

# Symposium to examine women's suffrage, upcoming elections

By [Mackie Swan](#)

**Published:** Thursday, November 1, 2012

**Updated:** Thursday, November 1, 2012 02:11

With strong emphasis on reproductive rights in the upcoming [presidential election](#), event organizers hope students will be inclined to attend this week's "Woman Citizen: Past, Present and Future" symposium at Oregon State University.

"It's an absolutely terrific event for an election year when so much is at stake," said [Mina Carson](#), an associate professor of history who helped plan the symposium.

This year marks the 100th anniversary of women's right to vote in the state of Oregon, and the symposium serves not only to commemorate that achievement, but also to spark discussion among students and the community.

"My hope is that OSU students and other attendees will get a better sense of how important the struggle for women's suffrage was," said [Misty Freeman](#), president of OSU's Women in Policy. "And for the women in the audience, how we should not take for granted the privilege of voting."

The symposium begins Thursday with featured speaker [Susan Scanlan](#), the chair of the National Council of Women's Organizations. Scanlan will speak about the history of the suffrage movement and what it means for this year's election.

Scanlan also serves as president of the [Women's Research and Education Institute](#), where she works directly with the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives to address women's issues in public policy.

"She's the voice of essentially 12 million American women who belong to these organizations," said [Marisa Chappell](#), associate professor of history and the organizer of the Woman Citizen symposium. "It's really exciting to have her here, to give us a view of the scene from the center of national power and what's going on with women's issues."

[Kim Jensen](#), who Chappell describes as the "foremost authority of the Oregon women's suffrage movement," will highlight the suffrage movement specific to the state. Jensen is a professor of history and gender studies at Western Oregon University.

Friday afternoon includes a roundtable discussion "Women in Government," featuring elected government officials currently in office. Participants include state Senator Jackie Winters and former Oregon Governor and current Metro Council Member Barbara Roberts, among others. Speakers will discuss the barriers they faced as women in politics and their experiences serving in office.

"We hope that students and community members will meet some amazing women who are working in various ways to bring about social change," said [Kryn Freehling-Burton](#), an OSU women's studies instructor.

Chappell believes that although women's history is now a "respected subfield" within history, it is still not central to high school curricula. As part of the [Woman Citizen Project](#), Chappell is teaching Women, Gender and Politics, an undergraduate history course in which students are creating lesson plans for local high schools.

One group of three students created a women's suffrage lesson plan that they will teach to history students at Crescent Valley High School.

The [Century of Action](#) exhibit, sponsored in part by the Secretary of State's office, will be displayed throughout the symposium. The digital exhibit was created to celebrate the anniversary of women's suffrage.

Student work will accompany the exhibit, including graduate student research from the [School of Public Policy](#) regarding issues of women and gender.

The symposium is Nov. 1-2 in the LaSells Stewart Center Construction and Engineering Hall. All events are free and open to the public. Lectures and roundtables are designed for a broad public audience and audience participation is highly encouraged. "I'm hoping that [people], especially students, will come away sort of inspired," Chappell said. "Inspired to become more informed, to

become involved, and to put some of their energy into trying to shape their community.”

Mackie Swan, news reporter  
news@dailybarometer.com