

Women in Politics: Power, Gender & Democracy in Scandinavia

SOC 4810 & POL _____

Spring 2027: January 5 – May 2, 2026

Study Abroad

Contact Information

Professor: Dr. Amanda Fehlbaum and Dr. Cryshanna Jackson Leftwich

Professional Qualifications:

Dr. Fehlbaum

Ph.D., Sociology, University of Oklahoma

Graduate Certificate, Women's and Gender Studies, University of Oklahoma

Master's, Interdisciplinary Studies, The University of Texas at Dallas

Bachelor's, Gender Studies, The University of Texas at Dallas

Dr. Jackson Leftwich

Ph.D., University of Akron

Master's, West Virginia University

Bachelor's, Miami University

Office: Fehlbaum – DEBH 507; Jackson Leftwich – DEBH 428

Phone: Fehlbaum - 330-941-2716; Jackson Leftwich – 330-941-2855

Email: afehlbaum@ysu.edu; cajackson@ysu.edu

Preferred Contact Method: Email

Student Support Hours: Tuesday and Thursday from 2 to 3 PM and by appointment

Communication Expectations: Response within 24 hours

How to refer to me: Dr. Fehlbaum or Dr. Jackson

Course Description

This study abroad course examines women's political participation in Denmark, a global gender-equity leader, through political science, sociology, and women's studies. Students visit the Danish Parliament and UN Women's Nordics Office, building analytical and cross-cultural competencies.

Prereq: SOC 1500 or POL 1560; Sophomore ranking; GPA of 2.75

Course Readings

The course readings are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances, research developments, current events, and/or to ensure better learning.

- World Economic Forum. (2025). *Global Gender Gap Report 2025*.
<https://www.weforum.org/publications/gender-gap-report-2025/>.
- Borchorst, A., & Siim, B. (2008). Woman-friendly policies and state feminism: Theorizing Scandinavian gender equality. *Feminist theory*, 9(2), 207-224.

- Dahlerup, D. (2011). Women in Nordic politics—a continuing success story? In K. Niskanen (Ed.), *Gender and power in the Nordic countries—With a focus on politics and business* (pp. 59–86). NIKK Publications.
- May, Vivian M. 2023. “Intersectionality” Pp. 68-74 in *Gendered Voices, Feminist Visions*, edited by S.M. Shaw and J. Lee. New York: Oxford University Press.
- hooks, bell. (2014). The Significance of Feminist Movement. In *Feminist Theory* (3rd ed.). London: Routledge.
- Dahlerup, D., Griffin, G., & Braidotti, R. (2002). Three waves of feminism in Denmark. *Thinking Differently: A Reader in European Women’s Studies*, 341–350.
- Gregersen, A. B., Agustín, L. R., & Meret, S. (2025). “It is like night and day”: The Disruptive Development of Danish Feminism in the Light of the #MeToo Movement. In G. Bonu Rosenkranz & D. della Porta (Eds.), *Feminist Movements in Time and Space* (pp. 39–65). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Freidenvall, L., Dahlerup, D., & Skjeie, H. (2013). The Nordic countries: An incremental model. In *Women, quotas and politics* (pp. 55–82). Routledge.
- Inter-Parliamentary Union. (n.d.). *Denmark | The Danish Parliament | Data on women*. IPU Parline: Global Data on National Parliaments.
<https://data.ipu.org/parliament/DK/DK-LC01/data-on-women>
- Dahlerup, D., Karlsson, D., & Stensöta, H. O. (2021). What does it mean to be a feminist MP? A comparative analysis of the Swedish and Danish parliaments. *Party Politics*, 27(6), 1198–1210.
- Hilson, M. (2020). The Nordic Welfare Model. In A. Lindskog & J. Stougaard-Nielsen (Eds.), *Introduction to Nordic cultures* (pp. 70–84). University College London.
<https://muse.jhu.edu/book/81882>
- Morgan, K. J. (2025). The politics of childcare. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 28(1), 75-93.
- Linnet, J. T. (2011). Money can’t buy me hygge: Danish middle-class consumption, egalitarianism, and the sanctity of inner space. *Social Analysis*, 55(2), 21–44.
- Andersen, D., Toubøl, J., Kirkegaard, S., & Bang Carlsen, H. (2022). Imposed volunteering: Gender and caring responsibilities during the COVID-19 lockdown. *The Sociological Review*, 70(1), 39–56.
- Women Count. (n.d.). *Denmark Fact Sheet*. UN Women Data Hub.
<https://data.unwomen.org/country/denmark>
- Women Count. (n.d.). *Sweden Fact Sheet*. UN Women Data Hub.
<https://data.unwomen.org/country/sweden>
- UN Women & UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2025). *Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The gender snapshot 2025*. UN Women.
- United Nations. (2026). *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women New York, 18 December 1979*. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-elimination-all-forms-discrimination-against-women>
- Lueg, K. (2026). ‘You are Danish, or you are not’: How migrants in Denmark experience class and otherness. *The Sociological Review*, 1–23.

