II. Gender and Politics Specialization. Day 2 -

Pick three.

1. A debate on State and Gender has centered on whether women’s rights and democratization are likely to occur together or in successive order. The debate raises questions about the effect of different processes such as reforms from above, pressures from below, and transnational influences. By referring to empirical studies and theoretical arguments, assess the extent to which women’s empowerment, understood as an expansion of rights and opportunities, can be ascribed to democratization or to other processes in a variety of contexts.

2. Joan Almaws (1995) argues that, “Notwithstanding indications of increasing openness to feminist theory, journals and texts on sociological theory reflect a continuing pattern of neglect.” Taking at least two major theoretical perspectives in political sociology, discuss how feminist theory differs from them in terms of questions asked, paradigms offered, or methodologies. Do you believe that bridges could be built? If not, why not? If yes, indicate the contributions that feminist scholarship can make to political sociology and vice versa by taking specific issues as examples (such as women’s empowerment, women’s movements, state formation, globalization, or any other you would like).

3. Discuss the deep mark the politics of motherhood has left on American state institutions and on women’s activism to influence these institutions. Use this history of the institutional and contentious politics of motherhood to argue for the relevance of gender for general theories of political sociology.

4. What does it mean to say social movements are gendered? And what does a gendered analysis of social movements reveal that standard approaches miss? To answer this take any social movement not widely seen as part and parcel of the women’s movement (e.g., Civil Rights Movement or the Chicano Movement) and show how a gendered analysis illuminates key aspects of this movement that might otherwise be missed.