

Sam Houston State University
Department of Political Science
Spring 2018
Seminar on Political Parties and Interest Groups
POLS 5378 – 01
Unique #: 20974

Instructor: Eric Svensen
Office: CHSS 485
Office Hours: By Appointment
Office Phone: 936-294-2577
Email: eps007@shsu.edu

Course Information:
Meeting Place: Online
Meeting Time: Online

Course Overview

In this course, our objective is to better understand the role of political parties and interest groups in America. We will not only discuss the importance of parties and why they form, but also focus on the changing power and role of parties as organizations and institutions, as well as the capacity of parties to serve as vehicles of change. While the study of political parties generally occurs through three broad perspectives: Parties-in-the electorate (the actions of voters), parties-in-government (the actions of elected officials), and party organization (how parties build and use collective resources), we will also attempt to understand the ideologies that undergird parties. Topics we will cover include: parties and the American Founding, American political party formation, party systems, third parties, interest groups, campaigns, and party polarization. In each topic we explore, we will discuss how voters, politicians, and party organizations affect these areas. We will also pay particular attention to how American parties have changed in recent years, and what these changes imply for the operation of American politics.

Course Evaluation

For this course, you will be evaluated through four assignments. First, each of you will be required to write reviews of the readings. Second, every week I and those who wrote reviews for that week will participate in an online collaborative discussion session. Finally, each of you will be required to write a research paper where a first draft is submitted before hand. The percentage toward your overall grade total is as follows:

25% - Written review of selected readings
10% - Term Paper First Draft
50% - Term Paper
15% - On-line Participation
100%

Written Reviews: Depending on total enrollment for the course, each of you will be required to write reviews for assigned readings. My grand design is that each of you will join a “reading group” (2 to 3 students) where your group will participate in and lead the readings for a specific week. Your groups will be required to lead discussion roughly every three weeks. How you tally up the reading assignments for that week is entirely dependent on the group itself. The purpose of this assignment is three fold. First, this exercise allows you will get exposure to interesting and exciting readings on political parties, ideology, and interest groups without having to read everything yourself. Second, all reviews are to be shared on Blackboard. The purpose of this exercise is for each of you to have access to summaries of all the readings without having to do all of them—this can prove beneficial in gathering reference material for your papers. There is a lot of reading for this course so it may seem daunting. Fear not! We will tackle the readings as a group. Finally, for each week, the groups assigned for that week’s readings will engage in a recorded, online video conference with me where we will discuss the readings and whatever else strikes our fancy. The purpose is to aid students who want to listen to a discussion on the readings so as to better understand the material for that week.

Essay: A major component of your grade is an individual term paper based on a topic of your choosing. This paper is meant to be a serious effort at engaging the material in some area of political parties that interest you. This essay should be at least 12 pages, double-spaced, with normal margins, and 12-font. Though I will help you develop an essay idea if needed, the purpose of this project is to synthesize the readings into a convincing analysis on political parties. There are a number of ways you can approach your paper. You can criticize an approach in the literature on political parties you feel needs expanding or reevaluating. You can compare and contrast the American party system to other countries. You can link ideology or past party ideals with today’s polarized political system. Whichever path you decide to travel, keep in mind that that your paper needs an argument supported with class materials. You are certainly welcome to incorporate additional readings/topics not covered in

class, as well as any additional evidence that will support your argument. You have complete freedom in how you choose to approach this assignment. Graphs, tables, and statistical analysis are welcome but not necessary.

Readings: Bolded selections in the course calendar is required reading for all students. These readings come from the required textbook and are designed as a tool to aid those of you unfamiliar with and in need of a refresher on political parties. The readings not bolded are the required readings for that week. ONLY the group assigned for the readings in each week will be responsible for reading and writing reviews. These readings will be available either through an online link or on Blackboard. To aid the class, I have provided the total pages for each reading assignment (excluding the textbook readings) as well as a total count for the entire week. I provide this information so each student and group can decide how they want to tally up the readings. After the first week I will divide you into groups for the semester. I would suggest naming your group so we can all get a sense of who you are. Serious names, fun names, crude names, and even insulting names (to a limit) are acceptable. For example: the Rhetorical Wizards, the Bearcat Bastards, The Terrible Teachers of _____. I am welcome to forming a discussion topic on Blackboard where you can all work amongst yourselves who you'd like to join with and what you'd like to read. As far as this last point is concerned, if you have topics that your group finds interesting then you can request that your group be assigned the readings for that week. Of course, if we have high interest in certain topics then I may have to pick and choose which group wins the day.

Grading: The class uses the following point system for your final grade. The scale is:

90 - 100%	A
80 - 89%	B
70 - 79%	C
60 - 69%	D
<60%	F

Course Expectations

All students will need access to the internet to retrieve course materials etc. It is also important for students to have access to at least a microphone and speakers to engage in online discussions. A camera would be beneficial.

