

Political Science 327  
American Political Parties  
Spring 2017  
MWF, 11:00-11:50  
303 Curry Building

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## SYLLABUS

This course examines political parties and elections in the United States. Among the topics we will cover are: the structure of competition between the parties; social and ideological differences between the parties; conflicts within the parties; how the parties are organized; how parties nominate candidates and attempt to elect them; and the overall role of political parties in the democratic political process. Students should leave this course with a critical understanding of the functioning of political parties in contemporary America, including a perspective on how the electoral process in general and political parties in particular might be improved.

The concern will be primarily with the Democratic and Republican Parties, since they are the major political parties in this country and have been so for over 150 years. Nevertheless, some consideration will be given to minor parties and independent candidates, as this topic raises some interesting questions about the political party system. Also, while this is a course in American political parties, some attention will be paid to political parties in other democracies in order to provide a comparative perspective.

An overriding concern of this course is to assess the role that political parties play in the democratic process in this country. In doing so, we will discuss why political parties are important for democracy, how well American political parties fulfill the role that we think that they should be playing in the political system, and what changes might be desirable in our political parties or electoral politics. The position paper topics all deal in some way with this general topic.

Because this is a course in political science, we will be concerned with how parties and elections can be studied. The collection and assessment of information to analyze and examine political phenomena will be discussed throughout the course, and the research paper will provide "hands-on" experience. I expect students to leave this course with an improved understanding of social science research. In order to achieve this goal, I have assigned a number of scholarly articles that report empirical research on political parties, and we will discuss the research methods and analysis of these studies in class.

This course has been designated as writing intensive. To help you develop your writing skills, two different types of papers will be required, along with brief reading summaries. The goal of this course is to improve your social science writing ability. This means, among other things, being able to make cogent arguments supported by relevant evidence. These points are discussed in more detail in the accompanying handout on writing in political science.

Finally, this course is a companion to PSC 332 (Elections and Voting), PSC 328 (Southern Politics), and PSC 326 (Elections, Law, and the Courts). These courses are designed to complement each other, but any one of them can be taken without having taken any of the others. Also, this course overlaps PSC 322 (American State Politics), which also may be of interest to students desiring work in this area. PSC 330 (Workshop in Practical Politics), which provides students with the opportunity to be directly involved in election campaigns, is another related course that may be of interest to students interested in political parties and electoral politics.

## Course Goals

As a result of taking this course, students should be able to:

1. Critically discuss theories of the role of political parties in American democracy.
2. Collect, analyze, and interpret data on various aspects of political parties.
3. Describe and explain the nature of the contemporary American political party system.
4. Analyze and evaluate the extent to which contemporary political parties fulfill the role that parties should play in American politics.
5. Analyze and evaluate proposals for reforming or improving the electoral process in the United States.

## Books

The following books are available at the bookstore in paperback editions:

Marjorie Randon Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, 16th edition, New York: Pearson, 2015.  
 John C. Green, Daniel J. Coffey, and David B. Cohen, eds., *The State of the Parties*, 7th ed., Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2014.

If you buy used copies, make sure that you buy the correct edition.

While the two required books for the course cover a great deal of material, there are topics where some supplementary material is useful, so there also is a set of reserve readings for this course. All of the reserve reading items are available on-line. The course schedule portion of this syllabus provides further information on the assigned reserve readings, including when the readings should be completed. Items that are available as e-reserve items through Canvas are marked as “[e-reserve]” in the course outline.

I also have placed several books on closed library reserve because they may be useful to you for the research paper. All of these books are ones with chapters on politics in individual states. One book (Appleton and Ward) has a chapter on each of the 50 states; one (Sabato) has chapters on the 2010 elections for a number of states, and the remaining two (Bullock and Rozell; Kapeluck et al.) have chapters on each of the southern states. Consult the reserve list for the details on these books, which are listed below.

Appleton and Ward, eds., *State Party Politics* (1996).  
 Bullock and Rozell, eds., *The New Politics of the Old South*, 5th ed. (2014).  
 Buchanan and Kapeluck, eds., *Second Verse, Same as the First: The 2012 Presidential Election in the South* (2014).  
 Sabato, ed., *Pendulum Swing* (2011).

## Classroom etiquette and expectations

Students are expected to come to class on time (the class starts at 11:00 am sharp) and prepared to discuss the assigned readings for the day. Students are also expected to follow good classroom etiquette. Among other things, this means that you should turn off your cell phone for the class, should not engage in annoying or distracting behavior, and should not bring your lunch to eat during the class session (a cup of coffee or a soft drink is fine).

## Course Requirements

The grades for this course will be based on the following:

1. A research paper, based on library research, which focuses on the political party system of a specific state. This paper will involve drafts of individual sections, along with a final paper. Details of this assignment will be found on another handout.
2. A position paper, based on library research, which argues for or against a proposed feature of or change in political parties or related aspects of the electoral system. Each of the topics for this paper will be the subject of discussion in a designated class session, and those who are writing on the topic will be expected to lead the class discussion. Details of this assignment will be found on another handout.
3. Reading summaries, due throughout the course. There will be 16 summaries assigned. Each will be worth up to 10 points. Your best 8 summaries will be counted. The reading assignment to be summarized and the due date will be announced at least two class periods in advance. The summaries should be typed and limited to one single-spaced typed page. Summaries must be submitted in person during the class period in which they are due. If you are not present for a class session, you may not submit a reading assignment due that day, regardless of the reason for your absence. Since only 8 of the 16 summaries will count toward your grade, you have ample allowance for illness and other unavoidable absences. The purpose of these assignments is twofold: (a) to help you understand the readings better by having to summarize the key points; and (b) to make sure that you are prepared to engage in class discussions about the readings.
4. Class participation, including both general contributions to class discussions and contributions to the discussion on the topic for your position paper. Regarding class participation, simply showing up for class is not enough; you should come prepared to discuss the readings in class and you should participate in the class discussion. If you have questions about the readings, you should raise them in class. Asking good questions is a valuable aspect of class participation. It also will be helpful for you to bring the assigned readings for that day to class, as we often will examine tables or charts in the readings.

