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PSC 341.01: Political Parties and Elections

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Political Parties and Elections
University of Montana
Political Science 341
MWF 11:10 – 12:00; Social Science 344
Fall 2009

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and by appointment

Course Description

No discussion of American politics can go too far before political parties begin to intrude. Indeed, as E.E. Schattsneider wrote: “Modern democracy is unthinkable save in terms of political parties.” Yet while they are a central feature of the American political system, parties are more elusive and difficult to study than other well-bounded institutions like Congress or the Presidency. Even definitions of “political party” are contested. Nonetheless, in a country marked by vast socio-economic, ethnic, and religious diversity, as well as fragmentation of power across branches and levels of government, parties play a central role in providing linkages. They connect voters to each other, link voters to elected officials, and bind elected officials to one another both within and across branches and levels of government. The ways in which political parties do these things has evolved in fascinating ways. This course will explore the origin, development, importance, and consequences of political parties in the United States. In addition, with the 2008 presidential election recently concluded, we will analyze the parties’ nominating processes and the general election, as well as the recent congressional elections. Among other things, this task involves analyzing voter participation and behavior.

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to: 1) Demonstrate knowledge of the transformation of America's Party system over the past 200 years; 2) Demonstrate an understanding of the fundamental models, terms, and concepts associated with the study of political parties and political behavior; 3) Demonstrate proficiency at writing critical analyses of social science theories; 4) Demonstrate an understanding of the consequences of political reform and the election process.

Readings

Most of our readings will be posted on the course’s Blackboard website. These readings are designated on the syllabus as: “(BB).” Contact me if you are not familiar with Blackboard.

One book is required and is available for purchase at the University Bookstore:

1. James W. Ceaser, Andrew E. Busch, and John J. Pitney, Jr., *Epic Journey: The 2008 Elections and American Politics* (Roman & Littlefield, 2009).

The *New York Times* (electronic edition: www.nyt.com) is also required reading on a daily basis

(Monday through Friday). Students are required to read those news stories dealing with American political parties. Students may substitute (or alternate between) the *Washington Post* or the *Washington Times* if they like.

The instructor reserves the right to add, delete, or alter course readings as necessary.

Requirements and Grading

Midterm Exam 1 (Friday, Oct. 23):	25%
Paper (due Nov. 23):	25%
Final Exam (Dec. 16):	25%
Reading Quizzes:	10%
Participation (including presentation):	15%

Exams: The Midterm Exam will be administered in class on Friday, October 23. The Final Exam will be held on Wednesday, December 16 from 8:00 – 10:00. Exams may include a combination of multiple choice, identification, short answer, and essay questions. Makeup exams will only be permitted if I have been notified *prior* to the missed exam and only if I agree that the absence was necessitated by a serious, documented emergency. Check your calendar now to make sure you do not have anything that conflicts with the exams.

Paper: Students will write a 5 to 7 page double-spaced research paper with 1-inch margins and standard 12 point font. More information about the research paper will be given in class. Papers are due at the beginning of class on Monday, November 23. Extensions will be available only for illness or serious family circumstance, and then only with *advance* permission. Papers will be marked down half a letter grade for each day they are late.

Reading Quizzes: Reading quizzes will be administered several times during the semester without prior announcement. Quizzes will cover basic aspects of the assigned reading.

Participation: Much of our class time will be spent discussing the course readings. Consequently, both quantity and quality of class participation will be very important. Students are expected to do all of the assigned readings before each class meeting and come to class prepared to discuss the material. Daily attendance will be taken and factored into participation grades. Students missing more than ¼ of our class meetings will not pass the course.

Presentations: In addition, each student will contribute to and participate in a formal group presentation about an historically important presidential election. Each group will select first-hand documents for the class to read ahead of the presentation. Unless otherwise noted, presentations will be held on Fridays. Further details about the presentations will be provided in class.

