



CONCEPT NOTE FOR THE FIRST MODULE OF THE MASSIVE OPEN ONLINE COURSE  
**LEADERSHIP IN SMALL STATES (LIST)**

## Module 4: Small State Leadership in Gender Policy

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*This module provides students with an understanding of how small states perform and profile themselves on normative leadership in gender equality. Students are presented with research from and on various small states, who have found a niche in international relations where they can excel and lead by example. They get critical tools to assess the difference between enhancing gender equality and trying to use domestic success to gain international recognition. Throughout the course, instructors try to problematize gender and bring an intersectional lens to their analysis.*

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The module starts out with a short refresher on small states and leadership. Students are then introduced to the case of Iceland, which is often presented as a global leader for having achieved gender equality. It problematizes the ranking of states based on their success in achieving gender equality, and places the emphasis on it in foreign policy in the context of branding; making the state a desirable partner and destination for its benign treatment of women, while leaving many domestic issues unresolved. This is followed by a short discussion of the emerging field of Feminist Foreign Policy, and the role of small states in its development.

Many current issues facing states in general can be particularly important for small states. In one module students are encouraged to explore the interactions of gender and climate policy. A short lecture examines the role of gender and other intersecting climate relevant factors such as class, income, education, and age in climate politics, with a focus on Scandinavia. The Nordic states are of particular interest in this area as they are known as norm entrepreneurs both on gender politics and environmental issues.

Gender equality policies have until recently been mainly domestic, and one section brings our focus to local governments, discussing women's participation and representation at the local level of government in relation to public administration in small states. It is noted here that empirical research is still lacking, and students are encouraged to participate in exploratory learning.

Turning the gaze to Lithuania, students are asked to reflect on two interrelated topics. First, on gender equality in Lithuania and how it relates to political participation and representation. Second, they are introduced to the politics of Lithuania's former President, Dalia Grybauskaitė and her leadership in foreign policy. Noting that there are still very few women in Lithuanian politics, the focus is on how a female leader emerges who is able to promote not only active and assertive foreign policy agenda, while maintaining gender equality at the core of her agenda.

**Learning outcomes:** On completion of the course, students enrolled should be able to:

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- understand and explain the value placed on gender equality by small states.
  - apply critical insight into how small states can capitalize on domestic characteristics to provide normative leadership in international affairs.
  - analyze examples of small states' leadership in the area of gender equality
  - debate cross-cutting themes such as gender and climate change and their impact on small state leadership
  - demonstrate how the objective of gender equality can be employed as a tool of small state policy
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