The contribution of each component to the course grade is:

Research paper drafts (3)	60 pts
Research paper, final version	100 pts
Position paper	100 pts
Reading summaries (8)	80 pts
Class participation	<u>60 pts</u>
	400 pts

Students are expected to abide by the UNCG academic integrity policy for all written work submitted in this course. Among other things, this means that you should be careful not to plagiarize when you are writing your papers. Further information on the academic integrity policy, including information on plagiarism, can be found at: <http://sa.uncg.edu/dean/academic-integrity/>.

## Course Outline and Reading Assignments

### A. Introduction to political parties and party systems

#### 1. Importance of political parties (January 20)

Hershey, chpt. 1.

#### 2. The American political party system (January 23-30)

Hershey, chpts. 2, 7.

Green, Coffey, and Cohen, chpt. 1.

[January 25 and 27 will be devoted to library research; meet in the Library Citi computer lab]

#### 3. Party competition (February 1-3)

Hofferbert, Richard. 1964. "Classification of American State Party Systems" *Journal of Politics* 26: 550-567. [e-reserve]

#### 4. Minor parties (February 6-10)

Rapoport, Ronald B., and Walter J. Stone. 2003. "Ross Perot Is Alive and Well and Living in the Republican Party: Major Party Co-optation of the Perot Movement and the Reform Party." In *The State of the Parties*, 4th ed., ed. John C. Green and Rick Farmer, 337-353. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield. [e-reserve]

Schraufnagel, Scot. 2011. *Third Party Blues*. New York: Routledge. chpts 1, 4. [e-reserve]

### B. Political party differences: ideological and social

#### 1. Party differences in the electorate (February 13-15)

Hershey, chpts. 6.

Green, Coffey, and Cohen, chpt 2 (by Abramowitz), chpt. 3 (by Kimball et al.), and chpt. 4 (by Carmines et al.).

#### 2. Party differences among elites (February 17-20)

Green, Coffey, and Cohen, chpt 5 (by Stonecash), chpt. 8 (by Shor) and chpt. 9 (by Coffey).

#### 3. Mass-elite differences (February 22)

Jackson, John S. III, Barbara L. Brown, and David Bositis. 1982. "Herbert McClosky and Friends Revisited: 1980 Democratic and Republican Party Elites Compared to the Mass Public." *American Politics Quarterly* 10: 158-180. [e-reserve]

#### 4. Party factionalism (February 24-27)

Green, Coffey, and Cohen, chpt. 10 (by Rapoport et al.), chpt. 11 (by Francia and Morris), and chpt. 12 (by Miller and Burton).

### C. Political party organization

#### 1. Party activists (March 1)

Hershey, chpt. 5.

Prysby, Charles L. 2004. "Purist versus Pragmatist Orientation among Southern Political Party Activists." In *Southern Political Party Activists: Patterns of Conflict and Change, 1991-2001*, ed. John A. Clark and Charles L. Prysby, 133-148. Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky. [e-reserve]

#### 2. State and local party organizations (March 6)

Hershey, chpt. 3.

Green, Coffey and Cohen, chpt. 18 (by Shea).

#### 3. National party organizations (March 8)

Hershey, chpt. 4.

#### 4. Parties as coalitions of groups (March 10)

Herrnson, Paul S. 2009. "The Roles of Party Organizations, Party-Connected Committees, and Party Allies in Elections." *Journal of Politics* 71: 1207-1224. [e-reserve]

### D. Nominating candidates

#### 1. State and local nominations (March 20-24)

Hershey, chpt. 9.

Kanthak, Kristin, and Jeffrey Williams. 2005. "Parties and Primaries: The First Electoral Round." In *Law and Election Politics: The Rules of the Game*, ed. Matthew J. Streb, 7-22. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner. [e-reserve]

#### 2. Presidential nominations (March 27-31)

Hershey, chpt. 10.

Green, Coffey, and Cohen, chpt. 16 (by Jewitt)

Cohen, Marty, David Karol, Hans Noel, and John Zaller. 2016. "Party Versus Faction in the Reformed Presidential Nominating System." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 49: 701-708.

### E. Political parties and elections

#### 1. Campaign finance (April 3-7)

Hershey, chpt. 12.

Green, Coffey, and Cohen, chpt. 13 (by Dwyre and Kolodny) and chpt. 14 (by Magleby).

#### 2. Electoral participation (April 10-12)

Hershey, chpt. 8.

3. Political parties and election campaigns (April 17-19)

Hershey, chpt. 11.

Green, Coffey, and Cohen, chpt. 15 (by Beck and Heidemann) and chpt. 17 (by Roscoe and Jenkins).

F. Parties, government, and the political process.

1. The responsible parties model (April 21-24)

Hershey, chpt. 15.

2. The partisan presidency April 26)

Hershey, chpt. 14.

3. Parties in Congress (April 28)

Hershey, chpt. 13.

Green, Coffey, and Cohen, chpt. 7 (by Ensley et al.).

4. Combating partisan gridlock (May 1-2)

Mann, Thomas J., and Norman J. Ornstein. 2012. *It's Even Worse Than it Looks: How the American Constitutional System Collided with the New Politics of Extremism*. New York: Basic Books. Chapter 5 ("Fixing the Party System"). [e-reserve]

Green, Coffey, and Cohen, chpt. 6 (by Connelly).