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PSCI 34101: Political Parties and Elections

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Political Science 341/440: Parties & Elections

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Spring 2012
University of Montana
Location: Liberal Arts 337
Time: TuTh 12:40-2:00
Office hours: Wed 10:00-12:00

Course Description

Political contests in America today are unimaginable without political parties. We frequently describe our political system in terms of right and left, Republican and Democrat. In this class, we will closely examine political parties and electoral politics in the United States. Topics will include the purposes and development of the American party system as well as the role of political parties in the electorate, campaigns, and government institutions. Students who successfully complete this course will leave with a deeper understanding of American partisanship and of the consequences of reforming party structure and electoral processes.

Readings

Two books are required for this course and are available at the campus bookstore:

Presidential Elections: Strategies and Structures of American Politics (13th ed.) by Nelson W. Polsby, Aaron Wildavsky, Steven E. Schier, & David A. Hopkins (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012).

Party Politics in America (14th ed.) by Marjorie Randon Hershey (New York: Pearson-Longman, 2011)

In addition to these texts, **a number of readings for this course will be made available online**. It is my expectation that you come to class having read the assigned material for that week. I reserve the right to add, delete, or alter course readings as needed.

Outside the class readings, I also expect you to stay current with U.S. political events, particularly those relating to the presidential primary and the upcoming elections in November. I will try to devote time every week to go over recent political news and relate it (when possible) to the theories discussed in class. Though there are many news sources to choose from, I strongly recommend the following websites, which are devoted to analyzing political events from a political science perspective:

FiveThirtyEight: fivethirtyeight.blogs.nytimes.com

Larry J. Sabato's Crystal Ball: centerforpolitics.org/crystalball

The Monkey Cage: themonkeycage.org

Assignments and Grades

GRADES. Your grade in this course will consist of the following components:

Paper #1	30%
Paper #2	30%
Final Exam	30%
Class Participation	10%

In order to receive a passing grade in the course, you must complete both writing assignments and both exams. Late papers will be accepted with a penalty of one full grade per day late. Extensions and exam reschedulings will be allowed only in extreme cases and will require sufficient notice.

PAPERS. There will be two writing assignments for this course. The first is due March 1, and the second on April 19. Details on the assignments will be distributed approximately two weeks before their due dates.

EXAM. The final exam for this course is scheduled for Tuesday, May 8 from 1:10-3:10 PM (in our usual classroom). Review material and details regarding the exam format will be distributed before the end of regular classes.

PARTICIPATION. This course is intended to be a mix of lecture and discussion. As such, it is expected that you attend class regularly, do the assigned readings before coming to class, and be prepared to talk about the material. I strongly prefer not to "cold call" on students but will resort to such a tactic if the discussion seems too inactive. I will not take attendance every class, but two bad things will happen if you frequently skip class: (1) your grade will suffer directly due to your participation score (since you will not be present to participate), and (2) you will not understand the material as well as if you see the lecture material, which will bring down the other components of your grade.

GRADUATE STUDENTS. Those enrolled in PSCI 440 will be expected to meet all the same requirements as those enrolled in PSCI 341 with one notable exception: the second writing assignment will be a lengthier, research-based paper that goes beyond that which is expected of the undergraduates enrolled in the course. Graduate students may choose their own paper topics, but they must get advance approval on the topic from the professor. Graduate students should begin discussing their research proposals with the professor at least one month before the due date.

Office Hours

My office hours are every Wednesday from 10 AM to 12 PM. If this time is inconvenient for you, I am also available by appointment. Office hours are a great opportunity for us to discuss the material in more depth, to go over assignments or difficult concepts, or to talk about anything else on your mind. Coming to office hours is by no means required, but they do help you get the most out of this course.

Academic Honesty

Academic dishonesty (cheating, plagiarism, etc.) will not be tolerated. Information on academic honesty is available here: libguides.lib.umd.edu/plagiarism. Those who commit acts of academic dishonesty will not pass this course. If you are unsure whether or not something counts as academic dishonesty, please come talk to me; I would much rather help you prevent plagiarism beforehand than be forced to punish you for it after the fact.

Disability Services

Qualified students with disabilities will receive appropriate accommodations in this course. Students with disabilities requesting accommodations on exams, papers, or other course requirements should contact me as soon as possible, and must contact Disability Services for Students (DSS) in order to arrange for and provide me with a letter of approval for accommodations at least one week prior to the first exam. DSS is in Lommasson Center 154.

Class Schedule

PART I: THE AMERICAN PARTY SYSTEM

Week 1 (Jan. 24 & 26): What Are Parties?

Marjorie Randon Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, ch. 1.

John H. Aldrich, *Why Parties? The Origin and Transformation of Political Parties in America* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1995), pp. 3-27. [online]

Week 2 (Jan. 31 & Feb. 2): Development of American Parties

Marjorie Randon Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, ch. 9.

Alexis de Tocqueville, "Parties in the United States," *Democracy in America*. [online]

David R. Mayhew, *Electoral Realignment: A Critique of an American Genre* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), pp. 7-42. [online]

Nelson W. Polsby, *How Congress Evolves* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 75-108. [online]

Week 3 (Feb. 7 & 9): Third Parties

Marjorie Randon Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, ch. 2.

Nelson W. Polsby, et al. *Presidential Elections: Strategies and Structures of American Politics*, pp. 47-49.

