



POS 4443
Classrooms: ROG 0110 & NRN 0331

Instructor: Dr. Dustin Fridkin
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Political Parties & Elections
Tue 10:40 – 11:30
Thu 10:40 – 12:35
Office: AND 003
Hours: Tue & Thu 12:45 – 2:00
(and by appointment)

OVERVIEW OF THE CLASS

Course Description & Objectives

As the title implies, this course examines political parties and elections, which are, respectively, the primary institutions and means through which citizens are connected to governments in democratic countries. We will focus primarily, though not exclusively, on the United States. We will consider the evolution of the theoretical foundations, historical contexts, and organization of political parties in the United States. We will also examine the relationship between the party system and the electoral system. Although we will be focused primarily on empirical analysis and explanation, we will remain attentive to the various normative issues connected to the crucial roles played by parties and elections in modern liberal-democratic political systems. We will consider the components of party systems (party organization, party in the electorate, and party in government) separately, for analytical purposes, but we will not forget that these

components function as parts of a more-or-less integrated party system. The primary purpose of the course is to enable students to think critically about the foundations, purposes, and functions of political parties. We should, by the end of the semester, be able to offer cogent, if not definitive, answers to the following question: Do parties matter, and if so, how, why, and with what consequences?

Course Goals

By the end of this course, students will

1. demonstrate familiarity with relevant political, philosophical, economic, and generally social-scientific 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

Required Textbook and Readings

- Brewer, Mark D. and L. Sandy Maisel, eds. 2013. *The Parties Respond: Changes in American Parties and Campaigns, 5th Edition*. Boulder, CO. Westview Press. ISBN: 987-0-8133-4600-7
- Additional required readings will be distributed by the instructor.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Reading, attendance, and participation

Attendance is mandatory. If you are planning to miss class for whatever reason (official university activity, religious holiday, jury duty, etc.) please notify me IN ADVANCE. Excessive absences will result in removal from the course and/or a failing grade. I will take roll at the beginning of every class. If you come in late, you will not receive full credit for your attendance. Furthermore, I expect every student to come to class having read the assigned material. You should be prepared to ask and answer questions about the material. Mere bodily presence in the classroom is not enough, and those who are in the classroom but mentally absent will not receive full credit for attendance.

Redistricting Game

We'll be spending the first week of October talking about redistricting and gerrymandering. I insist that, during this week, you play an educational game about redistricting, which you'll find here:

<http://www.redistrictinggame.org/>

Play the game, take a screenshot to prove you've completed it, and submit the screenshot to me.

Midterm Exam

The midterm will consist of three essay questions. It will be distributed on Thursday, October 20th, and it will be due by midnight on Sunday, October 23rd.

Platform-Creation Project

This group project requires you to imagine yourself as an advisor to a political party. Your party hopes to win a future election. You will need to investigate the history of your party and the electoral system in which it is embedded in order to determine the proper mix of policy planks to include in your platform. How will your party and/or candidate broaden their base of support without alienating core constituents? You will be randomly assigned to teams and parties, and you will be required to present your party platforms during the final week of classes.

Panel Discussions and Response Papers

Each week's readings are divided into primary and secondary readings. Everybody is expected to closely read the primary material. Each week, 3-5 students will be required to serve as panel discussants for the secondary readings. The students who are on the panel will be expected to have closely read the secondary materials. They will be expected to come to class prepared to summarize the secondary materials and to offer critical evaluations of it. Panel discussants will, naturally, be expected to lead in-class discussion of the materials. In addition to this, each student will be expected to submit a response paper concerning the secondary materials for the week for which they've been empaneled. The paper should be between two and four pages, double-spaced Times New Roman font with one-inch margins.

Final Exam

The cumulative final exam for this class will consist of three essay questions. It will be distributed on the final day of class and due during finals week.

GRADE CALCULATION POLICY

Redistricting Game	5%
Attendance and Participation	15%
Platform-Creation Project	20%
Panel Discussion and Response Paper	20%
Midterm Exam	20%
Final Exam	20%

