

(SOT866005) Digital Media, Politics and Gender

Franziska Pradel
HfP/TUM School of Social Sciences and Technology

Summer semester 2026

I. Literature Focus: **Seminar 1 – Empirical Studies on Gender and Online Political Communication:** Thursday, 09.45-11.15

II. Hands-On Focus: **Seminar 2 – Studying Bias in Political Communication with R**
Thursday, 11.30-13.00

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Office Hours: please make an appointment via email.

Course Description

With higher levels of digitalization in our society, people increasingly inform themselves, talk about politics, and engage in direct communication with political actors online. Women are still underrepresented in many parliaments around the world. While the proportion of women in politics has increased in recent years, female political actors still have to face gender stereotypes and gender-based attacks, especially during campaigns. This course will focus on political campaigns, the portrayal of women candidates in digital media, and gender biases in communication with political actors. This covers a new field of political communication: social media and other online platforms like Wikipedia.

Overview of the Module:

The module is offered in the form of two complementary seminars. For the first seminar, we will focus on empirical studies on gender and online political communication and theoretical frameworks. Students are expected to read the weekly reading list (highlighted as compulsory reading), and engage actively in course discussions and presentations. The students will be encouraged to make links between current political events and findings of recent academic research. They will learn basic concepts to summarize and review an original research paper.

The second seminar is more applied and focuses on studying bias in political communication with R. It requires a hands-on approach to working with available data and analyzing it. Students will explore data and learn techniques to study biases in digital media. Moreover, students will

write a scientific paper to explore a research question focusing on the investigation of gender biases and applying the learned methods with new data.

Evaluation:

- **The module will be assessed based on a presentation of a scientific article presented in the Thursday literature seminar (max 60 points) and a scientific written work (empirical) (max 60 points) (+ potential bonus points, max 3 points).**
- I. Presentation – Literature Seminar: Each student will prepare a 15-20-minute presentation about a scientific article of the reading list. Students have to send the presentation **slides via email the Tuesday evening before the presentation** at the latest.
- II. Group project: Finally, in groups consisting of two students, the students will write an **empirical scientific work** (10-15 pages per student). The work is based on a group project that is started in Seminar 2. In the scientific work, students have to develop a research question that is related to the module’s subject, review thematically related publications as well as theories and develop hypotheses. Students will analyze data empirically to test their hypotheses and present the findings in the scientific written work. The students’ research and its limitations have to be discussed within the written work. In the hands-on focused Seminar 2, students have time to develop their research project in groups, to analyze first data and to present first insights, receive feedback and provide feedback to the other groups. The work needs to be sent via email by **20.09.2026**. Delayed submissions won’t be accepted.
- Bonus Points: Students can earn bonus points by completing and submitting correct R solutions to exercises that we will work on during Seminar 2 (1 point per week, latest submission Thursday evening 8 pm). In total, students can earn up to three points by submitting the exercises throughout the seminar.

Important Deadlines

Deadline presentation scientific article (grade) individual
Deadline presentation group project (pass/no pass) 09.07.2026
Deadline scientific written work (grade) 20.09.2026

Expectations

- Seminar 1 - Literature seminar: It is expected that students will read articles of each session’s reading list (listed as compulsory reading) and discuss them in the course. Students may also read suggested articles listed under “Additional Literature” for the scientific work and course discussions (voluntary).
- Seminar 2 - Hands-on – Studying Bias in Political Communication with R: It is also expected that students will participate throughout the whole seminar and work with R to complete exercises.

Overview and Literature

Session 1: Introduction and Topics of the Seminar and Presentation, 16.04.2026

Session 2: Descriptive and Substantive Representation, 23.04.2026

Compulsory Reading

- Lena Wängnerud. Women in Parliaments: Descriptive and Substantive Representation. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 12(1):51–69, June 2009. ISSN 1094-2939, 1545-1577. doi: 10.1146/annurev.polisci.11.053106.123839. URL <https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/10.1146/annurev.polisci.11.053106.123839>
- Mikael Persson, Wouter Schakel, and Anders Sundell. A Man's World? The Policy Representation of Women and Men in a Comparative Perspective. *Perspectives on Politics*, pages 1–17, October 2023. ISSN 1537-5927, 1541-0986. doi: 10.1017/S1537592723002049. URL https://www.cambridge.org/core/product/identifier/S1537592723002049/type/journal_article

