

The Harris School of Public Policy
PPHA 47400 Women, Development, and Politics

Spring 2025

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Office Hours: Request meetings by email

TA:
Email:

Meeting Time: Fridays 1:30-4:20pm
Course materials: canvas.uchicago.edu

Keller Center Room 007

Course Description

Although the inequities between men and women have diminished during the last decades, large gaps are still evident and resistant to change. Throughout this course, we will explore the origins of these disparities which are all fundamentally rooted in the patriarchal nature of society. Understanding how patriarchy came to be the dominant order requires a multidisciplinary and historical approach. The first lectures will cover debates in biology, human evolution, history and archeology that explain the deep roots and the spread of this order throughout the centuries. The next set of lectures will cover how current cultural practices and social norms facilitate the reproduction of the patriarchy and will also examine alternative ways in which societies have organized themselves where women have powerful roles or live in matriarchies. The class will also capture how women from the Global South contest this order within their societies and on their own terms. Finally, we will evaluate policies that have aimed to close the gap between men and women around the world. A central theme of the course is that to understand how to craft effective policies one needs to comprehend the mechanisms which created patriarchy and led it to persist. The students produce a podcast introducing their project to an audience and making sure they revise their policies or topics from a critical perspective based on the material we covered throughout the quarter.

In the week we will have a special guest, Biology Professor Shauna Price from Loyola University. In the second week we will have Dr. Teodora Szasz who is a consultant in Computer Science and she will give us a lecture on “AI for Gender Equity: Challenges and Opportunities”. During the final lectures we will have special guests like Professor Alice Evans who is writing 'The Great Gender Divergence': why all societies have become more gender equal, and why some are more equal than others. We will also host, Dr.

Ana Maria Tribin Uribe who is a Senior Economist in the division of Women, Business and the Law at the World Bank, and Professor James Robinson.

Course Goals or Objectives:

The students will develop a strong foundation of the origins, reproduction and spread of the patriarchy. They will use it to develop a critical framework to evaluate general policies or those which aim at improving women's parity status.

Course Requirements:

All students are expected to have completed the relevant readings before the class meeting. Weekly readings will be drawn from a collection of articles and book chapters (whenever possible, these readings will be posted on the UChicago Canvas course site). You should aim to critically evaluate the theoretical argument and the evidence advanced in each reading. Some of the readings contain sections that use econometrics to support empirical tests of their arguments.

We will regularly update the syllabus online and mark the required readings at least one week in advance of each respective lecture. Check the course site in Canvas before every lecture for announcements of updated versions of the syllabus and required readings.

Required books:

All readings will be available online through UChicago library catalogue or at the Canvas Website. However, "The Patriarchs: The Origins of Inequality" by Saini, Angela (2023) will be a central book throughout the course and students should acquire it.

Grading:

Research Paper or Policy Evaluation Report (60%): Students can decide to work with another student or individually. Students have the following options for their main project:

- 1) Conduct a research project by developing a research question, literature review, methodology and develop a plan for data collection. The topic is open to the student but it should be related to the class material or topics.
- 2) Evaluate a policy aimed at improving women's well-being implemented in the Global South or marginalized communities in the Global North.

There will be a handout for both options available in Canvas for guidance on the main parts of each option.

There will be two deliverables for this final project, the first one is due in the 6th week and the second and last version of the project is due in the finals week. Each submission is 30% of your final grade.

The length of the research project or policy report: for the first version, the report should be at least 6 pages without references and the final one at least 12 pages.

Podcast (30%) : Students will produce a podcast based on their research or policy evaluation and will share it in Week 9 to their peers so they can listen to it and evaluate it. Their peers will give feedback and provide a grade that will be accounted for in the grade that the TA and Professor Bautista assign to the Podcast.

Class Participation (10%): Students are encouraged and expected to attend and participate actively in class. It is important to raise questions about the material and about the different theories presented during the lectures. Our TA will take note of who is engaged in and outside of class.

Late Work: All assignments are expected to be turned in on time. Late assignments will be downgraded one half-grade (A to A-, A- to B+, etc.) per day late. This includes weekends. The only exceptions will be made for serious medical or family problems with documentation.

Accommodations

ADA student accommodations: “Any student who believes they may need assistance should inform the Office of Student Disability Services by the end of the first week of class. Once you have received an accommodation letter, it should be presented to the course instructor immediately.” <https://disabilities.uchicago.edu/>

The disability liaison at Harris is Marley Mandelaro mbmandelaro@uchicago.edu

Academic Integrity:

This is the link for Harris SPP and the University’s principles on academic integrity:

<https://harris.uchicago.edu/student-life/dean-of-students-office/policies>

Any violation of these principles will result in a F as the final grade in this course.

