

Newcomb Institute is pleased to showcase the latest publication of the Women Leading Change Journal

|
Navya Murugesan (SSE '24)

[View PDF](#)



(Photo of Rising fourth-year Newcomb Scholars featured in *Women Leading Change: Case Studies in Women, Gender, and Feminism*)

September 6, 2023

Newcomb Institute is pleased to announce the latest publication of two new issues (Vol. 7 no. 1 and 2) of [***Women Leading Change: Case Studies in Women,***](#)

Gender, and Feminism. Featuring case studies authored by Newcomb Scholars, an elite cohort of undergraduate students at Tulane University, the journal is published periodically and provides a platform for sharing their research and classroom work, which is then carefully curated for journal publication.

Renowned as one of the leading research universities in the United States, Tulane actively promotes undergraduate participation in research endeavors. Through the Newcomb Scholars Program, students gain access to valuable research opportunities, allowing them to actively engage in meaningful studies, cultivate expertise in their chosen fields, and explore tenets of feminist leadership. The program fosters interdisciplinary exploration and supports a close-knit community of diverse thinkers, leaders, and activists, supported by the Newcomb faculty, staff, and resources provided by the Newcomb Institute. It also facilitates connections with faculty members that extend beyond traditional classroom interactions. Director of the Newcomb Scholars Program Aidan Smith notes “The Scholars’ research engagements are often the first opportunity to develop their own questions and discover their own capacity for knowledge production. They are not just absorbing information from a professor or textbook. They are creating something new, a contribution to the entire intellectual community.”

In their sophomore year, Newcomb Scholars embark on a captivating leadership course inspired by real-world challenges faced by women driving social change in organizations. Utilizing teaching cases inspired by Harvard Business School's approach, students engage in immersive learning through simulated scenarios, tackling complex dilemmas faced by women leaders; this experience equips them with invaluable insights into real-world problem-solving. This dynamic learning environment fosters vibrant classroom discussions, mirroring the advantages observed in professional schools. The course seamlessly combines the exploration of women's leadership, social change, and abstract reasoning across diverse academic disciplines. “Case studies enable students to develop critical thinking because they are able to place themselves in the shoes of leaders whose choices are not black and white” stated Anna Mahoney, Administrative Associate Professor of Women's Political Leadership and Director of Research for Newcomb Institute.

This year’s publication highlights work from a select group of rising fourth-year Newcomb Scholars: **Zoe Friese, Navya Murugesan, Molly Shields, Claire Ramsay, Ava Buras, Jazlynn Leung, Jordan Godfrey, and Rebecca Steynberg**

- [Zoe Friese](#), a multi-disciplinary student of Political Economy, Environmental Studies, and Chinese, took on the role of chief editor for this year's journal volume. Her standout contribution was a captivating case study on Sharon Lavigne, an inspiring grandmother-turned-activist from Louisiana's notorious Cancer Alley.
- [Navya Murugesan](#), a pre-med student studying Neuroscience and Sociology, penned a compelling case delving into the fiery dynamics of the resurgent "St. George" school secession movement in Louisiana amidst nationwide debates on Critical Race Theory, focusing on Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome's emergence as a resilient symbol who fearlessly works to unite the city of Baton Rouge, promote racial harmony, ensure financial stability, and revitalize the public education system.
- [Molly Shields](#), a Political Science major with minors in Economics and Public Health, analyzes Sarah Palin's vice-presidential campaign. Her case study explores how Palin's conservative feminism and identity as a mother reshaped women's engagement with national politics and influenced politicians' responses to female constituents.
- [Claire Ramsay](#), an Economics student, analyzed tennis star Naomi Osaka's withdrawal from the 2021 French Open emphasizing mental health advocacy and the need for supportive policies and legal frameworks for athletes, examining the legal aspects faced by the Grand Slam governing body in a case study.
- [Ava Buras](#), a Legal Studies in Business major with minors in Entrepreneurial Management, Political Science, and Gender & Sexuality Studies, authored a case that explores the positional influence of the chief justice, the importance of a representative bench, and what progress means for a historically prejudiced state like Louisiana.
- [Jazlynn Leung](#), a Public Health major, formulated a case study that follows one woman in her decision-making process regarding her pregnancy after receiving a fetal diagnosis of Down syndrome and the larger societal factors that may impact her decision and those of other people in similar positions.
- [Jordan Godfrey](#), a Cell and Molecular Biology major, authored a case focusing on the issue of maternal mortality in the United States and explored the impact of government legislation in reducing maternal health disparities.
- [Rebecca Steynberg](#), a Neuroscience and Psychology major, crafted a case about the ethics of the cutting-edge realm of germ-line editing, some history, and analysis of the ethics of medical research and its ties to eugenics.

A Note of Reflection & Gratitude

“Besides delving into and learning from Lavigne’s inspiring story, I enjoyed learning from my peers as I assisted them through the revisions process. It was an honor and ultimately a rewarding adventure to serve as this year’s chief editor. I hope the readers find these stories as intriguing and thought-provoking as I do.”

— **Zoe Friese**

“I had the privilege of serving as the assistant editor, allowing me to work with my peers and deepen my understanding of each scholar’s respective field of study. These cases highlight influential women leaders, showing that women face similar conflicts in various contexts. These stories reveal that there is no “right” answer to political activism and leadership, and women challenging political norms face double standards.”

— **Molly Shields**

“Case studies serve as catalysts for dialogue among students and seasoned experts alike, igniting vibrant discussions where theories and trends are transformed into tangible instances. Within the Newcomb Scholars Program, students are granted a precious gift—an opportunity to convene alongside other like-minded individuals with a shared passion for feminism.

Words cannot fully encapsulate the depth of our gratitude for our professor and guiding light, Dr. Anna Mahoney. She skillfully nurtured and shaped our narratives from their humble beginnings to their triumphant completion, imparting upon us the profound essence of the genre case study writing.

To our steadfast editors, Zoe and Molly, my peers and I owe immeasurable thanks to whose graceful demeanor brought solace and inspiration during the arduous editing process.

With great admiration, please join me in congratulating the authors for their dedication and immense effort poured into researching, writing, and refining these pieces over several months. Each insight has been meticulously crafted, possessing

a thoughtfulness and relevance that I believe will resonate and endure for years to come.”

— **Navya Murugesan**