Additional Literature

- Jane Mansbridge. Should Blacks Represent Blacks and Women Represent Women? A Contingent "Yes". *The Journal of Politics*, 61(3):628–657, August 1999. ISSN 0022-3816, 1468-2508. doi: 10.2307/2647821. URL <https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/10.2307/2647821>
- Gabriele Magni and Andrew Reynolds. Voter preferences and the political underrepresentation of minority groups: Lesbian, gay, and transgender candidates in advanced democracies. *The Journal of Politics*, 83(4):1199–1215, 2021. ISSN 0022-3816. Publisher: The University of Chicago Press Chicago, IL
- Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris. *Rising Tide: Gender Equality and Cultural Change Around the World*. Cambridge University Press, 1 edition, April 2003 (Chapter 1 ("Introduction") and 2 ("Introduction" and "From Traditional Roles toward Gender Equality"))
- Amanda Clayton, Diana Z O'Brien, and Jennifer M Piscopo. Electoral gender quotas and democratic legitimacy. *American Political Science Review*, 120(1):123–140, 2026
- Timothy Besley, Olle Folke, Torsten Persson, and Johanna Rickne. Gender quotas and the crisis of the mediocre man: Theory and evidence from sweden. *American economic review*, 107(8):2204–2242, 2017

Session 3: Stereotypes, Women Politicians and the Democracy, 30.04.2026

Compulsory Reading

- Leonie Huddy and Nayda Terkildsen. Gender stereotypes and the perception of male and female candidates. *American journal of political science*, 37(1):119–147, 1993. ISSN 0092-5853
- Kira Sanbonmatsu. Gender Stereotypes and Vote Choice. *American Journal of Political Science*, 46(1):20, January 2002. ISSN 00925853. doi: 10.2307/3088412. URL <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3088412?origin=crossref>

Session 4: Investigation of Representation in the Media and Effects of Biases, 07.05.2026

Compulsory Reading

- Daphne Joanna Van der Pas and Loes Aaldering. Gender Differences in Political Media Coverage: A Meta-Analysis. *Journal of Communication*, 70(1):114–143, March 2020. ISSN 0021-9916, 1460-2466. doi: 10.1093/joc/jqz046. URL <https://academic.oup.com/joc/article/70/1/114/5761879>
- Simon M Luebke and Dennis Steffan. Pathway to authenticity? the influence of politicians' gender and multimodal self-presentation in social media on perceived authenticity. *new media & society*, 27(4):2373–2392, 2025

Additional Literature

- Amanda Haraldsson and Lena Wängnerud. The effect of media sexism on women's political ambition: evidence from a worldwide study. *Feminist Media Studies*, pages 1–17, May 2018. ISSN 1468-0777, 1471-5902. doi: 10.1080/14680777.2018.1468797. URL <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14680777.2018.1468797>
- Tobias Rohrbach, Loes Aaldering, and Daphne Joanna Van der Pas. Gender differences and similarities in news media effects on political candidate evaluations: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Communication*, 73(2):101–112, 2023

Session 5: Gender and Political Campaigns in the Digital Era, 21.05.2026

Compulsory Reading

- Martina Santia, Nichole M Bauer, and Sylvia Gonzalez. Harnessing the power of emotions: How women of color use emotional appeals in their campaign messages. *Political Research Quarterly*, 78(1):401–414, 2025
- Charlotte Brands, Sanne Kruikemeier, and Damian Trilling. Insta(nt)famous? Visual self-presentation and the use of masculine and feminine issues by female politicians on Instagram. *Information, Communication & Society*, pages 1–21, August 2021. ISSN 1369-118X, 1468-4462. doi: 10.1080/1369118X.2021.1962942. URL <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1369118X.2021.1962942>

