GU POLITICS FELLOW KATIE PACKER

DISCUSSION GROUP OUTLINE

THE FORCE OF WOMEN IN THE POLITICAL ARENA

Discussion Group Synopsis
The focus of these discussion groups will be the role of women in politics. This will include but not be limited to women candidates, rather, how has the engagement of women changed the political arena. We will look at women as voters, donors, reporters, managers, candidates and officeholders. We will study the challenges and opportunities that are unique to women. And finally we will look at solutions for getting more women to engage in politics and discuss why it matters.

Week 1 – Women’s Political Power – From Suffragette to a Majority
How did campaigns change when women were given the right to vote? Over time women have become a larger and larger percentage of the electorate (53% of voters in the 2012 election were women). We will look at how long it took for women to engage and become a force to be reckoned with, how the issues evolved and how the candidates messages and tactics have changed over time to address this massive voting bloc.

Week 2 – What Women Want (and how campaigns are trying to reach them)
We will look at the last several campaign cycles and recently conducted research for general election battleground states to discuss what were the issue 'drivers' for each. How do campaigns try to win over women voters?

Week 3 – Is there a Republican “War on Women”?  
This will be a discussion on the tactics Democrats have employed to paint Republicans as anti-women. We will discuss whether or not those issues are legitimate, whether the Democrats actually believe them or it’s simply a campaign tactic, whether they have been successful and whether the Republicans have a plan to combat the attack. If not a “war on women,” does the GOP have a women problem?

Week 4 – Madam President
This will be a discussion of the women that have run for President and how that has led to the likelihood of the first female major party nominee. We will discuss the challenges she faces, the benefits and the differences between male and female candidates. How have female candidates chosen to run as a woman (or not)? What will be the impact of electing the first female president of the United States?

Week 5 – Newswomen Covering Campaigns
How have women in media changed the dynamics in political campaigns? We will discuss the role of women reporters, news anchors and debate moderators and how they have impacted modern campaigns. We will look at the evolution from the first women to cover political campaigns up to the present day. We will look at their relationships with male candidates vs female candidates and discuss the perception of a "sisterhood" among professional political women.
**Week 6 – What Political Admakers Can Learn from Madison Avenue About Women**
When it comes to advertising, are women different from men? This week we will focus on what goes into reaching women with advertising. We will discuss the research that goes into advertising as well as the footage, colors, music, messaging that go into creating a political ad. We will also discuss placement and the mediums used to get the ads in front of women voters.

**Week 7 – Do Women Lead Differently Than Men?**
When it comes to governing, how do women approach the job? We will discuss the challenges that young, newly elected women encounter in the oldest boys club in America. We will look at the difference women have made, the issue focus, and how women officeholders want to be remembered.

**Week 8 – What Are the Barriers to Women’s Political Participation?**
Why don't more women run for public office? We will discuss studies that have been done which try to answer this question. We will discuss the reasons that men and women approach this differently and what can be done to encourage more women to engage in the political process.