Use of AI

The use of AI tools for this course is allowed for the Research Paper or Policy Evaluation and for the podcast only when determined to be in support of the course learning goals. You are not required to use AI tools, but if you choose to use them for any part of the assignment (from brainstorming to text editing), you must use proper citation (please use APA citation format). Failure to properly cite AI tools is considered a violation of the University of Chicago's Academic Honesty and Plagiarism policy.

During the second week Dr. Thedora Szasz will cover some ways in which AI can be used to address gender equity.

Course Schedule

Week 1 – March 24 - 28th Data and Biology

Readings:

- Criado Perez, Caroline (2019) "Invisible Women: Exposing Data Bias in a World Design for Men" USA. Abrams Press. Read: Chapter 1
- Bohannon, Cat (2023) "Eve: How the Female Body Drove 200 Million Years of Human Evolution" New York, Alfred A. Knopf. Read: Introduction
- Saini, Angela (2023) "The Patriarchs: The Origins of Inequality" Read: Introduction and Chapter 1.
- Cook, Lucy (2022) "Bitch: On the Female of the Species" New York, Basic Books. Read: Introduction and Chapter 1.

Goal: Introduce several outcomes (gender wage gap, women's rights, differences in political power, domestic violence) that illustrate the differences between men and women. We will also discuss the examples presented in the readings. Then, I will invite the students to think of the possible explanations for the divergence. We will start with the basic explanations like the ones offered in Biology: Are men and women different? How are they different?

Professor Shauna Price will be a guest speaker who will provide several examples of how in animal species, females behave and organize in ways in which they dominate or set the principles of the groups.

Finally, we will briefly cover examples of societies that are Matriarchal and we will show how ways of organizing the society is possible.

Week 2 - April 3rd - 7th Early Human History

Readings:

- De Waal, F. (2022). "Different: Gender through the eyes of a primatologist". First edition. New York, NY, W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. Read: Chapter 5 (Show video?)
- Bohannon, Cat (2023) "Eve: How the Female Body Drove 200 Million Years of Human Evolution" New York, Alfred A. Knopf. Read: Chapter 5 (Tools) and Chapter 8 (Menopause)
- Slocum, Sally (1975). Woman the gatherer: male bias in anthropology. In Rayna R. Reiter (ed.), *Toward an Anthropology of Women*. New York: Monthly Review Press. pp. 49.
- Hrdy, S. B. (2009). *Mothers and Others: The Evolutionary Origins of Mutual Understanding*. Harvard University Press. Read: Chapter 8
- Gimbutas on Goddess TBD
- Hodder, I. (2004). Women and Men at Çatalhöyük. *Scientific American*, 290(1), 76–83.

Goal: We will revisit how humans are related to apes and discuss their behavior and how scholars have made biased assumptions. We look into the role of female human ancestors and how they developed tools and relationships that led to humankind to successfully spread around the world. We will also discuss the archeological literature that shows how pre-neolithic societies organized and the roles of women within them.

Week 3 - April 7th - 11th Origins of the Patriarchy

Readings:

- Lerner, Gerda. (1987). "The Creation of Patriarchy". Oxford University Press. Read Chapter 11
- Saini, Angela (2023) "The Patriarchs: The Origins of Inequality" Read: Chapter 4 and 5.
- Wiesner-Hanks, Merry (2022) "Gender in History: Global Perspectives" Wiley-Blackwell. Read Chapter 3
- Umair Khalil and Sulagna Mookerjee (2019) "Patrilocal Residence and Women's Social Status: Evidence from South Asia" in *Economic Development and Cultural*

Change 2019 67:2, 401-438.

<https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/action/showCitFormats?doi=10.1086%2F697584>

- Sara Lowes; Kinship Structure & Women: Evidence from Economics. *Daedalus* 2020; 149 (1): 119–133. doi: https://doi.org/10.1162/daed_a_01777
- Watch: David Reich on Who are we and How we got Here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3-vHByC14bc>

Goal: The origin of the patriarchy has been explained by different theories, we will explore some mechanisms that these theories have proposed but it will be hard to get to a definitive conclusion. In Week 2 we ended up in Çatalhöyük and we observed how there was parity between men and women. However, once we move to written sources found in Mesopotamia, Greece, India and the Middle East (Old Testament) the patriarchy is present. What changed and why? We will explore the different mechanisms that scholars have proposed that allow men to dominate women and which potentially can explain the emergence of the patriarchy. None are necessary or sufficient and all of them are partial. We will cover the following: Transition to Agriculture (shaping property and inheritance), Indo European Expansion, Warfare and the expansion of patrilocality. Most of the evidence is from Europe, so what about other societies around the world?

