

Political Parties in the United States

Political Science 4031

Spring 2016

Dr. Hogan
TTH 10:30-11:50
236 Coates

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Course Description

This course examines the current state of political parties within the U.S. political system. We will consider various aspects of parties – their organizational elements, the extent to which citizens identify with parties, and the role of parties in government. Our focus is on describing each of these three major elements, understanding the linkages among them, and assessing their influence within the electoral and policymaking spheres. A comparative approach will be employed when possible as we examine parties on the national, state, and local levels. Such a perspective will enable us to address several fundamental questions: Do political parties enhance or detract from representative democracy? Do the two major parties in the U.S. provide real policy alternatives to voters? Over time, have parties become too powerful? Or have they become too weak in the current candidate-centered, interest group-influenced electoral environment? In addition to aspects of parties themselves, we will focus attention on factors that condition their activities and power. How do rules or contextual variables affect parties and what changes might reform efforts bring?

Polarization of the parties is a topic that has received significant public attention in recent years and we will spend time pondering this aspect of party politics. Many observers and scholars view the high degree of party polarization in U.S. politics as worrisome. Throughout the semester we will address various questions regarding polarization such as measuring the extent of polarization, the conditions responsible for its presence, and the implications of a polarized political system. Another area that will receive special attention this semester is the presidential nomination process that is currently underway. We will spend time examining how this system operates and assess its implications. Given the relevance of the Democratic and Republican nomination contests to the topics we are covering in this course, please monitor news reports about these contests as events unfold.

In addition to our substantive focus, we will also give attention to the methods and techniques used by scholars as they go about answering important questions about political parties. One of our objectives is to assess the evidence uncovered by scholars. How do these findings comport with common perceptions or media accounts concerning political parties? While this is not a course on political science methodology, issues involving research design and analysis will play prominently in many of our class discussions.

Time Requirements

Please keep in mind the university's definition of work required for each credit hour: "not less than one hour (50 minutes) of lecture/classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours out-of-class student work across 15 weeks for one semester." Given that this is a 3-hour course, this means that students are expected to devote a total of 9 hours of work each week: 3 hours in the classroom and an additional 6 hours of course related work outside the classroom (for this class it means reading, studying, and working on the course assignments).

Required Reading Materials

There are two books available for purchase in the bookstore: *Party Politics in America* by Marjorie Randon Hershey (16th edition, New York: Pearson Longman) and *Primary Politics: Everything You Need to Know about How America Nominates Its Presidential Candidates* (2016, 2nd edition, Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press). In addition, a large portion of the reading load involve articles listed on the course schedule below. Each is available for download from the class Moodle site. Note a few of these readings are newspaper articles that will take only a few minutes to read, but most are lengthy pieces from academic journals that will take an hour or more to fully digest. These academic articles very often form the central part of our class discussions so it is imperative that you carefully read and take notes on these pieces. I also strongly recommend printing most of the articles given that I will often make reference to the tables and graphs in the articles. However, there are a few exceptions where the article has many pages and/or much color ink is required for printing (For these cases I provide an "Ink Warning along with the citations on the course schedule). Reading constitutes a substantial portion of the work for this course, so make certain that you plan accordingly for each class. I conduct class in a manner that assumes students have read the course materials assigned for the day, so come to class prepared.

Course Grades

The grade for the course is determined by a student's performance in the following areas:

| | |
|------------------------------|-------------|
| Participation and Attendance | 15% |
| State Party Project | 30% |
| Mid-Term Exam | 25% |
| Final Exam | 30% |
| TOTAL | 100% |

Letter grades are assigned as follows based on a student's final numerical average:

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| F | D- | D | D+ | C- | C | C+ | B- | B | B+ | A- | A | A+ |
| <60 | 60-62 | 63-66 | 67-69 | 70-72 | 73-76 | 77-79 | 80-82 | 83-86 | 87-89 | 90-92 | 93-96 | 97 ≥ |