- Andersen, D., Lue Kessing, M., & Østergaard, J. (2021). 'We have equal opportunities—in theory': Lay perceptions of privilege, meritocracy and inequality in Denmark. *Sociology*, 55(6), 1117-1134.
- Brown, S. R. (2025). Pork. It's What's for Lunch: Food, Race, and the Politics of Migration in Denmark. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*, 115(3), 535-558.
- The Danish Parliament. (2017). *The History of Christiansborg*. Folketinget.
<https://www.thedanishparliament.dk/en/christiansborg-palace/the-history-of-christiansborg-palace>
- Eilersen, M. (2020). A Feminist City Guide to Copenhagen. *Unearth Women*.
<https://www.unearthwomen.com/a-feminist-city-guide-to-copenhagen/>
- Juhl, M. (2025). They let in the women—And nothing was ever the same. *University Post*.
<https://uniavisen.dk/en/they-let-in-the-women-and-nothing-was-ever-the-same/>
- Royal Danish Library. (n.d.). *When women gained access to university*. Kb.Dk.
<https://www.kb.dk/en/inspiration/when-women-gained-access-university>
- Visit Sweden. (2026). *Malmö – a city of contrasts*.
<https://visitsweden.com/where-to-go/southern-sweden/malmo/>
- The Royal Danish Collection. (2026). *Rosenborg Castle*.
<https://denkongeligesamling.dk/en/rosenborg-castle/>

Course Learning Outcomes/Objectives

After successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- LO1:** Compare electoral systems, gender quotas, and women's representation across democracies.
- LO2:** Apply intersectionality, liberal feminism, and Scandinavian welfare feminism to case studies.
- LO3:** Evaluate how institutions (family policy, labor markets, media) shape women's leadership.
- LO4:** Examine international frameworks (UN Women, SD5) and their influence on national gender policy
- LO5:** Synthesize field observations into evidence-based written and oral reflections.
- LO6:** Construct an original comparative argument about women's political participation

Assignments/Assessments

This course is in a *hybrid* format in that there is online work prior to the actual in-country experience, the in-country experience itself in-person, then virtual meetings after the travel abroad.

Readings

Completing the assigned readings for each class is crucial to your success in this course as whole. We expect that you will participate actively online, ask questions, and challenge the ideas put forward by the texts or within class discussions. The readings help provide context for the travel abroad.

To help you engage deeply with the course materials, we will be using Feedback Fruits as a collaborative annotation tool. Feedback Fruits allows us to discuss readings asynchronously, transforming them from a solitary task into a structured conversation where you can ask questions and share insights with your peers. You must make a post to have the option of responding to classmates' posts. Responses must be more than "I agree." They should follow the 3CQ format (compliment, connect, comment, question) found in ["About Discussions."](#)

Discussion Board Posts (___ posts, ___ points each)

Throughout the semester you will post written responses to readings, share observations about Denmark and course topics, and reply to classmates. Most modules include at least one discussion prompt. Posts should be substantive and conversational — this is where the class thinks together between modules. Full credit requires completing posts on time and engaging meaningfully with peers, not just posting and moving on.

Positionality Statement (___ points)

A 400-500 word written reflection asking you to consider how your own background, identity, and experiences shape the way you understand gender and political power. There are no right answers — this is about honest examination as we enter the field.

Research Question Proposal (___ points)

A 300-word written proposal stating the research question you will carry into Copenhagen, focused on comparing women's political representation in Denmark and the United States. Posted to the discussion board so classmates can offer brief written feedback before you finalize it.

Source Bank for Journal Analysis (___ points)

A curated list of 5–6 scholarly sources — drawn from across political science, sociology, and women's studies — that you will draw on to analyze your in-country observations in your field journal. Submitted with a one-sentence annotation per source, then shared on the discussion board for peer feedback.

