

# Diversity and the Classroom

## *Syllabi*

### KEY FINDINGS:

- Women and professors from a diverse department are more likely to require readings by female scholars.<sup>b</sup>
- Syllabi are often saturated by U.S.-centric readings and material authored by men. Instructors who are female, people of color, and from more diverse countries are more likely to include female-authored work. <sup>b</sup>
- Women are less likely to assign their own research.<sup>b</sup>

Colgan, J. (2017). Gender Bias in International Relations Graduate Education? New Evidence from Syllabi. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 50(2), 456-460. DOI:10.1017/S1049096516002997. <sup>b</sup>

Gender diversity is good for the study of international relations (IR) and political science. Graduate training is an opportunity for scholars to affect the demographics of their field and the gendered practices within it. This article presents a first-cut investigation of the degree to which gender bias exists in graduate IR syllabi. The author found that the gender of the instructor for graduate courses matters significantly for what type of research is taught, in two ways. First, on average, female instructors assign significantly more research by female authors than male instructors. Second, women appear to be considerably more reluctant than men about assigning their own research as required readings. Some but not all of the difference between male- and female-taught courses might be explained by differences in course composition.



Diament, S., Howat, A., & Lacombe, M. (2018). Gender Representation in the American Politics Canon: An Analysis of Core Graduate Syllabi. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 51(3), 635-640.  
DOI:10.1017/S1049096518000392. [↗](#)

Core graduate-level seminars, in many ways, establish the “canon” literature for scholars entering a discipline. In the study of American Politics, the contents of this canon vary widely across departments and instructors, with important implications for the perspectives to which graduate students are exposed. At a basic level, the demographic characteristics of the authors whose work is assigned can have a major impact on the diversity (or lack of diversity) of viewpoints presented in these introductory courses. Using a unique dataset derived from a survey of core American Politics graduate seminars at highly-ranked universities, this project assesses the gender diversity of the authors whose research is currently taught—overall and within a comprehensive list of topics and subtopics. We also assess the “substantive representation” of women (and other underrepresented groups) within the American Politics canon by examining the frequency with which gender, racial, and other forms of identity politics are taught in these introductory courses.

Sumner, J. (2018). The Gender Balance Assessment Tool (GBAT): A Web-Based Tool for Estimating Gender Balance in Syllabi and Bibliographies. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 51(2), 396-400.  
DOI:10.1017/S1049096517002074. [↗](#)

This article introduces a web-based tool that scholars can use to assess the gender balance of their syllabi and bibliographies. The citation gap in political science is described briefly as well as why under-citing women relative to men is a problem that should be addressed by the field. The Gender Balance Assessment Tool (GBAT) is presented as a way to make assessing gender balance easier with the aim of remedying the gender gap. This is followed by an outline that explains in nontechnical terms how the tool identifies author names and then predicts their gender to produce a single document-level percentage of women authors. Finally, best practices for diversity in syllabi and bibliographies are discussed, and various public sources that can be used to find scholarly work by women, as well as scholars of color, are listed.

Hardt, Heidi, Amy Erica Smith, Hannah June Kim and Philippe Meister. (Forthcoming). ‘The Gender Gap in Assigned Readings in Graduate Training’. *The Journal of Politics*. [↗](#)

What influences gender representation in assigned readings during graduate training? Whereas recent studies have identified gender gaps in citations and publications, less is known about the readings used to train future political scientists. Introducing a unique dataset of 88,673 citations from 905 Ph.D. syllabi and reading lists, we find that only 19% of assigned readings have female first authors. Scholarship by female scholars is underrepresented in all subfields, relative to several benchmarks. Both supply and demand side factors affect gender representation. First, representation of female-authored readings



varies by the size of the pool of female scholars, over time and across subfields. Second, instructor gender and department composition affect demand for female-authored scholarship. As departments hire more female faculty, instructors of both genders become more likely to assign female-authored work. This article contributes an original dataset to the study of graduate training and advances understanding of gender diversity in political science.

Amy Erica Smith, Hardt, Heidi, Philippe Meister and Hannah June Kim. (Forthcoming). 'Gender, Race, Age and National Origin Predict Whether Faculty Assign Female-Authored Readings in Graduate Syllabi'. PS: Political Science & Politics. [\[2\]](#)

Numerous studies document female scholars' underrepresentation in political science publications and citations, yet few examine graduate syllabi. In this study, we assess the impact of instructors' individual characteristics (e.g. race, gender, age) on what readings they assign. We employ what is to our knowledge the largest dataset of graduate readings to date: the GRaduate Assignments DataSet (GRADS), with 75,601 readings from 840 syllabi in 94 US Ph.D. programs. We report several findings. First, overall, instructors infrequently assign female-authored scholarship, relative to the rates at which women publish. Second, instructors who are women, people of color, and those from more gender-equal countries assign significantly more female-authored readings than do white male instructors and those from less gender-equal countries. Among women – but not men – older instructors assign more female-authored work. We suggest that women's underrepresentation on syllabi may contribute to the leaky pipeline, which describes women's attrition from academic careers.

Cleeland Knight, S. (2019). Even Today, a Western and Gendered Social Science: Persistent Geographic and Gender Biases in Undergraduate IR Teaching. *International Studies Perspectives*, vol no., DOI: 10.1093/isp/ekz006.<sup>h</sup>

A perennial critique of international relations is that the field focuses disproportionately on the United States and Europe and contains a gender bias in terms of ignoring issues of particular concern to women. The field is also infamous for how difficult it is for female scholars to publish and have their publications cited. This study evaluates these claims of bias in the area of undergraduate international relations teaching by analyzing an original dataset of 48 introduction to international relations syllabi from ten countries. The study analyzes the authors of required readings and the theories and empirical topics taught, and finds that the geographic and gender biases are both firmly in place. The first finding is that courses assign readings predominantly from US-resident, US-trained, male authors, even those courses taught outside the United States and those taught by female faculty. A second finding is that assigned readings focus overwhelmingly on the United States more than any other country or region, and only 1 percent of readings focus specifically on gender-related issues.



# Engagement

## KEY FINDINGS:

- In the classroom, females, racial minorities, and students with lower English proficiency participate at lower rates than males, racial majorities, and students with high English proficiency.<sup>a</sup>

Yaylaci, Ş, & Beauvais, E. (2017). The Role of Social Group Membership on Classroom Participation. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 50(2), 559-564. DOI:10.1017/S104909651600319X. <sup>a</sup>

Active and cooperative learning is integral to many social science classes, as it increases student motivation, improves communication skills, and stimulates creative thinking. Many political science departments break large lectures down into smaller, weekly tutorial groups to foster active learning. But do all students participate equally in active, participatory learning? We use an original dataset measuring self-reported participation and a number of important predictors (student gender, race, and language proficiency) collected from 700 undergraduate students in 91 political science tutorials. We find that participation does vary across social groups, even when controlling for psychological and some contextual factors. Female students participate significantly less than males, racial minorities report speaking less frequently than white students, and students with lower English-proficiency (the language of instruction) also participate less. In light of these findings, we offer suggestions for instructors on how to motivate all students to find their voice in the classroom.