Week 4 - April 14th - 18th The Spread of the Patriarchy

Read:

- Saini, Angela (2023) “The Patriarchs: The Origins of Inequality” Read: Chapter 2.
- Kellogg, Susan. "From Parallel and Equivalent to Separate but Unequal: Tenochca Mexica Women, 1500–1700." *Indian Women of Early Mexico* (1997): 123-43.
- Kellogg, Susan. “The Woman’s Room: Some Aspects of Gender Relations in Tenochtitlan in the Late Pre-Hispanic Period.” *Ethnohistory*, vol. 42, no. 4, 1995, pp. 563–76. JSTOR, <https://doi.org/10.2307/483143>. Accessed 26 Jan. 2025.
- Berger, Iris (2016) “Women in Twentieth Century Africa”. Cambridge University Press. Read: Chapter 1
- Anderson, et. al “The Persistence of Female Political Power in Africa” <https://thepearsoninstitute.org/sites/default/files/2024-07/2024-06%20The%20Persistence%20of%20Female%20Political%20Power%20in%20Africa.pdf>
- Optional reading Karen Vieira Powers “Women in the Crucible of Conquest” *The Gendered Genesis of Spanish American Society, 1500-1600* Read: Chapter 1

Goal: Present a picture of how different societies were organized before colonialism and their traditional political and social institutions. Then evaluate the different ways in which colonialism disrupted societies and took away power from norms, religion, organization and the new roles for women. Then Professor James Robinson will join the lecture and present an empirical test on the effect of Colonialism on women's empowerment based on the paper titled: "The Persistence of Female Political Power in Africa" (joint with Siwan Anderson, Sophia Du Plessis and Sahar Parsa)

Week 5 - April 21st - 25th The Reproduction of the Patriarchy

Read:

- Saini, Angela (2023) "The Patriarchs: The Origins of Inequality" Read: Chapter 6
- Hrdy (2024) "Father time : a natural history of men and babies" Princeton University Press. Read: Chapter 10
- Anukriti, S., Catalina Herrera-Almanza, Mahesh Karra, and Rocío Valdebenito. 2022. "Convincing the Mummy-ji: Improving Mother-in-Law Approval of Family Planning in India." *AEA Papers and Proceedings*, 112: 568–72.
https://catalinaherrera.weebly.com/uploads/2/5/3/0/25303281/aerp_p.20221122.pdf
- Rippon, Gina (2019) "The Gendered Brain: The New Neuroscience that Shatters the Myth of the Female Brain" Penguin Random House Read: Chapter 9

Goal: Look into different ways the patriarchy is reproduced through social norms. These norms vary significantly in societies so having an understanding of this variation persistence and how they shape inequalities between women and men are key for a critical analysis of policy decisions.

Week 6 - April 28 - May 2nd - Societies where women were/are in Power

Read:

- Goettner-Abendroth, Heide (2012) "Matriarchal Societies: Studies on Indigenous Cultures Across the Globe" Read: Chapter 1, 2, 5, 14, 15 and 17.
- Amadiume, Ifi (1987) "Male Daughters and Female Husbands" London. Read: Introduction, Chapter 1 and 2.
- Professor Bautista will present her research based in Nigeria about the Omu and other traditional political institutions.
- Zakaria, Raffia (2021) "Against White Feminism: Notes on Disruption" Norton. Chapter: TBD

Goal: Understand how some societies managed to stay relatively unchanged or adapt in the face of patriarchal pressures.

Week 7 - May 5th - 9th Contesting the Patriarchy

We will have Professor Alice Evans with a special lecture. She will elaborate on different ways in which the different gaps between men and women have diminished. Also, the tools that women use in countries around the world to mobilize and lead to change. Professor Evans will also cover the basics of how to produce an engaging podcast.

Read:

- Evans, A. (2019). How Cities Erode Gender Inequality: A New Theory and Evidence from Cambodia. *Gender and Society*, 33(6), 961-984.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243219865510>

Week 8 - May 12th - May 16th Papers on Policy Design to Empower Women in the Global South

Read:

- Jalota, Suhani and Ho, Lisa, What Works For Her? How Work-from-Home Jobs Affect Female Labor Force Participation in Urban India (January 4, 2024). Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=4739387> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4739387>
- TBD

Ana Maria Tribin Uribe a Senior researcher at the World Bank in the Division of Women and the Law will present the findings of the latest report and she will discuss with students how the data is collected and analyzed.

Get familiar with the report available in the website of the World Bank:

<https://wbl.worldbank.org/en/wbl>

Goal: During this class we will examine some of the papers written around policies that seek to empower women in economic or political dimensions. The idea is to examine them critically, by now we should have a good understanding of the problems that are harder to tackle and what are the policies that could have a better chance to diminish inequalities between men and women.

Week 9 - May 19th - 23rd Sharing the Podcast with your peers

Goal: This week you will listen to the podcast of your assigned peer to give them feedback. This feedback should be incorporated into the final research project. All podcasts should include an abstract that will be published on canvas for everyone to read and leave comments.