Field Journal Setup & Pre-Departure Entry (___ points)

Setting up your field journal using the provided observation framework and writing one entry of approximately 300 words before you leave for Copenhagen. This entry asks you to state your research question, your expectations, and what you most want to observe.

Field Journal – Daily Entries (___ points)

One entry per day for every day of the 10-day program in Copenhagen, each at least 300 words. Each entry uses a four-layer observation framework — Describe, Analyze, Reflect, Connect — to move from what you saw to what it means, how it affected you, and how it connects to your comparative argument about Denmark and the United States. Your compiled journal is due May 28 via the course management system.

Capstone Debrief (__ points)

A 10–15 minute one-on-one conversation with the instructors, scheduled individually between May 26 and June 3. You will bring your field journal to reference during the conversation. You will discuss your comparative argument about women's political representation in Denmark versus the United States, the theoretical frameworks you applied, and how the trip shaped your thinking. This is an oral assessment — what matters is your ability to speak knowledgeably about what you observed and what you learned, using your journal as a springboard rather than a script.

Group capstone presentation (__ pts)

A 10-minute co-presentation with a small group of classmates, delivered to an invited campus audience on June 4. Each group selects one key theme from the trip and presents it using both course theory and specific in-country observations drawn from your field journals. Every group member speaks. A brief Q&A follows.

How to Succeed in This Course

We truly want everyone in this class to succeed not only in this course but throughout their college careers. To succeed in this course, we expect students to engage with the course, complete the assigned readings, participate in class discussion, complete assignments on time, proofread their work, and not plagiarize.

Levels of engagement can vary from above average to below average and may be reflected in your grade.

[Click here for YSU Student Support Resources](#)

Above average engagement involves:

- Spirited intellectual engagement with the course readings and the class
- Conscientious and insightful preparation of assignments
- Assignments that make and support sophisticated arguments, are well-written and interesting to read, and are free of errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar
- Active and thoughtful participation in class discussion

Average engagement involves:

- Clear demonstration in papers and in class discussion of understanding the concepts we explore
- Assignments with clear thesis statements and careful research
- Consistent participation in class discussion

Below average engagement involves:

- Work that shows minimal synthesis of concepts or original analysis

- Infrequent participation in discussion
- Assignments that are incomplete or late
- Assignments that are not well-researched or are presented carelessly (not proofread or contain many mechanical errors)

Our Student Support Hours (Office Hours) are held Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2 to 3 PM and by appointment. Please see us if you have any questions concerning the reading material, assignments, papers, study strategies, etc. If you are unable to meet me during these hours, but need to be seen, you can e-mail either of us to make an appointment

Technology

To successfully complete this course, you will need access to a computer with internet and Microsoft Office Suite ([available free](#)). Blackboard is free to use with your YSU login [here](#). Please let me know the first day of class if you do not have the appropriate access to technology and/or anticipate having trouble navigating Blackboard. We will work together to make sure technology is not a barrier to your success in this course.

Blackboard: Please be sure to login to Blackboard often during the duration of the course. Blackboard will be regularly used to share important course information.

Understanding Early Alerts

In all your classes, your professors may create a “flag” related to your performance in a class. Professors may indicate that you are having difficulty understanding course material, not attending class, missing assignments, etc. These alerts do NOT stay on a permanent record, and they are NOT used in any way as a penalty against you. The alerts are used to help you find a solution that is realistic and helps you succeed.

How to Get Help

YSU is committed to your success. As a student you have access to several resources that may be instrumental in helping you succeed in this course and others. Please do not hesitate to utilize any of these [free support services](#) to support your academic success, physical and mental health, registration, billing, and financial aid, assistance for student parents—all to help you navigate your time as a YSU student.

Attendance Expectations

Class attendance adheres to the [YSU Class Attendance Policy](#) and the [Religious Accommodations of Students Policy](#).

You are responsible for completing the content of the course in a timely manner. This means you are expected to regularly log-in to Blackboard to check for messages, complete assignments, and communicate with the class.

Late Work Submission Policy

Late work submission adheres to the [YSU Class Attendance Policy](#) and the [Religious Accommodations of Students Policy](#).

If your schedule requires that you must frequently miss this deadlines, it may be in your best interest to drop this course.

Please Note

Technological difficulties are not considered a valid excuse for tardiness. Please contact us – email or call - well before an assignment is due if you are having technical difficulties. We will do our best to work with you to address the situation.