Grades: Grades will be assigned according to the following percentages:

A 93-100	B+ 87-89.9	C+ 77-79.9	D+ 67-69.9	below 60 F
A- 90-92.9	B 83-86.9	C 73-76.9	D 63-66.9	
	B- 80-82.9	C- 70-72.9	D- 60-62.9	

** Student must complete both exams, the paper, and the presentation in order to pass the course.**

Academic Honesty

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available online at <http://life.umt.edu/SA/documents/fromWeb/StudentConductCode1.pdf>. I take academic honesty very seriously, and will do my utmost to prevent, uncover, and penalize any form of cheating. Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns about academic honesty.

DSS Students

Qualified students with disabilities will receive appropriate accommodations. Students requesting accommodations on exams, papers, or other course requirements should contact me as soon as possible, and must contact DSS in order to arrange for and provide me with a letter of approval for accommodations at least one week prior to the first exam. DSS is in Lommasson Center 154.

COURSE SCHEDULE

PART I: DEFINING POLITICAL PARTIES

Week 1, Aug. 31 – Sept. 4: Introduction

- (a) David Hume, "Of Parties in General" (BB)
- (b) Edmund Burke, *Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents*, paragraphs 1.1.141-48 and 1.1.151 (BB)
- (c) Matthew Yglesias, "The Case for Partisanship," *The Atlantic* (April 2008) (BB)

Week 2, Sept. 7 – 11: What are Parties?

- (a) John Aldrich, *Why Parties?* (University of Chicago Press, 1995) Chap. 1 (BB)
- (b) Woodrow Wilson, "Wanted – A Party" (BB)
- (c) Joseph A. Schlesinger, "Political Parties and the Winning of Office (University of Michigan Press, 1991), pgs 1-20 (BB)
- (d) Kay Lawson, "The Case for a Multiparty System," *Multiparty Politics in American* (Rowman & Littlefield, 1997) (BB)
- (e) John Bibby, "In Defense of the Two Party System," *Multiparty Politics in America* (BB)

Week 3: Sept. 14 – 18: National and State Party Organizations

- (a) Paul S. Herrnson, "National Party Organizations at the Dawn of the Twenty-First Century" (BB)
- (b) Daniel J. Galvin, "Changing Course: Reversing the Organizational Trajectory of the Democratic Party from Bill Clinton to Barack Obama," *The Forum* 6:2 (2008) (BB)
- (c) John Kenneth White and Daniel M. Shea, "State and Local Parties: 'Mom and Pop' Shops in the Information Age," *New Party Politics* (Thomson-Wadsworth, 2004) (BB)
- (d) Jerry Calvert, "Montana," *State Party Profiles* (CQ Press, 1997) (BB)

PART II: THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE AMERICAN PARTY SYSTEM

Week 4, Sept. 21 – 25: The Origins of the American Party System

- (a) Richard Hofstadter, *The Idea of a Party System* (University of California Press, 1969), Chapter 2 (BB)
- (b) Joel H. Silbey, "From 'Essential to the Existence of our Institutions' to 'Rapacious Enemies of Honest and Respectable Government': The Rise and Fall of American Political Parties, 1790-2000" (BB)
- (c) Alexis de Tocqueville, "Parties in the United States," *Democracy in America* (Book 1, Chapter 10) (BB)
- (d) Group #1 selected readings

Week 5, Sept. 28 – Oct. 2: The Development of the Republican Party, Part I

- (a) William E. Gienapp, "Formation of the Republican Party" (BB)
- (b) George Packer, "The Fall of Conservatism: Have the Republicans Run Out of Ideas?," *The New Yorker*, May 28, 2008 (BB)
- (c) Group #2 selected readings