GRADING SCALE

A 100-90%

B+	89-87
B	86-80
C+	79-77
C	76-70
D+	69-67
D	66-60
F	59-0

COURSE SCHEDULE

Readings are in *The Parties Respond* (TPR) unless otherwise noted

<p>Week 1 (8/23 & 8/25) Introduction to the syllabus, and to the American party & electoral systems.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Required Readings:</p> <p>Jillson <i>American Government</i> chapters 7 & 8</p>
<p>Week 2 (8/30 & 9/1) The present dilemma: partisan polarization and American politics</p>	<p>Primary Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TPR chapter 13 “American Politics in an Age of Polarization” <p>Secondary Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lijphart “Constitutional Choices for New Democracies” • Yglesias “American Democracy is Doomed”
<p>Week 3 (9/6 & 9/8) Political science, political parties, and politics</p>	<p>Primary Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TPR chapter 1 “Political Science and the Study of Politics” <p>Secondary Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bawn, Cohen, et al “A Theory of Political Parties: Groups, Policy Demands, and Nominations in American Politics”
<p>Week 4 (9/13 & 9/15) A brief history of the American party system</p>	<p>Primary Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TPR chapter 2: “The Diminishing Oddness of American Political Parties” <p>Secondary Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Washington’s “Farewell Address” • Madison’s “Federalist #10” • Madison’s “Candid State of Parties” • Baker “The Soul of a New Machine”
<p>Week 5 (9/20 & 9/22) The current state of American party organizations & electoral coalitions</p>	<p>Primary Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TPR chapter 6: “National Parties in the Twenty-First Century” <p>Secondary Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roscoe & Jenkins “Changes in Local Party Structure and Activity, 1980-

	<p>2008”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>TPR</i> chapter 3 “Attempting to Build a Winner: Parties and the Crafting of Electoral Coalitions” • Hertel-Fernandez and Skocpol “Billionaires against Big Business: Growing Tensions in the Republican Party Coalition”
<p>Week 6 (9/27 & 9/29) Causes of partisan polarization</p>	<p>Primary Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>TPR</i> chapter 4: “Party Activists, Ideological Extremism, and Party Polarization” <p>Secondary Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shea “Separated We Stand? The Impact of Ideological Sorting on Local Party Dynamics” • Carmines, Ensley, & Wagner “Why American Political Parties Can’t Get Beyond the Left-Right Divide”
<p>Week 7 (10/4 & 10/6) The partisan politics of redistricting</p> <p>**Redistricting Game assignment due Friday, 10/7**</p>	<p>Primary Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • McDonald “A Comparative Analysis of Redistricting Institutions in the United States, 2001-02” <p>Secondary Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kirkland “Wallet-Based Redistricting: Evidence for the Concentration of Wealth in Majority Party Districts” • Carson, Crespin, & Williamson “Reevaluating the Effects of Redistricting on Electoral Competition, 1972-2012” • Gastil “The Republicans’ big gerrymander could backfire in a major way”
<p>Week 8 (10/11 & 10/13) Direct democracy, partisanship, and elections</p>	<p>Primary Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smith & Tolbert “The Instrumental and Educative Effects of Ballot Measures: Research on Direct Democracy in the American States” <p>Secondary Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smith & Fridkin “Delegating Direct Democracy: Interparty Legislative Competition and the Adoption of the Initiative in the American States” • Phillips “Does the Initiative Weaken Party Government in the U.S. States?”

<p>Week 9 (10/18 & 10/20) **Midterm Exam handed out in class on Thursday**</p>	<p>Primary Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hacker & Pierson “Winner-Take-All Politics: Public Policy, Political Organization, and the Precipitous Rise of Top Incomes in the United States”
<p>Week 10 (10/25 & 10/27) Party politics and the courts</p>	<p>Primary Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Epstein, Martin, Quinn, & Segal “Ideology and the Study of Judicial Behavior” <p>Secondary Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Epps “Will Partisanship Undermine the Judiciary?” Levine & Cook “In states with elected high court judges, a harder line on capital punishment” Berry “How Judicial Elections Impact Criminal Cases”
<p>Week 11 (11/1 & 11/3) Parties and the executive branch</p>	<p>Primary Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>TPR</i> chapter 12 “Partisan Presidential Leadership: The President’s Appointees” Binder “Polarized We Govern” <p>Secondary Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ostrander “The Logic of Collective Inaction: Senatorial Delay in Executive Nominations” Kennedy “Signing Statements, Gridlock, and Presidential Strategy”
<p>Week 12 (11/8 & 11/10) Partisanship in Congress</p>	<p>Primary Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>TPR</i> chapter 11 “Congressional Parties and the Policy Process” <p>Secondary Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Barber & McCarty “Causes and Consequences of Polarization” <i>TPR</i> chapter 9 “Boehner’s Dilemma: A Tempest in a Tea Party?”
<p>Week 13 (11/15 & 11/17) Voting and Voting Rights</p>	<p>Primary Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Davidson “The Historical Context of Voter Photo-ID Laws” NCSL “History of Voter ID” Levitt “A comprehensive investigation of voter impersonation finds 31 credible”

	incidents out of one billion ballots cast Secondary Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • McKee “Politics is Local: State Legislator Voting on Restrictive Voter Identification Legislation” • Levitt “The Truth About Voter Fraud”
Week 14 (11/22)	Primary Reading Disch “Democratic Representation and the Constituency Paradox”
Week 15 (11/29 & 12/1)	Platform Presentations
Week 16 (12/6)	Platform Presentations (and final review session)

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, which you can find here:

<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>

Accommodating Students with Disabilities

Students requesting accommodation for disabilities must first register with the Den of Students Office, which you can find here:

<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 to the instructor 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.