

**POLITICAL PARTIES AND INTEREST GROUPS\***

**POLS 3360.01                      CRN # 21644              3 Credit Hours**  
**MWF 8:00-8:50am              CHSS 242B              Spring 2018**  
**Dr. Mitzi Mahoney                      Political Science Department**

**CONTACT INFORMATION:**

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**Office Hours: MW 7:30-8:00am, 10:00-11:30am**  
**TTh 7:30-8:00am, 9:30-11:00am, By appointment**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** In democracies, intermediary institutions such as political parties, interest groups, media, and social movements, help link citizens to governments. In this course we explore how political parties and interest groups perform as linkage institutions. Today, parties' and interest groups' behaviors are contingent upon the other and thus it is appropriate to analyze them in relation to each other. Therefore, the course is structured around the functions intermediaries perform in the political system (mobilization, communication, etc.) For each function, we will analyze how parties and interest groups perform these functions and to what effect. In the first section of the course we consider intermediaries from philosophical, theoretical, and historical perspectives. In the second section of the course, we explore party and interest group organizations (structure, resources, and strategies), their mobilization efforts, and their attempts to control government. In the third section of the course we explore how parties and interest groups influence government. This semester we will focus on the role of parties and interest groups in problem solving and policy making. As a class we will analyze the how the political system attempts to address the issue of immigration. Our focus will be on how political parties and interest groups affect the recognition, development, debate, and adoption of policies intended to solve these problems. As a class we will follow the policy debate over DACA and Border Wall legislation. Individually students will analyze a policy issue and write a research paper. This year is a midterm election year. In March Texas parties will hold primaries to select its party's nominees for U.S. House of Representatives as well as all state elected officials and state legislative officials. We will follow the Texas state primaries.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES/LEARNING OUTCOMES:** My objectives for students in the class include:

- expanding students' knowledge base of political parties and interest groups
- learning about the major principles, theories, models, methods that inform our study of political parties and interest groups
- learning to apply the major principles and theories to understand current political phenomena
- developing the analytical skills to critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view

**COURSE READINGS:** Course assignments will be posted on Blackboard.

**1. PARTY POLITICS IN AMERICA, 17<sup>th</sup> edition.** Marjorie Randon Hershey. Pearson Publishing. ISBN: 9781138683686 (paperback) and ISBN: 9781315544427 (eBook).

**2. Interest Group readings will be posted on Blackboard. There is no Interest Group text book to purchase.**

**3. Additional Readings/Materials:** Additional reading assignments will be posted on Blackboard.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

**Exams:** Three exams will be given. They will include multiple choice, identification, short answer, and essay questions. Each is worth 20% of the grade.

**Research Project:** The research project includes a research paper analyzing the impact of political parties and interest groups on a policy issue. Project instructions are posted on Blackboard. The individual paper is worth 40% of the course grade.

**COURSE EVALUATION:**

Exam 1	20% of course grade
Exam 2	20% of course grade
Exam 3	20% of course grade
Research Paper	40% of course grade

**Grading Scale:** An average of 90-100 constitutes an A, 80-89 constitutes a B, 70-79 constitutes a C, 60-69 constitutes a D, and any grade below 60 constitutes an F. Grades will be posted on Blackboard.

**COURSE POLICIES:**

**Makeup exams:** Students who miss an exam will not take a makeup exam. Instead the other 2 exams will count 30% of the grade each.

### Course Schedule\*

Week	Topic
Week 1	Introduction to Course Intro to Primaries and Voting in Texas
Week 2	Intermediaries in Democracies: Functions
Week 3	Intermediaries in Policy Process (focus on DACA/Border Wall)
Week 4	Party Organizations
Week 5	Party in the Electorate
Week 6	Interest Group Organizations
Week 7	Interest Group Members and Incentives
Week 8	Campaigns and Elections Analyzing the Texas Primaries
Week 9	Parties in Government: The Legislature
Week 10	Interest Groups in Government: The Legislature
Week 11	The Party in Government: Executive Branch
Week 12	Interest Groups in Government: Executive Branch
Week 13	The Party in Government: Judicial Branch
Week 14	Interest Groups in Government: Judicial Branch
Week 15	Party/IG Impact on Policy and Democracy
Week 16	Finals

\*The professor reserves the right to alter the syllabus and the course schedule.

### **CLASSROOM DECORUM**

**-If you find you must leave for any reason, do not re-enter the classroom. Once you leave you may not come back in to class.**

**-Do not talk among yourselves while I or fellow students are talking. I will ask you to leave if you disrupt the class.**

**- Academic Dishonesty: Students found cheating on an exam will receive an F for the course. Plagiarism on the research paper is also a form of academic dishonesty and will result in an F for the course. My detailed plagiarism policy will be posted on Blackboard. I**

**consider it a form of academic dishonesty to submit a paper written for another course and will result in an F for the course.**

**-Use of Cell Phones in Class: The use by students of telephone and pagers or any device that performs these functions during class-time is prohibited. All such devices should be turned off or put in a silent (vibrate) mode and should not be visible during class. At no time should students answer a call or page during class or leave the classroom to answer a call or page. Failure to comply with this policy could result in expulsion from the classroom or with three or more offenses, failure of the course. In an emergency situation, make arrangements with the professor before class begins. Any use of a telephone or pager or any device that performs these functions during a test period is prohibited. These devices should not be present during a test or should be stored securely in such a way that they cannot be seen or used by the student. Even the visible presence of such a device during the test period will result in a zero for that test. Use of these devices during a test is considered de facto evidence of cheating and could result in a charge of academic dishonesty (see student code of conduct**

**Other classroom policies:**

**Students will be asked to evaluate the professor near the end of the semester. You will receive an email with a link to the IDEA form. Please complete the evaluation. The professor uses it to improve her classroom performance. The administration uses it to determine if the faculty is meeting the university's teaching standards. Your input is vital to promote excellent teaching. Thank you for your participation.**

**The College of Humanities and Social Sciences requires syllabi to refer you to the following website - <https://www.shsu.edu/syllabus/> - where you will find all additional information**