

POLS 30010
AMERICAN POLITICAL PARTIES

Spring 2012
MW 1:30-2:45 p.m.
DeBartolo 131
<http://www.nd.edu/~cwolbrec/POLS30010.html>

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...the common and continual mischiefs of the spirit of party are sufficient to make it the interest and duty of a wise people to discourage and restrain it.

George Washington, *Farewell Address* (1796)

...political parties created democracy and modern democracy is unthinkable save in terms of parties.

E.E. Schattschneider, *Party Government* (1942)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Parties are everywhere in American politics. Party polarization and divided government are accused of causing policy-making stalemate in Washington. Tea Party Movement candidates won a number of Republican nomination contests in 2010, and the Tea Party is given substantial credit for the Republicans re-taking the House. Pollsters tell us that the “enthusiasm gap” between Democratic and Republican voters was also crucial. The differing ability of the two major parties to capitalize on campaign finance rules changes generates unprecedented levels of campaign fundraising and spending, amid continued concern about bias and influence. This Spring, Republicans will select their party’s presidential nominee, capping off a process the began months—even years—ago, despite the fact that the general election is still 10 months away.

Political parties play many roles in American politics: They educate potential voters about political processes, policy issues, and civic duties. They mobilize citizens into political activity and involvement. They provide vital information about public debates. They control the choices—candidates and platforms—that voters face at the ballot box. They influence and organize the activities of government. Most importantly, by providing a link between government and the governed, parties are a central mechanism of representation. These roles—how well they are performed, what bias exists, how they shape outcomes, how they have changed over time—have consequences for the working of the American political system. As the quotes above suggest, the role of political parties in American politics has often been controversial. This class explores the contribution of political parties to the functioning of American democracy.

TEACHING ASSISTANT

The teaching assistants (TAs) for this course are Greg Shufeldt (Shufeldt.1@nd.edu) and Patrick Schoettmer (Schoettmer.1@nd.edu). You will be assigned a specific TA by the second week of the semester.

REQUIREMENTS

Readings

The following books are required and available in the bookstore:

Marjorie Randon Hershey. 2010. *Party Politics in America*. Fourteenth Edition. New York: Pearson Longman.

Mark D. Brewer and Jeffrey M. Stonecash. 2009. *Dynamics of American Political Parties*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Additional **required** readings for this course are available from Electronic Reserve (<http://ereserves.nd.edu>), or from the Reserve Book room on the first floor of the Hesburgh Library. Treat these readings like the required books available from the Bookstore: Get them (even if you have to pay to print them) and read them. It is *imperative* that students complete the assigned readings on time as they serve as the basis for classroom lecture and discussion. Lecture will supplement, not replicate, the readings. Students are responsible for information provided both in the assigned reading and in class.

Midterm and Final

The Midterm will cover topics discussed in the first half of the class; the Final, topics covered in the second half (in other words, the Final is not cumulative). Exams will be a mix of short answers and essays. Additional information will be provided in class.

State Parties Paper

Each student will write an 8-page (double-spaced) paper describing and analyzing the party politics of an American state. Further information on this assignment will be provided in class and handouts. You must inform me via e-mail as to which state you will be analyzing by 5 p.m. on Monday, January 23rd. State parties papers are **due in class by 1:30 p.m. on Wednesday, February 22nd**. Any papers not handed in at 1:30 p.m. will be considered late.

Parties Issue Paper

Each student will write an 8-page (double-spaced) paper describing and analyzing the parties' positions on a major public policy issue. Further information on this assignment will be provide in class and handouts. You must inform me via e-mail as to which public policy issue you will be analyzing by 5 p.m. on Wednesday, March 21st. Party issue papers are **due in class by 1:30 p.m. on Monday, April 23rd**. Any papers not handed in at 1:30 p.m. will be considered late.

POLICIES

The penalty for late papers is 5 points (half of a letter grade) per day.

Exceptions (e.g., extensions, exam rescheduling) are only granted in the case of true and extreme emergencies. Except for the case of illness or family emergency, all such requests must be made in writing at least one week before the paper or exam due date.

Any requests (e.g., exceptions, meetings outside of office hours) *must* be made in writing via e-mail so that we both have a record of the request and decision.

