

University of Florida
POS 4443: Political Parties & Elections
Spring 2015
3 Credits

Instructor: A. Diana Forster

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Office Hours: W 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Anderson 301

Meeting time: MWF 6

Classroom: McCarty A, Room 1142

Course Description:

In this course, we will consider the theoretical foundation, historical context, and organization and functions of political parties in the United States. We will study the formation and development of the parties and examine the current party system, including theories of party identification in the electorate, the process of nominating candidates, party polarization, and campaign finance. The course is divided into three sections. The first section will begin with an analysis of the theories used to explain party conflict. Throughout the course, we will return to these theories and use them to guide our thinking about party systems throughout history. In the remainder of this section, we will explore how changing ideas about the purpose of political parties and the issues dividing them have influenced their development over time. Tracing the history of political parties in the U.S. will help us to understand the shape parties have taken today. The second section will serve as an introduction to political parties in the U.S. We will break down the party system into its three components (party organizations, parties in the electorate, and parties in government) and discuss the roles that parties play in national, state, and local politics. The final section will address the topic of party polarization, including its causes and consequences. Throughout the course, identifying the patterns and processes of party development which run throughout American history is more important than simply memorizing facts about components of the party system. The goal of the course is to help you understand and think critically about the theoretical foundations and purposes of political parties. Throughout the course, you will be asked to consider the question: Do parties matter?

Course Goals:

By the end of this course, students will:

- (1) Demonstrate familiarity with fundamental political, philosophical, religious, economic, and social scientific research and theories.
- (2) Be able to express and defend reasoned points of view both orally and in writing.
- (3) Evaluate their views relevant to the course with reasons and evidence.

Textbooks

Schaffner, Brian F. 2012. *Politics, Parties, & Elections in America*, 7th edition. Wadsworth. ISBN: 0-495-89916-X. (recommended)

My lectures will draw heavily on the Schaffner textbook. As such, it is likely to come in handy when preparing for exams. However, I will not test you on any specific details from the book that are not also covered in lecture, and I do not expect you to incorporate the recommended readings from it into your weekly essays. Judge for yourself whether it's worth your money to buy.

All required readings are available under the Resources tab in eLearning.

Assignments & Grading:

Attendance and Participation	20%
Weekly Essays (8 at 5% each)	40%
Role Play essay and participation	10%
Midterm Exam	15%
Final Paper	15%

Attendance and Participation

Attendance is mandatory. If you are planning to miss class (official university activity, religious holiday, jury duty, etc.) please notify me in advance.

Student participation is expected in the form of discussion of the assigned readings and asking questions. For this to be a successful course, it is imperative that you do the assigned readings before class, give yourself time to think about them, and prepare yourself to discuss them in class. Your participation is worth 20% of your final grade. Please be respectful and polite at all times.

In preparing for class meetings, students should consider the following questions in relation to the assigned readings:

- What are the central issues addressed?
- What is the perspective of the author and what evidence is provided to support his/her argument?
- What is your own point of view? Do you agree/disagree with the points presented?
- How does the literature clarify your understanding of political science?

Because this is an upper-level course, most sessions will be conducted in a seminar style. All students will be expected to participate in a meaningful way during every class session.

Weekly Essays

Students are expected to complete eight short essays (500-600 words, ~2 pages) over the course of the semester. These essays will be used to structure class discussion. Essays will be due Tuesdays at 11:59 p.m. on E-Learning, and the prompts will relate to that week's required readings. There will be prompts for each week of readings (12 in total), so you will have some choice on which topics/weeks to write on. No late essays will be accepted. Prompts will be announced in class and posted on E-Learning one week in advance.

Role Play Essay and Presentation

Each student will be required to participate in a panel in which he or she will “role play” a real life figure from either past or contemporary politics. You will have seven panel dates and topics, noted on the syllabus, and numerous “characters” from which to choose. Panel sign-ups will take place during the second week of class.

In advance of your panel, you are required to write a short (500-600 words, ~2 pages) essay discussing your character’s perspective on the issues discussed in class that week. This will likely require a minimal amount of Googling on your part to learn about your character; however, *these are designed to be exercises in critical thinking, not research papers*. These short essays will be due on the day before your panel (Thursdays) at 11:59 p.m. on eLearning. On the panel, you will be required to briefly introduce yourself and respond to questions from the instructor and your classmates in character.

Midterm Exam

The midterm will be a mix of multiple choice and short essay questions, to be held during class on *Wednesday, February 25*.

Final Paper

The final paper will be a 6-8 pages long essay due on the university designated exam day, *Wednesday, April 29*, by 11:59 p.m. on E-Learning. Each day late will result in a penalty of a full letter grade. Prompts will be distributed on the last day of class.

University Policy on Accommodating Students with Disabilities

Students requesting accommodation for disabilities must first register with the Dean of Students Office (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>). The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation. You must submit this documentation prior to submitting assignments or taking the quizzes or exams. Accommodations are not retroactive; therefore, students should contact the office as soon as possible in the term for which they are seeking accommodations.

University Policy on Academic Misconduct

Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students should be sure that they understand the UF Student Honor Code at <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>.

Grading Scale:

A 100 – 93	B 86 – 83	C+ 79-77	D+ 69-67
A- 92 – 90	B+ 89 – 87	C 76 – 73	D 66-60
	B- 82 – 80	C- 72 – 70	E 59-0

Grades for individual assignments and overall averages will be posted on E-Learning throughout the semester.

