

POLS 30010: American Political Parties
MIDTERM REVIEW SHEET

The following is a general list of topics, concepts, and issues with which you should be familiar in preparation for the midterm. This is a general outline *only*. Remember, you are responsible for information both from the reading and from lecture. The form of the midterm is 12 short answers and a choice of 3 (out of a possible 4) essays.

American party system

- Party organization
- Party in government
- Party in the electorate

Political parties

- Definition
- Goal(s)
- Characteristics / functions

Why only two parties?

- Tradition, dualist, social consensus, institutional
- Duverger's Law
- Effects of a two party system

Party organization

- Convention
- National committees
- Campaign committees
- State and local organizations

Activists

- Motivations
- Kinds: professionals/pragmatists v. amateurs/purists
- Characteristics
- Primary / caucus activists (McCann reading)
- Convention delegates
- Impact

Partisanship

- Determinants
- Impact on vote choice: "schools" / approaches (Green et al. reading)
- Decline/resurgence in partisanship
 - Decline in party ID: Myth of the Independent Voter (leaners)
 - Decline in party allegiance: Rise and decline of split ticket voting
 - Party less predictable, recent trends
 - Causes of decline and of resurgence
- Who votes? (Hershey)
- Polarization? (Fiorina et al. reading))

Presidential campaigns

- Nomination v. general: audience, location, goal
- Nomination and general election campaign strategy

Nomination process

- Caucuses versus primaries (Mayer and Buell readings)
- Kind of primaries: closed, open, blanket
- Presidential nomination process, incl. Iowa caucuses, NH primaries, front-loading
- Party reform eras
 - Jacksonian Period: congressional caucus to convention
 - Progressive Era: introduction of the direct primary
 - Since 1950: shift of power/control to national, rather than state, parties
- Other causes of lack of party control

Congressional campaigns (Maisel et al. reading)

- Party contact and recruitment

Campaign finance

- Reform before Watergate
- Federal Election Campaign Act Amendments (1974)
- Buckley v. Valeo* (1976)
- Loopholes: bundling, independent expenditures, soft money
- Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act (2002)
- 527 organizations
- Does money matter?
- Why is there so little money in U.S. politics? (Ansolabehere et al. reading)