Additional Course Expectations

A positive learning environment involves commitment of both instructor and students in a course. [Reciprocal Responsibilities for Undergraduate Students and Instructors](#) was developed jointly with the Student Government Association and YSU Academic Senate to outline mutual responsibilities in the classroom, and our class will follow these guidelines.

Academic Integrity

As outlined in *The Student Code of Conduct*, all forms of academic dishonesty are prohibited at Youngstown State University. This includes plagiarism, the unauthorized use of tools or notes in taking tests or completing assignments, fabrication of data or information used for an assignment, working with others without permission from the instructor, and more. A student who is believed to have violated the [academic integrity policy](#) will meet with the instructor to discuss the allegations. The student may accept responsibility for the violation and any sanctions selected by the instructor, or they have the right to ask for a hearing before a hearing panel. The full Academic Integrity policy can be found in Article III. 1. of *The Student Code of Conduct*, while further information on University procedures for alleged academic integrity violations can be found in Article V.

Note: Not adequately citing your sources, such as only listing sources at the end and not citing them within the assignment, is a violation of academic integrity. If you do this, you will receive a zero on your assignment and will be reported for academic dishonesty.

If you are retaking this class to receive a higher/passing grade, you may not submit papers you previously submitted in the course.

Honors Contract Language

Honors students may contract this course for honors credit. Notify us of your interest to discuss options and complete required paperwork. You must submit the project to us by the semester deadline.

Title IX

Title IX makes it clear that violence, discrimination, and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, etc. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find the appropriate resources here: Title IX Coordinator (titleix@ysu.edu), Counseling Services (330-941-3737), YSU Police (330-941-3527), and Rape Crisis & Counseling Center (24-hour crisis line: 330-782-3936). More information can be found at <https://ysu.edu/title-ix/>.

Voluntary/Involuntary Medical Leave or Withdrawal

[Medical leave/withdrawal](#) is available for all students with a documented physical or psychological illness of a serious nature that requires them to leave the university after the last day to withdraw with a grade of “W” without completing their coursework.

Artificial Intelligence Policy Statement

The responsible use of generative artificial intelligence is permitted in this course, within the parameters established in the YSU Student Code of Conduct. You are expected to complete each assignment without substantive assistance from others (subject to faculty discretion), including automated tools. You are responsible for the information you submit based on an AI query (for instance, that it does not violate intellectual property laws, or contain misinformation or unethical content).

Your use of AI tools must be properly cited. See [these resources](#) for common citation formats. Any use of generative AI tools without attribution may be considered a violation of the YSU Code of Conduct. When in doubt about permitted usage, please ask for clarification.

The use of generative AI tools such as ChatGPT is permitted in this course for the following activities:

- Brainstorming and refining your ideas
- Fine tuning your research questions
- Finding information on your topic
- Clarify unclear course concepts
- Drafting an outline to organize your thoughts
- Checking grammar and style

The use of generative AI tools is not permitted in this course for the following activities:

- Impersonating you in classroom contexts, such as by using the tool to compose discussion board prompts assigned to you or content that you put into an online chat.
- Writing a draft of a writing assignment.
- Writing entire sentences, paragraphs or papers to complete class assignments.

Grading and Grading Scale

YSU courses follow the [YSU Grading System](#).

A: 900-1000

B: 800-899

C: 700-799

D: 600-699

F: 0-599

Final grades will be based on points, not percentage. **Final grades are non-negotiable.**

University Policies

[University policies](#) can be found online and provide you guidance on your rights as a student in this course. The links below take you directly to a specific policy. Should you have any questions about a policy, please do not hesitate to contact me using the information at the top of the syllabus.

- [Academic Grievances and Complaints](#)
- [Academic Integrity/Honesty](#)
- [Class Attendance Policy](#)
- [Honors Contracts](#)
- [Incomplete Grade Policy](#)
- [Religious Accommodation of Students](#)
- [Statement of Non-Discrimination from the University](#)
- [Student Accessibility](#)

Tentative Course Schedule (Subject to Change)

The course schedule, policies, procedures, and assignments in this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances, by mutual agreement, and/or to ensure better learning.

