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PSC 341.01: Political Parties and Elections

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Political Science 341
Political Parties
Spring 2007

Professor Gregory Koger
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Office Hours: M 2-4 p.m.; T, Th 7:30-8 a.m.

Content

This course analyzes the role of parties in American democracy. Parties are ubiquitous in our politics—recruiting and financing candidates, organizing coalitions, and promoting cooperation in government. Yet parties are hard to define and their effects are hard to measure. Thus this class seeks to define parties, identify their functions, and trace their influence. To accomplish these goals, this course develops a theoretical framework for understanding parties as cooperative solutions to basic democratic problems. As a countervailing view, we discuss the normative view that parties should be “responsible.” We trace the history of American parties and their current status to understand variation in party strength, and the relationship between strong parties and responsible parties.

Required Texts

A collection of supplemental readings is available on e-reserve at Mansfield Library, or by e-mail. Also, I may send e-mails linking you to relevant news items.

Student Behavior

Students are required to read all assigned readings and bring them to class, attend all lectures, participate in class, take a midterm and final, and complete a research paper. Students are expected to avoid profanity, to turn off cell phones, and to arrive on time. While we will be discussing contemporary politics, students should avoid simple proselytizing or provocation.

The grade breakdown is:

Participation:	10%
Midterm:	20%
Paper:	40%
Final:	30%

Papers are due at the start of class. Late papers are docked a **full grade** for each day late. Students may schedule a make-up exam with documentation if illness or family death prevents attendance at the midterm. *No excuses* will be accepted for late papers; students are responsible for beginning their papers early, avoiding computer problems, and getting papers to me in a timely fashion.

Students are expected to do their own work. Students must cite sources used to write their papers. Plagiarism will be punished in accordance with university policy.

Students taking PS 300 or PS 400 in conjunction with this class, or graduate students, will write an additional paper.

TIMELINE

Week	Topics and Readings
Jan 23 – Feb 1	Introduction. Parties as Politicians' Tools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federalist 10. John Aldrich, <i>Why Parties</i>, ch. 2 (Read carefully! Then read ahead.)
Feb. 6&8	Parties as Supervisors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> APSA Report on Responsible Party Government, 1950.
Feb 13&15	The Polarization of American Politics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CQ Report: "The Partisan Divide" (e-mailed separately) Layman et al, "Party Polarization in American Politics" ARPS 2006
Feb 20 & 22	Partisanship in the Electorate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Menand, "Unpolitical Animals," <i>New Yorker</i>, 2004 Selections from Pew Reports on the politically divided nation (2003) and intra-party factions (2005)
Feb 27 & Mar 1	Elections—Campaign Finance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open Secrets Donor Survey Cohen et al, "Beating Reform" manuscript (<i>start</i>)
Mar 6 & 8	Parties as organizations 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cohen et al, "Beating Reform" manuscript (<i>finish</i>)
Mar 13 & 15	Parties as Organizations 2 - formal and informal parties <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skinner, "Do 527's Add Up to a Party?..." <i>The Forum</i>. Koger et al, "Partisan Webs" (e-mailed separately)
Mar 20 & 22	3/21: MIDTERM. 3/23: Governing Overview.
	SPRING BREAK
April 3 & 5	Congressional Parties I: Organization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Green and Harris, "Goal Salience and the 2006 Race for House Majority Leader" Aldrich and Rohde, "The Republican Revolution and the House Appropriations Committee" <i>Journal of Politics</i>, 2000.
April 10	Congressional Parties II: Discipline <ul style="list-style-type: none"> King and Zeckhauser, "Congressional Vote Options," LSQ 2003 Clippings: CAFTA vote
April 17 & 19	Congressional Parties III: Agenda and Message <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lee, "Agenda Content and Senate Party Polarization, 1981-2004"
April 24 & 26 PAPERS DUE	Parties and Gridlock: a Macro View <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Binder, "Dynamics of Legislative Gridlock" <i>APSR</i> 1999 <p style="text-align: right;">→ PAPERS DUE April 24!</p>
May 1 & 3	Reforming American Politics; Review → see e-mailed readings
May 7	FINAL, 1:10-3:10