Participation and Attendance

Classes are generally conducted using a lecture-discussion format so it is necessary to keep up with the readings and to come prepared for every class. Students are strongly encouraged to take part in class discussions. In order to do so, it is necessary to complete the readings *in advance* and to spend time thinking about them in a critical manner. Also, please keep up with current political developments since these will often be used as examples in our discussions. Participation comprises a relatively large portion of your grade (15% total) and will be determined by three equally weighted components:

- Self-Reported Class Participation: During each class period I will ask questions about the day's readings and will expect to receive answers. If you have questions about the readings or comments about the substantive topics in the course, please ask them. I will track your participation based upon your self-reported participation. If you have participated in the day's class either in asking questions, answering questions, or providing comments, please hand in a sheet of paper at the end of class indicating what your contribution was for that day (briefly restating your question, answer, or comment). It is expected that you will participate on 6 different days during the course of the semester. If you provide substantive comments or ask questions (that a reasonable person would say enlightened the discussion) on 6 separate days, you will receive 100% for this portion of your participation grade (if you participate 5 times your score will be 83%, 4 times 67%, and so on).
- Class Activities: Several times during the semester I will ask you to provide written comments about a topic, answer a brief question, take a quiz, or take part in a class exercise. Your performance on these activities will be counted as a component of your overall participation grade. There will be many of these opportunities throughout the semester and your grade is determined by your successful completion of each. If you satisfactorily complete all of them, you will receive 100% for this component of your participation, complete 90% and your grade is 90, 80% is a grade of 80, etc. Note for quizzes and some activities a grade is given, so to "satisfactorily complete" the activity is to correctly answer the questions asked.
- Attendance: Attending class is important and your presence will be checked regularly with a sign-in sheet or by other mechanisms. Please make certain that you come to class on time so that you will be counted as present for the day. As with the other forms of participation, if you attend 100% of the time when I have checked attendance, your grade is 100, attend 90% of the time and it is 90, etc.

State Party Project

A major portion of the course grade (30%) is determined by your work on a report and presentation about state party organizations on an assigned state. The report requires that you collect information on the party organizations, their structures, and their various activities during recent elections. Students will make brief presentations to the class in April and a final report is due at the beginning of class on Thursday, April 21. Details concerning the project will be provided in an additional handout during the second week of classes.

Exams

There is a midterm and a final exam (dates are listed on the syllabus). These tests will consist of multiple-choice, short-answer, and/or brief essay questions. Note that makeup exams are all-essay exams and will only be administered when a student can produce a valid written excuse. If you anticipate a problem, please let me know as soon as possible. Also, for anyone who has special needs or who requires accommodations through Disability Services, please advise me of your situation in advance of the exams so arrangements can be made.

General Policies

Academic Honesty

Students are required to abide by the academic conduct policies outlined in the LSU Code of Student Conduct (<http://www.lsu.edu/judicialaffairs>). Examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to: cheating on exams, plagiarizing, buying or selling assignments, altering grades, intentional deception, and collaborating with others without permission. I reserve the right to investigate when I suspect a violation of any of these policies. All violations of the university's academic conduct policies are turned over to the Dean of Students.

Classroom Rules

Please be respectful to those around you who are trying to listen, take notes, and participate in the class. Please make every effort to be on time to class. Be seated and ready to begin at 10:30 and leave early only for emergencies. Turn cell phones and pagers to silent. Most importantly, do not talk during class. Disruptive students will be asked to leave immediately.

Absolutely no audio or video recording devices are allowed to be used unless special permission is granted. Please do not take photographs of the overheads. Photography or videography of any kind is forbidden. This rule is strictly enforced during exams and during review of exam materials. All violators of this policy will be asked to leave the classroom immediately and the incident will be reported to the Dean of Students. These restrictions are in place to ensure the integrity of testing materials and to protect student privacy.

You are free to use laptop computers and other electronic devices for class purposes (e.g., taking notes, looking up relevant information, etc.). But please do not play on the internet, check e-mail, or use social networking sites.