Date	Proposed Topic	Class Readings	Assignments/Tasks Due
FOUNDATIONS			
Module 1 January 4 – 16	Welcome & Who We Are	Why Scandinavia (LO1, LO3) - World Economic Forum's 2025 Global Gender Gap Report – Denmark and Sweden profiles - Borchorst & Siim (2008) - Dahlerup (2011)	- Introductions: "My Political World" (LO5) - Denmark 101: Virtual Country Exploration (LO5)
Module 2 January 17 – 29	Feminist Frameworks & Political Theory	Feminist Theory Foundations (LO2) - May (2023) - Hooks (2014) - Dahlerup, Griffin, & Braidotti (2002) - Gregersen, Agustín, and Meret (2025)	- Peer Interview & Introduction Post (LO5) - Feedback Fruits on Readings (LO2)

Date	Proposed Topic	Class Readings	Assignments/Tasks Due
			- Positionality Statement (LO2, LO5)
DEEPENING			
Module 3 February 1 - 13	Women & Legislative Representation	Electoral Systems & Gender Quotas (LO1) - Freidenvall, Dahlerup, & Skjeie (2013) - Dahlerup, Karlsson, & Stensöta (2020) - Inter-Parliamentary Union – Denmark data	- Feedback Fruits on Readings (LO1) - Profiles on The Folketing (LO1, LO5) - Asynchronous Debate on Quotas (LO1, LO6)
Module 4 February 14 – 26	Social Institutions, Policy & Gender	Family Policy, Labor, & The Welfare State (LO3) - Hilson (2020) - Morgan (2025) - Linnet (2011) - Andersen et al (2021)	- Feedback Fruits on Readings (LO3) - Cultural Deep Dive: Hygge, Gender, and Danish Daily Life (LO3, LO5) - Recipe Swap (LO5)
Module 5 February 27 – March 5	International Frameworks & UN Women	SDG 5, CEDAW, and Global Gender Governance (LO4) - Women Count – Denmark Profile - Women Count – Sweden Profile - UN Women – Gender Snapshot 2025 - UN CEDAW	- Feedback Fruits on Readings (LO4) - Questions for UN Women Nordics Office (LO4, LO5) - Research Question Proposal (LO1, LO6)
APPLICATION & PRE-DEPARTURE			
Module 6 March 8 – March 19	Intersectionality & Political Exclusion	Race, Class, and Gender in Nordic Politics (LO2, LO3) - Lueg (2026)	- Feedback Fruits on Readings (LO2, LO3)

Date	Proposed Topic	Class Readings	Assignments/Tasks Due
		- Andersen, Lue Kessing, & Østergaard (2021) - Brown (2025)	- Shared Playlist: Women's Political Anthems (LO5) - Source Bank for Journal Analysis (LO2, LO6)
Module 7 March 20 – April 9	Copenhagen & Malmö: Place, History, & Politics	- The Danish Parliament - The Royal Collection - Eilersen (2020) - Juhl (2025) - Royal Danish Library - Visit Sweden: Malmö Recommendation: Episodes of Borgen	- Neighborhood & Landmark Field Guide (LO3, LO5) - Virtual Map Annotation (LO5) - Travel Norms & Group Agreements Session (LO5) – IN PERSON
Module 8 April 10 – May 1	Pre-Departure Preparation	Background Materials for Academic Site Visits	- Logistics & Safety Orientation Checklist (LO5) - Academic Site Visit Briefings (LO4, LO6) - Field Journal Setup & Pre-Departure Entry (LO5, LO6) - Virtual Pre-Departure Send-Off Gathering (LO5)
IN-COUNTRY EXPERIENCE (MAY 11 – 20)			
May 11	Copenhagen		AM: Arrive
May 12	Copenhagen		AM: Walking Tour PM: Academic Visit
May 13	Copenhagen		AM: Guided Food Tour PM: Free Afternoon

Date	Proposed Topic	Class Readings	Assignments/Tasks Due
May 14	Copenhagen		AM: Academic Visit PM: Free Afternoon
May 15	Copenhagen		AM: Copenhagen Tour Hill (Guided) PM: Canal Boat Tour
May 16	Copenhagen, Malmö		AM: Day tour to Malmö, Sweden: Walking tour and free time to explore
May 17	Copenhagen		AM: Guided Parliament Tour PM: Free Afternoon
May 18	Copenhagen		AM: Visits to Copenhagen Rosenborg Castle and Christiansborgs Castle PM: Free Afternoon
May 19	Copenhagen		AM: Academic Visit PM: Farewell Dinner
May 20	Copenhagen		AM: Depart
POST-TRAVEL INTEGRATION			
Module 9 May 21 – June 4	Synthesis & Capstone Assessments		- Re-entry Group Debrief Session (LO5) - Field Journal – Final Submission (LO5) - Capstone Debrief Meetings with Instructors (LO1-6) - Group Capstone Presentation (LO1, LO4, LO5, LO6)