Texts and Required Materials

Hershey, Marjorie. 2012. Party Politics in America (17th Edition). Routledge: ISBN: 13-978-1138683686.

Accommodations for Religious Holidays

Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. Section 51.911 (a) (2) defines a religious holy day as: "a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20...." A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence.

University policy 861001 provides the procedures to be followed by the student and instructor. A student desiring to absent himself/herself from a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day(s) shall present to each instructor involved a written statement concerning the religious holy day(s). The instructor will complete a form notifying the student of a reasonable timeframe in which the missed assignments and/or examinations are to be completed.

Special Needs

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance should register with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Lee Drain Annex (telephone 936-294-3512, TDD 936-294-3786, and e-mail disability@shsu.edu). They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a disability that may affect adversely your work in this class, then I encourage you to register with the SHSU Services for Students with Disabilities and to talk with me about how I can best help

you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: No accommodation can be made until you register with the Services for Students with Disabilities.

Academic Integrity

All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials.

For a complete listing of the university policy, see: <http://www.shsu.edu/dept/dean-of-students/index.html>

Course Schedule and Reading Assignments

Please note: The syllabus should be used as a guideline for course objectives and student responsibilities. The instructor reserves the right to modify the syllabus, including the course schedule, shown below. Any modification to the schedule will be announced. Students are responsible for announcements and other information posted on Blackboard, and/or sent via email.

Week 1 (1/17 – 1/19): Class Introduction

- Readings
 - **Hershey (Chapter 1)**

Week 2 (1/22 – 1/26): Parties and Founding Principles

- Readings
 - **Hershey (Chapter 2)**
 - Federalist 9, 10
 - Gillespie, *Political Parties and the American Founding*
 - Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, (Vol 1, Part II, Chapters 1 and 2)
 - Schattschneider, *Party Government* (Chapter 4)
 - Key, *Politics, Parties, and Pressure Groups* (Chapter 8)

Week 3 (1/29 – 2/2): American Party Formation

- Readings (Total Pages = 252)
 - Aldrich, *Why Parties?* (Chapter 2) – (40 p)
 - Caesar, *Presidential Selection* (Chapter 3) – (48 p)
 - Milkis, *Political Parties and Constitutional Government* (Chapter 2) – (30 p)
 - Reichley, *The Life of Parties: A History of American Political Parties* (Chapters 2, 3, 4, 5) - (76 p)
 - Silbey, *Martin Van Buren and the Emergence of American Popular Parties* (Chapters 1, 2, 3) - (58 p)

Week 4 (2/5 – 2/9): Party Systems and Realignment Theory

- Readings (Total Pages = 187)
 - **Hershey (Chapter 7)**
 - Burnham, *Critical Elections and the Mainsprings of American Politics* (Chapters 1 and 2) – (33 p)
 - Sundquist, *Dynamics of the Party System* (Chapters 1 and 2) – (34 p)
 - Brewer and Stonecash, *Dynamics of American Political Parties* (Chapters 1 and 2) – (32 p)
 - Karol, *Party Position Change in American Politics* (Chapter 3) – (46 p)
 - Mayhew, *Electoral Realignment* (Chapters 1, 2, 3) – (42 p)

Week 5 (2/12 – 2/16): Party History

- Readings (Total Pages = 293)
 - Holt, *Political Parties and American Political Development* (Chapters 1 and 2) – (87 p)
 - Holt, *The Rise and Fall of the American Whig Party* (Chapters 1, 2, 26) – (68 p)
 - Phillips, *The Emerging Republican Majority* (Chapter 1) – (22 p)
 - Nash, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America since 1945* (Chapter 1, 2, 12) – (67 p)
 - Schickler, *Racial Realignment* (Chapters 5 and 6) – (49 p)

Week 6 (2/19 – 2/23): Party Ideology and the Ideological Origins of the Modern Political Parties

- Readings (Total Pages = 287)
 - Converse, *The Nature of Belief Systems of Mass Publics* – (65 p)
 - Gerring, *Party Ideologies in America* (Chapters 1 and 2) – (54 p)
 - Noel, *Political Ideologies and Political Parties in America* (Chapters 1 and 2) – (37 p)
 - Hoffer, *The True Believer* (Parts I and II) – (57 p)
 - Huntington, *American Politics: The Promise of Disharmony* (Chapters 1, 2, 5) – (74 p)

Week 7 (2/26 – 3/2): The Ideology of the Left

- Readings (Total Pages = 303)
 - Marx, *The Communist Manifesto* (All) – (91 p – compact)
 - Alinsky, *Rules for Radicals* (Chapters 1 and 2) – (44 p)
 - Lenin, *State and Revolution* (All) – (99 p)
 - Mussolini, *The Doctrine of Fascism* (All) – (23 p)
 - Chomsky, *Profit over People* (Chapters 1 and 2) – (46 p)