Late Assignments and Missed Work

In an effort to provide a level playing field, I take deadlines very seriously and hold everyone to an identical standard. Make every effort to take scheduled exams and hand in work on time. However, I recognize there are legitimate reasons for missing a deadline or an exam. The following reasons are some, but probably not all, of the excuses that are considered acceptable: a documented illness, a family emergency, some severe mechanical failure (related to transportation, computing, etc.), or a scientifically documented anomaly in the space-time continuum. Please note that most job-related issues are not considered acceptable excuses (although see university regulations concerning military duties, official university-sponsored events, etc.). A penalty for handing in the paper late is assessed based upon the circumstances, but will generally involve a substantial loss of points (5 points for missing the deadline, and 5 points for each 24-hour period thereafter). Recognize that for reasons of fairness to other students in the class, credit cannot be given at the end of the semester for missed exams or papers not handed in. In other words, when you experience a significant problem that prevents you from meeting a deadline or taking a test, it is your responsibility to let me know about it in a timely manner and to make arrangements to make up the missed work. Excuses must be provided within one week of your return, NOT at the end of the semester. Excuse forms are available on this course's Moodle site where they must be submitted along with any other accompanying documentation (a doctor's note, etc.).

Graded Work

I do not make grades available on Moodle and I will not e-mail grades. I will return the state party project and your midterm exam to you in class. During office hours I am happy to review grades with you and talk with you about ways to improve your performance. Please note, however, I will not estimate your current grade for you (the percentage that each grade counts toward your final average is provided above).

Graduate Credit or Honors Credit

For students taking this course for graduate credit or for those who wish to receive special Honors credit, it is the student's responsibility to contact me at the beginning of the semester to make appropriate arrangements.

Special Needs

For students who have special needs or require accommodations through Disability Services, please advise me of your situation so arrangements can be made.

Course Schedule

- January 14 ***Introduction to the Course***
- No reading assignment.
- January 19 ***What Are Political Parties and Why Should We Study Them?***
- Hershey: pp. 1-48.
 - Reading #1: Mann, Thomas E. 2014. “Admit It, Political Scientists: Politics Really Is More Broken Than Ever,” *The Atlantic*.
 - Reading #2: Pew Research Center. 2015. “GOP’s Favorability Rating Takes a Negative Turn,” July 23. **[INK WARNING – long article with several colored pages].**
 - Reading #3: Klein, Ezra. 2015. “Two Political Scientists Have Found the Secret to Partisanship, and It’s Deeply Depressing” *Vox*, October.
- January 21 ***How to Study Parties***
- Reading #4: Chapters from *Everything is Obvious Once You Know the Answers: How Common Sense Fails Us* by Duncan J. Watts, 2011, New York: Crown Publishing (Preface, Chapters 1 & 2).
 - Reading #5: Berry, William D., and Mitchell S. Sanders. 2000. (Chapter 1) *Understanding Multivariate Research: A Primer for Beginning Social Scientists*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
 - Reading #6: “Political Science Research Fundamentals: Some Important Concepts and Definitions.”
 - Reading #7: Bycoffe, Aaron. 2016. “The Endorsement Primary,” *New York Times*, January 9.
 - Reading #8: Putnam, Josh. 2015. “Everything You Need to Know about How the Presidential Primary Works,” *Washington Post*, May 12.
- January 26 ***Methods of Studying Parties***
- Reading #9: Thomsen, Danielle M. 2014. “Ideological Moderates Won’t Run: How Party Fit Matters for Partisan Polarization in Congress,” *Journal of Politics* July: 786-97.
 - Reading #10: Cohn, Nate. 2015. “Donald Trump’s Strongest Supporters: A Certain Kind of Democrat,” *New York Times*, December 31.
 - Reading #11: Bland, Scott. 2016. “Donald Trump’s Big Tent,” *POLITICO*, January 8.
- January 28 ***Parties and Presidential Nominations***
- Hershey: pp. 196-215.
 - Kamarck: pp. 1-52.
- February 2 ***Presidential Nomination Process***
- Kamarck: pp. 53-150.
- February 4 ***Presidential Nomination Process Evaluated***
- Kamarck: pp. 151-190.
- February 9 **Mardi Gras Holiday**
- February 11 ***Party Organizations at the State and Local Levels***
- Hershey: pp. 49-70.
 - Reading #12: Golway, Terry. 2014. “The Forgotten Virtues of Tammany Hall,” *New York Times*, Jan. 17.
 - Reading #13: Tau, Byron. 2014. “Last Call for State Parties?” *Politico*, February 16.
- February 16 ***Party Organizations at the State and National Levels***
- Hershey: pp. 71-91.
 - Reading #14: Nagourney, Adam. 2014. “Midterms Give Parties Chance for Sweeping Control of States,” *New York Times*, August 10. See the interactive graphics at: <http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2014/01/11/us/politics/who-controls-the-states-and-where-they-stand.html>
 - Reading #15: Robertson, Campbell, and Jonathan Martin. 2014. “Louisiana’s Rogues Yield to National Issues,” *New York Times*, October 29. See the interactive graphics at: http://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/30/us/politics/national-concerns-drain-color-from-politics-in-louisiana.html?hp&action=click&pgtype=Homepage&module=first-column-region®ion=top-news&WT.nav=top-news&_r=0#