Additional Literature

- Nathalie Giger, Stefanie Bailer, Adrian Sutter, and Tomas Turner-Zwinkels. Policy or person? What voters want from their representatives on Twitter. *Electoral Studies*, 74:102401, December 2021. ISSN 02613794. doi: 10.1016/j.electstud.2021.102401. URL <https://linkinghub.elsevier.com/retrieve/pii/S0261379421001177>
- Armin Mertens, Franziska Pradel, Ayjeren Rozyjumayeva, and Jens Wäckerle. As the Tweet, so the Reply?: Gender Bias in Digital Communication with Politicians. In *Proceedings of the 10th ACM Conference on Web Science*, pages 193–201, Boston Massachusetts USA, June 2019. ACM. ISBN 978-1-4503-6202-3. doi: 10.1145/3292522.3326013. URL <https://dl.acm.org/doi/10.1145/3292522.3326013>

- Kevin M. Wagner, Jason Gainous, and Mirya R. Holman. I Am Woman, Hear Me Tweet! Gender Differences in Twitter Use among Congressional Candidates. *Journal of Women, Politics & Policy*, 38(4):430–455, October 2017. ISSN 1554-477X, 1554-4788. doi: 10.1080/1554477X.2016.1268871
- Heather K Evans and Jennifer Hayes Clark. “You tweet like a girl!” How female candidates campaign on Twitter. *American Politics Research*, 44(2):326–352, 2016. ISSN 1532-673X

Session 6: Algorithmic Bias, 28.05.2026

Compulsory Reading

- Safiya Umoja Noble. *Algorithms of Oppression: How search engines reinforce racism*. NYU Press, 2018. ISBN 1-4798-3724-5 (Chapter 1)
- Carsten Schwemmer, Carly Knight, Emily D. Bello-Pardo, Stan Oklobdzija, Martijn Schoonvelde, and Jeffrey W. Lockhart. Diagnosing Gender Bias in Image Recognition Systems. *Socius: Sociological Research for a Dynamic World*, 6:1–17, January 2020. ISSN 2378-0231, 2378-0231. doi: 10.1177/2378023120967171. URL <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/2378023120967171>

Additional Literature

- Dialekti Athina Voutyrakou and Constantine Skordoulis. Algorithmic governance: Gender bias in ai-generated policymaking? *Human-Centric Intelligent Systems*, 5(3):385–417, 2025
- Franziska Pradel. Biased Representation of Politicians in Google and Wikipedia Search? The Joint Effect of Party Identity, Gender Identity and Elections. *Political Communication*, 38(4):447–478, July 2021. ISSN 1058-4609, 1091-7675. doi: 10.1080/10584609.2020.1793846. URL <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10584609.2020.1793846>

Session 7: Populism and Gender, 11.06.2026

Compulsory Reading

- Alexandra Snipes and Cas Mudde. “France’s (Kinder, Gentler) Extremist”: Marine Le Pen, Intersectionality, and Media Framing of Female Populist Radical Right Leaders. *Politics & Gender*, 16(2):438–470, 2020. ISSN 1743-923X. Publisher: Cambridge University Press
- Lihi Ben-Shitrit, Julia Elad-Strenger, and Sivan Hirsch-Hoefler. ‘pinkwashing’ the radical-right: Gender and the mainstreaming of radical-right policies and actions. *European Journal of Political Research*, 61(1):86–110, 2022

Additional Literature

- Tevfik Murat Yildirim and Alper Tolga Bulut. Gendered Perceptions of Personality Traits, Policy Stereotypes, and Support for Right-Wing Populist Parties: Lessons from Turkey. *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society*, page jxac007, May 2022. ISSN 1072-4745, 1468-2893. doi: 10.1093/sp/jxac007. URL <https://academic.oup.com/sp/advance-article/doi/10.1093/sp/jxac007/6583275>
- Jennifer Bast, Corinna Oschatz, and Anna-Maria Renner. Successfully overcoming the “double bind”? a mixed-method analysis of the self-presentation of female right-wing populists on instagram and the impact on voter attitudes. *Political Communication*, 39(3):358–382, 2022

Session 8: Gendered Online Engagement on Social Media, 18.06.2026

Compulsory Reading

- Karolina Koc-Michalska, Anya Schiffrin, Anamaria Lopez, Shelley Boulianne, and Bruce Bimber. From Online Political Posting to Mansplaining: The Gender Gap and Social Media in Political Discussion. *Social Science Computer Review*, 39(2):197–210, April 2021. ISSN 0894-4393, 1552-8286. doi: 10.1177/0894439319870259. URL <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0894439319870259>