If you have a disability, I am happy to work with you and the Office of Students with Disabilities (OSD) to provide appropriate accommodation. Please contact the OSD to register. The OSD will contact me regarding any accommodations. I can only provide accommodations to students who have registered through the OSD.

Students are expected to abide by Notre Dame's Code of Honor (<http://www.nd.edu/~hnr/code>). Any violations of academic integrity, including plagiarism, will be pursued according to Notre Dame policies.

Plagiarism is a violation of the Honor Code and strictly prohibited in this course. I recommend you read the Philosophy Department's useful guide to plagiarism posted here: <http://www.nd.edu/~hnr/code/docs/plagiarism.pdf>. If you have any questions about proper attribution of the ideas, arguments, words, or phrases you use in your own writing, consult your TA and/or professor.

I do not accept assignments via e-mail. All assignments must be submitted in class, at my office (Decio 442), or to me or your TA in person.

Attendance at lectures is not required, but it is highly recommended. You will be held responsible for all information provided in class.

I do not provide the full set of Power Point lecture slides to students, but I will send very abbreviated versions with tables, graphs, and other details as e-mail attachments to the class as a whole to assist with note-taking.

You must complete all of the requirements (papers and exams) in order to pass this course.

GRADING

Final grades will be calculated according to the following allocation:

State Parties Paper	25%
Parties Issue Paper	25
Midterm	25
Final	<u>25</u>
	100%

I use a basic grade distribution: 90s are the A range, 80s are the B range, and so on. A B grade indicates that you have met the minimum standards of the course: knowledge of central facts and information, good understanding of relevant processes, theories, developments, and ideas, and an ability to think critically and thoughtfully about the

information covered in readings and lecture. In other words, a B grade indicates good work that meets basic expectations for students in this course. A C grade (or less) indicates deficiencies in meeting those standards. An A grade indicates exemplary and outstanding work that exceeds the minimum standards. Work that merits an A indicates mastery of the topic, and is particularly thoughtful, insightful, and creative.

SCHEDULE

The following constitutes a tentative battle plan and may be subject to future adjustment if necessary.

January 3: Iowa (c)
January 10: New Hampshire (p)

1/18 W Overview of the Course

January 21: South Carolina (p)

1/23 M The American Party System: What is a Party? Why Only Two?
E-mail state choice to professor (Wolbrecht.1@nd.edu) by 5 p.m.

READING:

Hershey, *Party Politics*, Ch. 1 and 2

Part I. Parties and the Electoral Process

1/25 W Party Organization
READING:
Hershey, *Party Politics*, Chs. 3 and 4

1/30 M Party Activists
READING:
Hershey, *Party Politics*, Ch. 5
e-reserves: Campbell and Putnam, "Crashing the Tea Party" (*New York Times* op-ed)

January 31: Florida (p)

2/1 W Party Identification
READING:
Hershey, *Party Politics*, Chs. 6 and 8
e-reserves: Abramson, Aldrich, and Rohde, "Party Loyalties, Policy Preferences, and the Vote" (*Change and Continuity in the 2008 Elections*)

February 4: Nevada (c)
February 4-11: Maine (c)

- 2/6 M Party Identification
 READING:
e-reserves: Fiorina, et al., “If America Is Not Polarized, Why Do So Many Americans Think It Is?” and “A 50:50 Nation? Red and Blue State People Are Not That Different” (*Culture Wars? The Myth of Polarized America*, Chs. 2 and 3)
 February 7: Colorado (c), Minnesota (c)
- 2/8 W Nominations: From Jefferson-Barr to McGovern-Fraser and beyond
 READING:
 Hershey, *Party Politics*, Ch. 9 and 10
e-reserves: Abramson, Aldrich, and Rohde, “The Nomination Struggle” (*Change and Continuity in the 2008 Elections*)
- 2/13 M Campaigns
 READING:
 Hershey, *Party Politics*, Ch. 11
 Examine party congressional campaign websites (NRCC, DCCC, NRSC, DSCC—all linked through course website)
- 2/15 W NO CLASS: Research day—opportunity to meet with professor or TA
- 2/20 M Watch documentary: “Journeys with George”
- 2/22 W Discuss state party papers
State Party Paper DUE
- 2/27 M Campaign Finance
 READING:
 Hershey, *Party Politics*, Ch. 12
e-reserves: Abramson, “Return of the Secret Donors.” *New York Times*, October 16, 2010.
 February 28: Arizona (p), Michigan (p)
- 2/29 W Campaign Advertisements
 READING:
e-reserves: West, “Setting the Agenda” and “Priming and Defusing” (*Air Wars*, Chs. 6 and 7)
 March 3: Washington (c)
- 3/5 M Midterm Review
 March 6: SUPER TUESDAY
 Alaska (c), Georgia (p), Idaho (c), Massachusetts (p), North Dakota (c), Oklahoma (p), Tennessee (p), Texas (p), Vermont (p), Virginia (p)
 March 6-10: Wyoming (c)
- 3/7 W **MIDTERM**