Week 8 (3/5 – 3/9): The Ideology of the Right

- Readings (Total Pages = 232)
 - Spencer, *The Right to Ignore the State* (Chapter 1) – (2 p)
 - Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (Chapters 18, 19, 20, 21) – (60 p)
 - Hoppe, *Democracy the God that Failed* (Chapter 1) – (44 p)
 - Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (Chapters 1, 2, 3) – (50 p)
 - Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom* (Chapters Intro, 1, 2, 6, 10) – (76 p)

Spring Break – 3/12 – 3/16

Week 9 (3/19 – 3/23): Parties-in-the-Electorate

- Readings (Total Pages = 235)
 - **Hershey (Chapters 6 and 8)**
 - Judis and Teixeira, *The Emerging Democratic Majority* (Chapters 4 and 5) – (47 p)
 - Keith et al., *The Myth of the Independent Voter* (Chapters 1, 3, 4, 5) – (63 p)
 - Trende, *The Lost Majority* (Chapters 8 and 9) – (29 p)
 - Rosenstone, Behr, and Lazarus, *Third Parties in America* (Chapters 2, 5, 6) – (96 p)

Week 10 (3/26 – 3/30): Parties-in-Government

- Readings (Total Pages = 222)
 - **Hershey (Chapters 13 and 14)**
 - Rohde, *Parties and Leaders in the Postreform House* (Chapter 1) – (16 p)
 - Grossman, *Artists of the Possible* (Chapters 1 and 2) – (71 p)
 - Wood, *The Myth of Presidential Representation* (Chapters 1 and 2) – (54 p)
 - Smith, *Party Influence in Congress* (Chapters 1, 2, 3) – (81 p)

Week 11 (4/2 – 4/6): Party Organization

- Readings (Total Pages = 219)
 - **Hershey (Chapters 4, 5, 9, 10)**
 - Aldrich, *Why Parties?* (Chapters 4 and 8) – (67 p)
 - Milkis, *The President and the Parties* (Chapters 1, 2 and 12) – (59 p)
 - Caesar, *Presidential Selection* (Chapter 5) – (47 p)
 - Cohen, et al., *The Party Decides* (Chapters 1 and 2) – (46 p)

Week 12 (4/9 – 4/13): Interest Groups – The Basics

- Readings (Total Pages = 195)
 - Grossman, *The Not-So-Special Interests* (Chapters Intro, 1, 2) – (75 p)
 - Truman, *The Governmental Process* (Chapters 1 and 3) – (32 p)
 - Walker, *Mobilizing Interest Groups in America* (Chapter 2) – (23 p)
 - Schlozman and Tierney, *Organized Interests in American Democracy* (Chapter 6) – (29 p)
 - Wright, *Interest Groups and Congress* (Chapters 1 and 2) – (36 p)

Week 13 (4/16 – 4/20): Interest Groups – The Consequences

- Readings (Total Pages = 248)
 - Schattschneider, *The Semi-Sovereign People* (Chapter 2) – (27 p)
 - Drutman, *The Business of Lobbying* (Chapter 1, 2, 3, 4) – (96 p)
 - Baumgartner et al., *Lobbying and Policy Change* (Chapter 1, 2, 3) – (67 p)
 - Kaiser, *So Damn Much Money* (Chapter 1 and 2) – (29)
 - Nownes, *Interest Groups and American Politics* (Chapter 9) – (29 p)

Week 14 (4/23 – 4/27): Contemporary Parties – The Era of Polarization (Parties-in-the-electorate)

- Readings (Total Pages = 225)
 - Abramowitz, *The Disappearing Center* (Chapters 2 and 3) – (47 p)
 - Levendusky, *The Partisan Sort* (Chapters 2 and 3) – (66 p)
 - Fiorina, Abrams, and Pope, *Culture War?* (Chapters 1 and 2) – (32 p)
 - Bishop, *The Big Sort* (Chapters Intro and 1) – (40 p)
 - Gelmen, *Red State, Blue State* (Chapters 1, 2, 3) – (40 p)

Week 15 (4/30 – 5/4): Contemporary Parties – The Era of Polarization (Parties-in-government)

- Readings (Total Pages = 241)
 - McCarty et al., *Polarized America* (Chapters 1 and 2) – (70 p)
 - Mann and Ornstein, *It's Even Worse Than It Looks* (Chapters 1 and 2) – (80 p)
 - Theriault, *Party Polarization in Congress* (Chapters 1, 2, and 3) – (58 p)
 - Mayhew, *Partisan Balance* (Chapter 1) – (33 p)

Final Papers Due = May 10th