Additional Literature

- Leticia Bode. Closing the gap: gender parity in political engagement on social media. *Information, Communication & Society*, 20(4):587–603, April 2017
- Karoline Oelsner and Linette Heimrich. Social Media Use of German Politicians: Towards Dialogic Voter Relations? *German Politics*, 24(4):451–468, October 2015. ISSN 0964-4008, 1743-8993. doi: 10.1080/09644008.2015.1021790. URL <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09644008.2015.1021790>

Session 9: Emotions and Emotional Reactions, 25.06.2026

Compulsory Reading

- Constantine Boussalis, Travis G. Coan, Mirya R. Holman, and Stefan Müller. Gender, Candidate Emotional Expression, and Voter Reactions During Televised Debates. *American Political Science Review*, 115(4):1242–1257, November 2021. ISSN 0003-0554, 1537-5943. doi: 10.1017/S0003055421000666. URL https://www.cambridge.org/core/product/identifier/S0003055421000666/type/journal_article
- Annelise Russell, Heather K Evans, and Bryan Gervais. Not ready to make nice: Congressional candidates’ emotional appeals on twitter. *Social Science Quarterly*, 105(5):1848–1856, 2024

Additional Literature

- Nichole M Bauer, Kenlea Barnes, Nana Ama Agyeman, Dylan White, and Caitlyn White. Candidate gender, feminist identities, and emotional engagement during political campaigns. *Journal of Women, Politics & Policy*, pages 1–18, 2026

Session 10: Gender and Toxicity, 02.07.2026

Compulsory Reading

- Josefina Erikson, Sandra Håkansson, and Cecilia Josefsson. Three dimensions of gendered online abuse: Analyzing Swedish MPs' experiences of social media. *Perspectives on Politics*, 21(3):896–912, 2023
- Jade Vrielink and Daphne Joanna Van Der Pas. Part of the job? the effect of exposure to the online intimidation of politicians on political ambition. *Political Studies Review*, 22(4): 1022–1041, 2024

Additional Literature

- Niels Bjørn Grund Petersen, Rasmus Tue Pedersen, and Mads Thau. Citizens' perceptions of online abuse directed at politicians: Evidence from a survey experiment. *European Journal of Political Research*, 64(2):790–809, May 2025. ISSN 0304-4130, 1475-6765. doi: 10.1111/1475-6765.12724. URL https://www.cambridge.org/core/product/identifier/S0304413000000151/type/journal_article
- Luise Koch, Maria Paula Russo Riva, and Janina Isabel Steinert. Technology-facilitated gender-based violence against politically active women: A systematic review of psychological and political consequences and women's coping behaviors. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, page 15248380251343185, 2025
- Mona Lena Krook. Semiotic violence against women: Theorizing harms against female politicians. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 47(2):371–397, 2022
- Karina Kosiara-Pedersen. Single ladies and freedom of speech: gendered explanations for, and effects of, violence in politics. *European Journal of Politics and Gender*, 7(2):221–238, 2024

Session 11: Movements, 09.07.2026

Compulsory Reading

- Jiyoun Suk, Aman Abhishek, Yini Zhang, So Yun Ahn, Teresa Correa, Christine Garlough, and Dhavan V. Shah. #MeToo, Networked Acknowledgment, and Connective Action: How "Empowerment Through Empathy" Launched a Social Movement. *Social Science Computer Review*, 39(2):276–294, April 2021. ISSN 0894-4393, 1552-8286. doi: 10.1177/0894439319864882. URL <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0894439319864882>
- Jennifer Hayes Clark and Heather K. Evans. Let's Talk about Sex: Examining the Factors Influencing Congressional Response to #MeToo on Twitter. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 53(1):51–56, January 2020. ISSN 1049-0965, 1537-5935. doi: 10.1017/S1049096519001124. URL https://www.cambridge.org/core/product/identifier/S1049096519001124/type/journal_article

Session 12: Wrap-Up, Q&A and Best Practices for an Empirical Paper, 16.07.2026

We will wrap up the seminar's key themes, followed by an open Q&A session for any remaining questions. Finally, we will discuss best practices for writing a high-quality empirical paper.