- February 18** ***Party Activists***
- Hershey: pp. 92-108.
 - Reading #16: Bailey, Michael A., Jonathan Mummolo, and Hans Noel. 2012. "Tea Party Influence: A Story of Activists and Elites," *American Politics Research* 405: 769-804.
- February 23** ***Party in the Electorate***
- Hershey: pp. 109-129.
 - Reading #17: Edsall, Thomas B. 2014. "How Much Do Our Genes Influence Our Political Beliefs?" *New York Times*, July.
 - Reading #18: Irwin, Neil. 2016. "How Is the Economy Doing? It May Depend on Your Party, and \$1" *New York Times*, January 1.
 - Reading #19: Ezra Klein, and Alvin Chang. 2015. "Political identity is fair game for hatred": How Republicans and Democrats Discriminate," *Vox*, December 7.
- February 25** ***Party Polarization in the Electorate***
- Reading #20: Dimock, Michael. 2014. "Political Polarization in the American Public," Pew Center June [INK WARNING – long article with many colored pages].
 - Reading #21: Fiorina, Morris. 2014. "Americans Have Not Become More Politically Polarized," *The Monkey Cage*, June 23.
- March 1** ***Party Coalitions***
- Hershey: pp. 130-154.
 - Reading #22: Lyons, Jeffrey. 2011. "Where You Live and Who You Know: Political Environments, Social Pressures, and Partisan Stability," *American Politics Research* 39: 963-992.
- March 3** ***Party Coalition Changes***
- Reading #23: Knuckey, Jonathan. 2006. "Explaining Recent Changes in the Partisan Identifications of Southern Whites," *Political Research Quarterly* 59: 57-70.
- March 8** **Mid-Term Exam**
- March 10** ***Parties and Voter Participation***
- Hershey: pp. 155-176.
 - Reading #24: Miller, Patrick R., and Pamela Johnston Conover. 2015. "Red and Blue States of Mind: Partisan Hostility and Voting in the United States," *Political Research Quarterly*: 1-15.
 - Reading #25: McElwee, Sean. 2015. "Why Non-Voters Matter," *The Atlantic*, September 15.
- March 15** ***Voting Laws in the States***
- Reading #26: Mycoff, Jason D., Michael W. Wagner, and David C. Wilson. 2009. "The Empirical Effects of Voter-ID Laws: Present or Absent?" *PS: Political Science and Politics* January: 121-126.
 - Reading #27: Bentele, Keith G., and Erin E. O'Brien. 2013. "Jim Crow 2.0? Why States Consider and Adopt Restrictive Voter Access Policies," *Perspectives on Politics*, December: 1088-1116.
 - Reading #28: Bergman, Elizabeth. 2015. "Voting Only by Mail Can Decrease Turnout. Or Increase It. Wait, What?" *Washington Post*, December 21.
- March 17** ***Party Financing: Sums and Sources, and Rules***
- Hershey: pp. 235-260.
 - Reading #29: Rutenberg, Jim. 2014. "How Billionaire Oligarchs Are Becoming Their Own Political Parties," *New York Times* October 17.
 - Reading #30: Confessor, Nicholas, Sarah Cohen, and Karen Yourish. 2015. "Small Pool of Rich Donors Dominates Election Giving," *New York Times*, August 1.
 - Reading #31: McCauley, Laura. 2015. "2016 Marks a New Era for Dark Money," *The American Prospect*, June 15.
 - Reading #32: Israel, Steve. 2016. "Confessions of a Congressman," *New York Times* January 8.
- March 22** **Spring Break**
- March 24** **Spring Break**

