchy are freer to engage in emotion displays. We talked about the task of learning to control one’s emotions from young childhood through adulthood, and explored how that task is different for different people. The class agreed that women’s anger is widely perceived as both more demanding and out of place than men’s. I raised the example of black and brown parents who give their children – especially their sons “the talk,” teaching them to withhold expressions of their emotions in the face of threats or abuse by white authorities – this training in suppressing emotion

communication in certain circumstances is a survival strategy. (I recommended the PBS special on this topic, available at <https://www.pbs.org/wnet/the-talk/>).

We then delved into women in politics, and women's political history with respect to the importance of anger. We reconsidered a number of stories of the mobilization of women, especially to engage in acts that were well outside normally acceptable behavior for women, and the role of anger. Research in political psychology shows that different emotions tend to have different implications for political response, with anger more likely to lead to political engagement compared, for example, with fear – another negative emotion. I asked them to consider, for example, how Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott probably felt when, as activists in the abolition movement, they found themselves excluded from meaningful participation in the World AntiSlavery Convention. How would *they* feel if it happened to them? Would anyone get involved in potentially dangerous emancipation work without a rising of emotion, especially anger at perceived injustice?

We concluded with a discussion of the communication and channeling of anger. How do people make something constructive out of those feelings? What kinds of choice behavior are involved? How do these experiences and actions change over the adult life course? Why do young people and older people tend to deal with expression of emotion differently?

So this is where we left things. After a semester of exploring emancipatory movements, and considering what is left to be done, how shall we each proceed? What choices will we make? When we see injustice, how will we respond? And what have we learned from those who went before?

Postscript

This was an amazing course to teach on many grounds. Beside everything else, halfway through the COVID-19 pandemic hit, and the students and I were spread out all across the country. It was instructive to give myself the task of blogging each week after class – I'm sure I learned more from the course that way. It was a great and valiant group of students. I thank them for this journey, and hope they are glad they took it with me.