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PSC 341.01: Political Parties and Elections

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Political Science 341
Political Parties
Spring 2006

Professor Gregory Koger
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Office Hours: T, Th 9:30-10:30 and 3:00-3:30

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 reserve at Mansfield Library. 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 analyzing the 2006 Congressional elections.

TIMELINE

Week	Topics and Readings
Jan 24 & Feb 2	Introduction. Parties as Politicians' Tools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federalist 10. John Aldrich, <i>Why Parties</i>, ch. 2 and 4. (Read ahead!)
Feb. 7 & 9	Parties as Supervisors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> APSA Report on Responsible Party Government, 1950. Wilson, <i>Amateur Democrat</i>, 1962, ch. 5
Feb 14 & 16	Parties in American History <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reichley, <i>Life of the Party</i>, ch. 3, 7, 9, 10. CQ Report: "The Partisan Divide"
Feb 21 & 23	Elections—Rules and Organization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Green and Herrnson, "Party Development in the 20th Century..." from <i>Responsible Partisanship?</i> 3 clippings on Party Databases Dominguez, "Groups and the Party Coalitions: A Network Analysis of Overlapping Donor Lists" APSA paper
Feb 28 & Mar 2	Elections—Candidates and Message <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Doherty, "Organized by Competition," APSA 2005 Masket, "The Emergence of Unofficial Party Organizations in California" <i>Spectrum</i>, 2002 Clippings: Congressional parties aid vulnerable incumbents
Mar 7 & 9	Elections—Campaign Finance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open Secrets Donor Survey Farrar-Myers and Dwyre, "Parties and Campaign Finance" <i>Decline or Resurgence?</i> Corrado, "Party Finance in the Wake of BCRA" draft chapter
Mar 14 & 16	Elections—Voters and Groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fleisher & Bond, "Evidence of Increasing Partisanship Among Ordinary Citizens," From <i>Decline or Resurgence?</i> Skinner, "Do 527's Add Up to a Party?" <i>The Forum</i>. Jackson, Bigelow, Green, "The State of the Party Elites: National Convention Delegates 1992 – 2004," Akron paper
Mar 21 & 23	3/21: MIDTERM. 3/23: Governing Overview.
Mar 27 & 31	SPRING BREAK
April 4 & 6	Congressional Parties I: Organization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aldrich and Rohde, "The Republican Revolution and the House Appropriations Committee" <i>Journal of Politics</i>, Feb. 2000. Sinclair 1995, "Organization, Communication and Accountability"
April 11 & 13	Congressional Parties II: Discipline and Punishment Sinclair 1995, "Information and Inclusion: The Whip System" Clippings: whipping, CAFTA vote Clippings: Democratic sanctions
April 18 & 20	Congressional Parties III: Agenda and Message <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Groeling & Kernell, "Parties, The President, and Party Competition Via Network News" <i>Polarized Politics</i> Clippings on agenda-setting
April 25 & 27	Parties and Gridlock: a Macro View PAPERS DUE April 27! Binder, "Dynamics of Legislative Gridlock" <i>APSR</i> 1999
May 2 & 4	Reforming American Politics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Come prepared to propose reforms - See e-mailed clippings
May 10	FINAL (1:10-3:10 p.m.)