References

- Jennifer Bast, Corinna Oschatz, and Anna-Maria Renner. Successfully overcoming the “double bind”? a mixed-method analysis of the self-presentation of female right-wing populists on instagram and the impact on voter attitudes. *Political Communication*, 39(3):358–382, 2022.
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- Timothy Besley, Olle Folke, Torsten Persson, and Johanna Rickne. Gender quotas and the crisis of the mediocre man: Theory and evidence from sweden. *American economic review*, 107(8): 2204–2242, 2017.
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- Charlotte Brands, Sanne Kruikemeier, and Damian Trilling. Insta(nt)famous? Visual self-presentation and the use of masculine and feminine issues by female politicians on Instagram. *Information, Communication & Society*, pages 1–21, August 2021. ISSN 1369-118X, 1468-4462. doi: 10.1080/1369118X.2021.1962942. URL <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1369118X.2021.1962942>.
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- Gabriele Magni and Andrew Reynolds. Voter preferences and the political underrepresentation of minority groups: Lesbian, gay, and transgender candidates in advanced democracies. *The Journal of Politics*, 83(4):1199–1215, 2021. ISSN 0022-3816. Publisher: The University of Chicago Press Chicago, IL.
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- Karoline Oelsner and Linette Heimrich. Social Media Use of German Politicians: Towards Dialogic Voter Relations? *German Politics*, 24(4):451–468, October 2015. ISSN 0964-4008, 1743-8993. doi: 10.1080/09644008.2015.1021790. URL <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09644008.2015.1021790>.
- Mikael Persson, Wouter Schakel, and Anders Sundell. A Man’s World? The Policy Representation of Women and Men in a Comparative Perspective. *Perspectives on Politics*, pages 1–17, October 2023. ISSN 1537-5927, 1541-0986. doi: 10.1017/S1537592723002049. URL https://www.cambridge.org/core/product/identifier/S1537592723002049/type/journal_article.
- Niels Bjørn Grund Petersen, Rasmus Tue Pedersen, and Mads Thau. Citizens’ perceptions of online abuse directed at politicians: Evidence from a survey experiment. *European Journal of Political Research*, 64(2):790–809, May 2025. ISSN 0304-4130, 1475-6765. doi: 10.1111/1475-6765.12724. URL https://www.cambridge.org/core/product/identifier/S0304413000000151/type/journal_article.
- Franziska Pradel. Biased Representation of Politicians in Google and Wikipedia Search? The Joint Effect of Party Identity, Gender Identity and Elections. *Political Communication*, 38(4): 447–478, July 2021. ISSN 1058-4609, 1091-7675. doi: 10.1080/10584609.2020.1793846. URL <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10584609.2020.1793846>.
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- Annelise Russell, Heather K Evans, and Bryan Gervais. Not ready to make nice: Congressional candidates’ emotional appeals on twitter. *Social Science Quarterly*, 105(5):1848–1856, 2024.
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- Alexandra Snipes and Cas Mudde. “France’s (Kinder, Gentler) Extremist”: Marine Le Pen, Intersectionality, and Media Framing of Female Populist Radical Right Leaders. *Politics & Gender*, 16(2):438–470, 2020. ISSN 1743-923X. Publisher: Cambridge University Press.

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- Daphne Joanna Van der Pas and Loes Aaldering. Gender Differences in Political Media Coverage: A Meta-Analysis. *Journal of Communication*, 70(1):114–143, March 2020. ISSN 0021-9916, 1460-2466. doi: 10.1093/joc/jqz046. URL <https://academic.oup.com/joc/article/70/1/114/5761879>.
- Dialekti Athina Voutyrakou and Constantine Skordoulis. Algorithmic governance: Gender bias in ai-generated policymaking? *Human-Centric Intelligent Systems*, 5(3):385–417, 2025.
- Jade Vrieling and Daphne Joanna Van Der Pas. Part of the job? the effect of exposure to the online intimidation of politicians on political ambition. *Political Studies Review*, 22(4):1022–1041, 2024.
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