Course Calendar

Week 1: W 1/07-F 1/09

Parties and Politics in America: An Overview

- W Jan 7 Course introduction
F Jan. 9 Schaffner: Chapter 1 (recommended)

Section I: The Origins and Development of the Party System

Week 2: MWF 1/12-1/16

Party Systems and Realignment Theory

- M Jan 12 Schaffner: Chp 2, pp. 17-19 (recommended)
W Jan 14 Key, "A Theory of Critical Elections"; Mayhew, *Electoral Realignments*:
Chp 2
F Jan 16 NO CLASS – Southern Political Science Association conference in New
Orleans, LA
Weekly Essay 1 Due January 13

Week 3: WF 1/21-1/23

M Jan 19 NO CLASS, MLK Day

Changing Conceptions of Parties

- W Jan 21 Madison, "Federalist No. 10"
F Jan 23 Hofstadter: Chp 1
Weekly Essay 2 Due January 20

Week 4: MWF 1/26-1/30

The History of the Party Systems

- M Jan 26 Schaffner: Chp 2, pp. 19-33 (recommended)
W Jan 28 Hoadley, "The Emergence of Political Parties in Congress, 1789-1803";
Shade, "Politics and Parties in Jacksonian America"
F Jan 30 Role Play Panel #1
Weekly Essay 3 Due January 27

Week 5: 2/2-2/6

The United States: A 2-Party System

- M Feb 2 Schaffner: Ch. 2, pp. 33-47 (recommended)
W Feb 4 Benoit, "Duverger's Law and the Study of Electoral Systems"; Abramson
et al., "Third-Party and Independent Candidates in American Politics:
Wallace, Anderson, and Perot"
F Feb 6 Role Play Panel #2
Weekly Essay 4 Due February 3

Section II: The Parties Today

Week 6: MWF 2/9-2/13

Party Organizations

- M Feb 9 Schaffner: Chp 3 (recommended)
W Feb 11 Schaffner: Chp 4 (recommended)
F Feb 13 Koger et al, "Partisan Webs: Information Exchange and Party Networks";
Heaney & Rojas, "Partisans, Nonpartisans, and the Antiwar Movement in
the United States"

Weekly Essay 5 Due February 10

Week 7: MWF 2/16-2/20

Parties, Nominations, and Elections

- M Feb 16 Schaffner: Ch. 5-6 (recommended)
W Feb 18 Norrander, "The End Game in Post-Reform Presidential Nominations";
Brady et al, "Primary Elections and Candidate Ideology: Out of Step with
the Electorate?"
F Feb 20 Role Play Panel #3

Weekly Essay 6 Due February 17

Week 8: MWF 2/23-2/25

- M Feb 23 Midterm Exam Review
W Feb 25 MIDTERM EXAM in class
F Feb 27 NO CLASS – Enjoy your spring break!

Section III: The Party in the Electorate

Week 9: MWF 3/9-3/13

Party Identification: The Michigan School and Retrospective Voting

- M March 9 Schaffner: Chp 7, pp. 183-205 (recommended)
W March 11 Green, Palmquist, and Schickler: Chp 1-2
F March 13 Fiorina: "Economic Retrospective Voting in American National Elections:
A Micro-Analysis"

Weekly Essay 7 Due March 10

Week 10: MWF 3/16-3/20

Race and the Parties

- M March 16 Schaffner: Ch. 7, pp. 206-217 (recommended)
W March 18 Frymer, *Uneasy Alliances*: Chp. 1
F March 20 Barreto and Segura, *Latino America*: Chp. 3

Weekly Essay 8 Due March 17

Week 11: MWF 3/23-3/27

Gender, Religion, and the Parties

- M March 23 Abramowitz & Saunders, "Exploring the Bases of Partisanship in the
American Electorate: Social Identity vs. Ideology"

W March 25 Schlesinger & Heldman, "Gender Gap or Gender Gaps? New Perspectives on Support for Government Action and Policies"; Putnam & Campbell, *American Grace*: Chp. 11
F March 27 Role Play Panel #4
Weekly Essay 9 Due March 24

Section IV: The Party in Government

Week 12: MWF 3/30-4/03

The Party in Congress

M March 30 Schaffner: Chp. 9 (recommended)
W April 1 Kingdon, "Models of Legislative Voting"; Wright & Schaffner, "The Influence of Party: Evidence from the State Legislatures"
F April 3 Role Play Panel #5
Weekly Essay 10 Due March 31

Week 13: MWF 4/06-4/10

Partisan Strategies

M April 6 Schaffner: Chp. 8 (recommended)
W April 8 Gerber & Green, "The Effects of Canvassing, Telephone Calls, and Direct Mail on Voter Turnout: A Field Experiment"; McDonald, "A Comparative Analysis of Redistricting Institutions in the United States, 2001-02"
F April 10 Role Play Panel #6
Weekly Essay 11 Due April 7

Section V: The Future of the Parties

Week 14: MWF 4/13-4/17

Party Polarization

M April 13 Schaffner: Chp. 10 (recommended)
W April 15 Fiorina, *Culture War?*: Chp. 1-2; Abramowitz & Saunders, "Is Polarization a Myth?"
F April 17 Role Play Panel #7
Weekly Essay 12 Due April 14

Week 15: MW 4/20-4/22

M April 20 Course conclusions
W April 22 Exam review. Final paper prompts distributed in class.

Wednesday, April 29: Final Exams Due on eLearning by 11:59 p.m.