Kay Lawson, "The Case for a Multiparty System," in Paul S. Herrnson & John C. Green, eds., *Multiparty Politics in America* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997), pp. 59-72. [online]

John F. Bibby, "In Defense of a Two-Party System," in Paul S. Herrnson & John C. Green, eds., *Multiparty Politics in America* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997), pp. 73-84. [online]

Ronald B. Rapoport & Walter J. Stone, *Three's a Crowd: The Dynamic of Third Parties, Ross Perot, and Republican Resurgence* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), pp. 25-46. [online]

PART II: PARTIES & VOTERS

Week 4 (Feb. 14 & 16): Party Identification

Marjorie Randon Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, ch. 6.

Nelson W. Polsby, et al. *Presidential Elections: Strategies and Structures of American Politics*, ch. 1.

Donald Green, Bradley Palmquist, & Eric Schickler, *Partisan Hearts and Minds: Political Parties and the Social Identities of Voters* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), pp. 1-51. [online]

Week 5 (Feb. 21 & 23): Ideology and Polarization

Michael Barone, "The 49 Percent," *National Journal*, June 9, 2001. [online]

Morris P. Fiorina & Samuel J. Abrams, "Political Polarization in the American Public," *Annual Review of Political Science* 11 (2008), 563-588. [online]

Jeffrey M. Stonecash, "Class in American Politics," in Jeffrey M. Stonecash, ed., *New Directions in American Political Parties* (New York: Routledge, 2010), pp. 110-125. [online]

Alan Abramowitz, "Ideological Realignment among Voters," in Jeffrey M. Stonecash, ed., *New Directions in American Political Parties* (New York: Routledge, 2010), pp. 126-147. [online]

Laura R. Olson, "Religion, Moralism, and the Culture Wars: Competing Moral Visions," in Jeffrey M. Stonecash, ed., *New Directions in American Political Parties* (New York: Routledge, 2010), pp. 148-165. [online]

Week 6 (Feb. 28 & March 1): Voting Behavior

Paper #1 due: March 1 (at the beginning of class)

Marjorie Randon Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, ch. 8.

Jack Citrin, Eric Schickler, & John Sides, "What if Everyone Voted? Simulating the Impact of Increased Turnout in Senate Elections," *American Journal of Political Science* 47, no. 1 (2003): 75-90. [online]

Henry E. Brady & John E. McNulty, "Turning Out to Vote: The Costs of Finding and Getting to the Polling Place," *American Political Science Review* 105, no. 1 (2011): 115-134. [online]

PART III: CAMPAIGNS & ELECTIONS

Week 7 (March 6 & March 8): Party Organizations & Activists

Marjorie Randon Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, ch. 3-5.

Week 8 (March 13 & 15): Recruitment and Nominations

Marjorie Randon Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, ch. 9 & 10.

Nelson W. Polsby, et al. *Presidential Elections: Strategies and Structures of American Politics*, ch. 4.

Nelson W. Polsby, *The Consequences of Party Reform* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), pp. 3-39. [online]

Marty Cohen, David Karol, Hans Noel, & John Zaller, *The Party Decides: Presidential Nominations Before and After Reform* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2008), pp. 187-234. [online]

Week 9 (March 20 & 22): General Elections

Marjorie Randon Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, ch. 11.

Nelson W. Polsby, et al. *Presidential Elections: Strategies and Structures of American Politics*, ch. 4.

Paul S. Herrnson, *Congressional Elections: Campaigning at Home and in Washington* (Los Angeles: CQ Press, 2012), pp. 91-135. [online]

Week 10 (March 27 & 29): Presidential Campaigns

Film: *The War Room*

Week 11 (April 10): The Electoral College

Nelson W. Polsby, et al. *Presidential Elections: Strategies and Structures of American Politics*, pp. 51, 231-237.

Akhil Reed Amar, *America's Constitution: A Biography* (New York: Random House, 2005), pp. 148-159. [online]

George C. Edwards III, "The Faulty Premises of the Electoral College," in Michael Nelson, ed., *The Presidency and the Political System*, 9th ed. (Washington: CQ Press, 2010), pp. 192-209. [online]

Darshan J. Goux & David A. Hopkins, "The Empirical Implications of Electoral College Reform," *American Politics Research* 36, no. 6 (2008): 857-879. [online]

Week 12 (April 17 & 19): Campaign Finance

Paper #2 due: April 19 (at the beginning of class)

Marjorie Randon Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, ch. 11.

Nelson W. Polsby, et al. *Presidential Elections: Strategies and Structures of American Politics*, ch. 3.

Anthony Corrado & Raymond La Raja, "Point/Counterpoint: Will the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2002 Strengthen the Political System?" *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 24, no. 3 (2005): 604-610. [online]

PART IV: PARTIES IN GOVERNMENT

Week 13 (April 24 & 26): Legislative Parties

Marjorie Randon Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, ch. 13.

David Rohde & John Aldrich, "Consequences of Electoral and Institutional Change: The Evolution of Conditional Party Government in the U.S. House of Representatives," in Jeffrey M. Stonecash, ed., *New Directions in American Political Parties* (New York: Routledge, 2010), pp. 126-147. [online]

Keith Krehbiel, "Where's the Party?" *British Journal of Political Science* 23 (1993): 235-266. [online]

Week 14 (May 1 & 3): Executive & Judicial Parties; Responsible Parties

Marjorie Randon Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, ch. 14 & 15.

Sidney M. Milkis, "The Presidency and Political Parties," in Michael Nelson, ed., *The Presidency and the Political System*, 9th ed. (Washington: CQ Press, 2010) pp. 295-340. [online]

Matthe Yglesias, "The Case for Partisanship: Why Polarization is Good for Us," *The Atlantic*, April 2008. [online]