

Political Parties in the United States

Political Science 4031

Fall 2016

Dr. Hogan
TTH 1:30-2:50
132 Prescott

Office Hours Mon. 9-11 (or by apt.)
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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 elements, understanding the linkages among them, and assessing their influence within the electoral and policymaking spheres. A comparative approach will be employed whenever 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 roles 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 have noted the high degree of party polarization in U.S. politics as worrisome. Throughout the semester we will address various questions regarding polarization: increasing the extent of polarization, the conditions responsible for its presence, and the implications of a polarized political system.

In addition to our substantive focus, we will 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? How do they account for common perceptions? While this is not a course on political science methodology, issues involving research design and analysis will play prominently in our class discussions.

Time Requirements

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lecture/classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of class student work across 15 weeks for one V H P H V W H U μ * L Y H O U R W O R K S . W H I S M E A N S T H A T S T U D E N T S A R E E X P E C T E D T O D E V O T E A T O T A L O F 9 H O U R S O F W O R K E A C H W E E K : 3 H O U R S I N T H E C L A S S R O O M A N D A N A D D I T I O N A L 6 H O U R S O F C O U R S E R E L A T E D W O R K O U T S I D E T H E C L A S S R O O M (r e a d i n g , s t u d y i n g , a n d w o r k i n g o n t h e c o u r s e a s s i g n m e n t s) .

Required Reading Materials

A textbook is available for purchase in the bookstore: Party Politics in America by Marjorie Randon Hershey (16th Edition, New York: Pearson Longman). In addition, large portions of the reading load involve articles listed on the course schedule below. Each is available for download from the class Moodle site. Not 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 a 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 out 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

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

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Classroom Rules

Please be respectful

Course Schedule

- August 23 *Introduction to the Course*
 f No reading assignment.
- August 25 *What Are Political Parties and Why Should We Study Them?*
 f Hershey

- November 3 *Parties and Presidential Nominations*
 fHersheypp. 196215.
 fReading #2 3 X W Q D P - R V K (Y H U \ W U H Q W the R Presidential Primary . Q R Z
 : R U N Washington Post May 12.
 fReading #3: % \ F R I I H \$ D U R Q ' 7 K H N e w C o r k T i m e s M a y 1 2 . 3 U L P D U \ μ
- November 8 *Presidential Nomination Process and the Media*
 fReading #4: Paterson, Thomas E. 2016. 1 H Z V & R Y H U D J H R I W K H 3 U H V L G H Q W
 5 H S R U W L Q J + D V & R Q V H T X H Q F H V μ 6 K R U H Q V W H L Q & H Q W H U R Q
 Media Tenor, Harvard Kennedy School, July.
 fReading #5 We Asked 8 Political Scientists, I 3 D U W \ 3 O D W x 2 0 1 6 . V 0 D W W H U μ
- November 10 *Political Parties in the General Election*
 fHersheypp. 216234.
 fReading #6: & K H Q / D Q K H H - D Q G \$ Q G U H Z 5 H H Y H V ' 7 X U Q L Q J
 Periphery? An Analysis of County-level & D Q G L G D W H \$ S S H D U D Q F H V L Q W K H 3 U
 American Politics Research 39: 545-56.
 *** Presentations: Set #1 ***
- November 15 *Political Parties in the General Election Continued*
 fReading #7 % U R R N V ' D Y L G New York Times November 3 2016 D μ
 fReading #8 & R F N E X U Q \$ Q G U H Z ' R Z Q W K H 7 X E H 7 H O H Y L V L
 , Q G X V W U L D - O D & S P S O V A I D J D J L Q H
 *** Presentations: Set #2 ***
- November 17 *Minor Parties in U.S. Elections*
 fHershey Reread pp. 346.
 ***** Printed copy of State Party Project due at the beginning of class *****
- November 22 *Parties in Legislatures*
 fHersheypp. 264286.
 fReading #9 Nokken, Timothy P. ' \ Q D P L F V R I & R Q J U H V V L R Q D O - / R \ D O W \
 Call Behavior, 1947 Legislative Studies Quarterly 26: 417-45.
- November 24 Thanksgiving Holiday
- November 29 *Party Effects in Government*
 fHersheypp. 287334.
- December 1 *Summation and Review*