

Women leaders in New Orleans are focus of Tulane course

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Among the leaders of New Orleans discussed are (clockwise from top left) Sybil Morial, Nina Compton, Deon Haywood, Kristin Gisleson Palmer, Anne Milling (NC '62) and Helena Moreno. (Image from Newcomb College Institute)

From nonprofit organizations to government, from social movements to Mardi Gras, and from restaurants to boardrooms, women have led and continue to lead New Orleans.

Using an intersectional feminist lens, Clare Daniel, administrative assistant professor of Women's Leadership at Newcomb College Institute, teaches first-year students in the Spark Residential Learning Community how personal, organizational and institutional factors affect women's practices of leadership in "Women Leading New Orleans," a Tulane Interdisciplinary Experience Seminar (TIDES) course.

In "Women Leading New Orleans" students read and discuss research on gender and leadership, while examining historical and contemporary examples of women taking charge in New Orleans. Daniel introduces students to theories of gender as a social construct and intersectionality and discusses how and why women lead, as well as barriers they encounter to do so. Guest speakers, field trips, and writing assignments ask students to think broadly and analytically about what leadership is, what it means to them, and how identities and institutions shape the experience of leadership.

Guest speakers from across New Orleans have included author and former first lady of New Orleans Sybil Morial, and activist/philanthropist Anne Milling (NC '62) of the nonprofit organization Women of the Storm. This semester, Daniel will also take students to City Hall to meet councilmembers Kristen Gisleson Palmer and Helena Moreno, and to the restaurant Compère Lapin to have lunch and speak with chef Nina Compton about what it's like to be a woman leader in a male-dominated field.

"I hope that students leave this course ready to make good use of their time at Tulane — to begin taking leadership opportunities early in life, so that they can practice navigating the unique challenges that face women leaders across fields," said Daniel.