- March 29 ***Party Money Continued***
- Reading #33: Chapters 1-3 (PAGES 1-45) Tokaji, Daniel P., and Renata E. B. Strause. 2014. "The New Soft Money: Outside Spending in Congressional Elections," A Project of Election Law @ Moritz, Ohio State University College of Law [INK WARNING – This is a very large file with many colored pages].
 - Reading #34: Wesleyan Media Project. 2015. "Super PACS Dominate Airwaves," December 15.
- March 31 ***Party Contributions and Polarization***
- Reading #35: Damore, David F., and Thomas G. Hansford. 1999. "The Allocation of Party Controlled Campaign Resources in the House of Representatives, 1989-1996," *Political Research Quarterly* 52: 371-85.
 - Readings #36: LaRaja, Ray, and Brian Schaffner. 2014. "Want to Reduce Polarization? Give Parties More Money," *Washington Post*, July 21.
- April 5 ***Parties in Candidate Recruitment and Nomination***
- Hershey: pp. 177-195.
 - Reading #37: Maestas, Cherie, L. Sandy Maisel, and Walter Stone 2005 "Strategic Contact: Party Efforts to Recruit State Legislators to Run for the U.S. House" *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 30: 277-300.
- *** Presentations: Set #1 *****
- April 7 **No Class**
- April 12 ***Party Nomination Rules***
- Reading #38: Schumer, Charles. 2014. "End Partisan Primaries, Save America." *New York Times*, July 21.
 - Reading #39: Karol, David. 2014. "Charles Schumer's Flawed Diagnosis of Polarization," *The Monkey Cage, Washington Post* July 23.
 - Reading #40: McGhee, Eric, Seth Masket, Boris Shor, Steven Rogers, and Nolan McCarty. 2014. "A Primary Cause of Partisanship? Nomination Systems and Legislator Ideology," *American Journal of Political Science* 58: 337-51.
- *** Presentations: Set #2 *****
- April 14 ***Political Parties in the General Election***
- Hershey: pp. 216-234.
- *** Presentations: Set #3 *****
- April 19 ***Political Parties in the General Election Continued***
- Reading #41: Brooks, David. 2014. "Death by Data" *New York Times* November 3.
 - Reading #42: Chen, Lanhee J., and Andrew Reeves. 2011. "Turning Out the Base or Appealing to the Periphery? An Analysis of County-Level Candidate Appearances in the 2008 Presidential Campaign," *American Politics Research* 39: 534-556.
- *** Presentations: Set #4 *****
- April 21 ***Minor Parties in U.S. Elections***
- Hershey: Re-read pp. 34-46.
- ***** Printed copy of State Party Project due at the beginning of class *******
- April 26 ***Parties in Legislatures***
- Hershey: pp. 261-286.
 - Reading #43: Nokken, Timothy P. 2000. "Dynamics of Congressional Loyalty: Party Defection and Roll-Call Behavior, 1947-97," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 25: 417-45.
 - Reading #44: Farrell, John Aloysius. 2012. "Divided We Stand," *National Journal*, February 24.
- April 28 ***Party Effects in Government***
- Hershey: pp. 287-334.
- May 6 **Final Exam in this classroom on Friday from 10:00 a.m. to NOON.**