March 10: Kansas (c), U.S. Virgin Islands (c)
March 13: Alabama (p), Hawaii (c), Mississippi (p)
March 17: Missouri (c)

Spring Break

Part II. Party Development and Change

3/19 M The Emergence of Political Parties

READING:

Brewer and Stonecash, *Dynamics*, Ch. 1

March 20: Illinois (p)

3/21 W Party Eras in American History

E-mail issue choice to professor (Wolbrecht.1@nd.edu) by 5 p.m.

READING:

Hershey, *Party Politics*, Ch. 7

Brewer and Stonecash, *Dynamics*, Chs. 3 and 4

March 24: Louisiana (p)

3/26 M Party Eras in American History

READING:

Brewer and Stonecash, *Dynamics*, Chs. 5 and 6

3/28 W Party Eras in American History

READING:

Brewer and Stonecash, *Dynamics*, Chs. 7-10

4/2 M Cultural Politics and Party Change

READING:

e-reserves: Wolbrecht, "Of Presidents and Platforms" (*The Politics of Women's Rights*, Ch. 2)

e-reserves: Layman, "Cultural Conflict in American Society and Politics" (*The Great Divide*, Introduction)

April 3: Maryland (p), WDC (p), Wisconsin (p)

4/4 W Race and Southern Realignment

READING:

e-reserves: Carmines and Stimson, "The Politics of Race: From Roosevelt to Reagan" (*Issue Evolution*, Ch. 3)

e-reserves: Frymer, "Competitive Parties and the 'Invisibility' of Captured Groups" (*Uneasy Alliances*, Ch. 2)

4/9 M Easter Monday – NO CLASS

- 4/11 W Party Machines and the Golden Era of Party Politics
 READING:
e-reserves: Riordin, "To Hold Your District: Study Human Nature and Act Accordin'" (from *Plunkett of Tammany Hall*)
e-reserves: Rakove, "Don't Make No Waves ... Don't Back No Losers: An Insider's Analysis of the Daley Machine"
- 4/16 M NO CLASS: Research day – opportunity to meet with professor or TA
- 4/18 W Third Party Movements
 READING:
e-reserves: Jelen, "The Perot Campaign in Theoretical Perspective" (*Ross for Boss*, Ch. 1)
- 4/23 M Discuss party issue papers
Party Issue Paper DUE

April 24: Connecticut (p), Delaware (p), New York (p),
 Pennsylvania (p), Rhode Island (p)

Part III. The Party in Government

- 4/25 W Party in the Legislature
 READING:
 Hershey, *Party Politics*, Ch. 13
- 4/30 M Party in the Executive and Judiciary
 READING:
 Hershey, *Party Politics*, Ch. 14
e-reserves: Bai, "Democrat in Chief?" *New York Times Magazine*, June 8, 2010.
- 5/2 W American Parties: Past, Present, Future
 READING:
 Hershey, *Party Politics*, Chs. 15 and 16
- 5/9 W **FINAL EXAM** (4:15-6:15 p.m.)

May 8: Indiana (p), North Carolina (p), West Virginia (p)
 May 15: Nebraska (p), Oregon (p)
 May 22: Arkansas (p), Kentucky (p)
 June 5: California (p), Montana (p), New Jersey (p), New Mexico (p), South Dakota (p)
 June 12: Ohio (p)
 June 26: Utah (p)

August 27: Republican National Convention, Tampa Bay, Florida
 September 3: Democratic National Convention, Charlotte, North Carolina