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PSC 341.01: Political Parties and Elections

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Summer 2005, Session 1
PS 341: Political Parties
Dr. Gregory Koger
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LA 337 M-F 7:30-9 a.m.
Office Hours: M, T, Th 9-10 a.m.
Office: LA 354

Syllabus: Political Parties and Polarization

A typical parties class studies the role of parties as organizations, as active participants in elections, and as a cue for voters' loyalty. Then attention turns to the role of parties in Congress and, more broadly, the relationship between parties and policy making. Ideally, these topics will be addressed in historical perspective.

This class approaches these topics through the prism of a contemporary debate over the *polarization* of American politics. Media coverage of modern politics often stresses the extent to which people align with one party, the increasing cultural divisions between liberals and conservatives, and the stark separation of America into "red" and "blue" states. Political scientists have entered this debate with research on the *extent* of polarization and the *causes* of polarization.

This class will survey the answers to these questions. Through readings and discussion we will study the extent of polarization across different spheres of elections and governing and compare different explanations for the polarization that exists. After a couple weeks of surveying popular and scientific readings, we turn to our centerpiece text, a manuscript-in-progress by Sean Theriault.

This is primarily a reading class. Your primary responsibility is to be prepared for every class and to participate actively. To that end, this class features rules and rituals designed to promote active participation. First, attendance and participation are both key parts of your grade. Second, each class will begin with students being chosen at random to summarize the readings for the day.

Additionally, you are responsible for a memorandum evaluating Theriault's manuscript and an in-class final. Here is the breakdown of grades:

Attendance	20%
→ 1 excused absence; -2% for every subsequent missed class.	
Participation	20%
Paper	30%
Final	30%

Late papers are docked a **full grade** for each day late. There are no excuses for late papers; start papers early and protect yourself against computer failures.

READINGS

The course readings will be on reserve at the library. I recommend making a personal copy of these readings and bringing them to class. In addition, you should check your umontana.edu e-mail addresses daily for news stories that we will discuss in class.

SCHEDULE

Class	Topics	Readings
WEEK 1		
May 23	Introduction	
May 24	Overview 1	<i>Washington Post</i> articles
May 25	Overview 2	"The Partisan Divide," <i>CQ Researcher</i> , April 2004
May 26	Pew I: Mass Polarization	<i>Evenly Divided and Increasingly Polarized</i> (November 2003) 1-76
May 27	<i>Same</i>	<i>Same</i>
WEEK 2		
May 30	<i>Memorial Day NO CLASS</i>	
May 31	Mass Attitudes	Larry Bartels, "Partisanship and Voting Behavior, 1952-1996" <i>AJPS</i> 2000
June 1	Elites as Cause	Marc Hetherington, "Resurgent Mass Partisanship: The Role of Elite Polarization" <i>APSR</i> 2001
June 2	Sources of Congressional Polarization 1	Gary Jacobson, "Explaining the Ideological Polarization of the Congressional Parties Since the 1970s" <i>draft paper</i>
June 3	Sources of Congressional Polarization 2	John Aldrich and David W. Rohde, "The Logic of Conditional Party Government: Revisiting the Electoral Connection," <i>Congress Reconsidered</i> #7
WEEK 3		
June 6	Congressional Polarization 1	Theriault, Ch. 1
June 7	History	Theriault, Ch. 2
June 8	Theory	Theriault, Ch. 3
June 9	Redistricting	Theriault, Ch. 4
June 10	Procedural Rules	Theriault, Ch. 5
WEEK 4		
June 13	Public Opinion	Theriault, Ch. 6
June 14	House & Senate	Theriault, Ch. 7
June 15	<i>Discussion</i>	
June 16	Judicial Politics	Nuke Option Readings
June 17	Pew II: News Media	<i>Online News Audience Larger, More Diverse</i> (June 2004) 1-44
WEEK 5		
June 20	Pew III: intra-party fissures	<i>Beyond Red vs. Blue</i> (May 2005) 1-61
June 21	<i>Same</i>	<i>Additional news clippings</i>
June 22	PAPERS DUE— <i>Discussion</i>	
June 23	Review Session	
June 24	<i>In-class exam</i>	