Week 6, Oct. 5 – 9: The Development of the Republican Party, Part II

- (a) Nicol Rae, *Decline and Fall of the Liberal Republicans* (Oxford University Press, 1989), pgs. 25-45, 78-87, 118-21 (BB)
- (b) Linwood Holton, "An End to the Southern Strategy?," *New York Times* (BB)
- (c) Gerard Alexander, "The Myth of the Racist Republicans," *Claremont Review of Books* (BB)
- (d) Group #3 selected readings

Week 7, Oct. 12 – Oct. 16: The Development of the Democratic Party, Part I

- (a) William G. Shade, "The Jacksonian Party System" (BB)
- (b) Nicol Rae, *Southern Democrats*, (Oxford University Press, 1994), Chapter 1 (BB)
- (c) Group #4 selected readings

Week 8, Oct. 19 – Oct. 23: The Development of the Democratic Party, Part II

******Midterm Exam: Friday, October 23******

- (a) Thomas Byrne Edsall, "The Old and New Democratic Parties," in Peter Berkowitz ed., *Varieties of Progressivism* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 2004) (BB)
- (b) William Galston, "Incomplete Victory: The Rise of the New Democrats," in *Varieties of Progressivism* (BB)

PART III: PARTIES AND ELECTIONS

Week 9, Oct. 26 – 30: Party Identification and Voting

- (a) Warren E. Miller, "Party Identification and the Electorate at the Start of the Twenty-First Century" (BB)
- (b) Louis Menand, "The Unpolitical Animal: How Political Science Understands Voters," *The New Yorker* (Aug 30, 2004) (BB)
- (c) Larry M. Bartels, "The Irrational Electorate," *The Wilson Quarterly* (Autumn 2008) (BB)
- (d) Group #5 selected readings

Week 10, Nov. 2 – Nov. 6: Partisan Regimes and Electoral Realignment

- (a) Walter Dean Burnham, "Party Systems and the Political Process," in *The American Party Systems: Stages of Development*, Burnham and William Nisbet Chambers, eds. (Oxford University Press, 1967) (BB)
- (b) David Mayhew, "Electoral Realignments," *Annual Review of Political Science* 3 (2000), 449-74 (BB)
- (c) Elizabeth Sanders, "In Defense of Realignment and Regimes," *Polity* (2005) (BB)
- (d) Group #6 selected readings

Week 11, Nov. 9 – Nov. 13: Presidential Nominations and Campaigns

- (a) Nelson W. Polsby, *The Consequences of Party Reform* (Oxford University Press, 1983), Part I (BB)
- (b) Marty Cohen, David Karol, Hans Noel, and John Zaller, "The Invisible Primary in Presidential Nominations, 1980-2004," in *The Making of the Presidential Candidates 2008*, William G. Mayer, ed. (Rowman & Littlefield, 2007) (BB)
- (c) Larry J. Sabato, "Politics: America's Missing Constitutional Link," *Virginia Quarterly Review*, Summer 2006 (BB)
- (d) Group #7 selected readings

PART IV: THE 2008 PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN

Week 12, Nov. 16 – Nov. 20: Analyzing Campaign 2008, Part I

- (a) James W. Ceaser, Andrew E. Busch, and John J. Pitney, *Epic Journey: The 2008 Elections and American Politics*, Chapters 1-2
- (b) Group #8 selected readings

Week 13, Nov. 23: Paper Due; Catch-Up

- (a) Paper due Monday, Nov. 23, 11:10 AM
- (b) Happy Thanksgiving!

Week 14, Nov. 30 – Dec. 4: Analyzing Campaign 2008, Part II

- (a) Ceaser, Busch, and Pitney, *Epic Journey*, Chapters 3-4
- (b) Group #9 selected readings (to be held Wednesday)

Week 15, Dec. 7 – 11: Analyzing Campaign 2008, Part III

- (a) Ceaser, Busch, and Pitney, *Epic Journey*, Chapters 5 & 7
- (b) Group #10 selected readings (to be held Monday)

******FINAL EXAM: WEDNESDAY, DEC. 16, 8:00 – 10:00******