

## *Political Parties and Elections*

Prof. Michael McDonald

### Contact Info

Office: Anderson 222

E-mail: michael.mcdonald@ufl.edu

Phone: 352-273-2371

### Office Hours

Wed 9:00-11:30am or by appointment

### **Introduction**

Welcome to Political Parties and Elections. The course examines political parties, which are the primary political organizations that put candidates before the voters and organize deliberations within political institutions. Parties are mentioned nowhere in the United States constitution. In his farewell address, George Washington expressed his opposition to political parties shared by many of the Founding Fathers: "...the common & continual mischiefs of the spirit of Party are sufficient to make it the interest and the duty of a wise People to discourage and restrain it." Yet, even in his cabinet, the growing animosity between future presidents John Adams and Thomas Jefferson would soon develop into the first national political parties.

The goal of this class is to understand the function and organization of political parties. There are three parts to this course that correspond to three aspects of political parties:

- **Parties as organizations** unto themselves: how are they organized locally and nationally? Who actively joins political parties?
- **Parties in the electorate:** how do voters use political parties to orient themselves? As we cover this topic, we will also explore elections in greater depth, covering such topics as who votes, how voters make their decisions, and how campaigns and parties mobilize voters.
- **Parties in government:** what role do parties play in Congress, the presidency, and the courts?

If you're reading this syllabus, congratulations! These three bolded aspects of political parties will likely be an exam question.

### **Readings**

- Hershey, Majorie R. 2021. *Party Politics in America, 18<sup>th</sup> Edition*. New York: Pearson Education Inc.
- Additional readings are available on Canvas.

The readings that will be discussed each class are listed below as a Reading Assignment for that day of class. Readings denoted "(Canvas)" have electronic versions available in the "Files" tab on Canvas.

## Attendance Policy

If you do not participate in at least one of the first two class meetings of a course or laboratory in which you are registered, and you have not contacted the department to indicate your intent, you can be dropped from the course. You must not assume that you will be dropped, however. The department will not notify you if you have been dropped from a course or laboratory. You can request reinstatement on a space-available basis if you present documented evidence.

**The university recognizes the right of the individual professor to make attendance mandatory. After due warning, professors can prohibit further attendance and subsequently assign a failing grade for excessive absences.**

**The policy for this class** is that every student should make the best attempt to attend all classes. A student that misses four or more classes without a university-approved excuse (e.g., from the Dean's office, sports department or other university official) will have their overall grade reduced a letter step. Students do not need, and should not approach the professor, to provide non-university-approved excuses for missing three or fewer classes. A student with ten or more unexcused class absences will receive a failing grade for the entire course and will be barred from attending further classes.

If there is an issue that affects your ability to attend class, please let the professor know as soon as possible. Accommodations can be made if we devise a plan together as soon as a problem occurs.

## Grades

Grades consist of three midterms and classroom participation. The weighting of the aspects of the grade are:

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Due</u>	<u>% of Overall Grade</u>
Midterm 1	Feb 14	30%
Midterm 2	Mar 21	30%
Midterm 3	April 25	35%
Participation		5%

## Technology Use Policy

Studies find that students who use laptops or cell phones in class tend to receive lower grades than their peers.

Laptops, cell phones, tablets, and other electronic devices are banned from the classroom, unless the professor explicitly states otherwise as some class assignments will use technology.

A first offense earns a warning. A second offense results in letter grade reduction of the overall class grade, and a third offense results in an automatic failing grade for the course.

Students with disabilities who present documentation to the professor are permitted to use laptops for note taking. Other students who wish to use laptops for notetaking must receive permission from the professor. An approval effectively serves as a warning. Any student with an approved laptop will receive a letter grade reduction for the first offense of doing anything non-class related on their laptop in class, and a failing grade for the second offense.

## **Honor Code**

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor.

Basically, don't cheat. You cheat yourself of your education and more severe punishment may follow. Helping someone else is cheating, too. If you have any questions if your approach to completing an assignment may violate the honor code, please contact the instructor for guidance.

## **Disability Statement**

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

My exams tend to have an essay component. If you are eligible for disability services and your disability leads you to need more time taking an exam, please take advantage of disability services. We cannot undo poor performance on an exam if you did not make disability arrangements in advance.

## **Evaluations**

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically

open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.

<b>Week 1</b> <b>Jan 10 &amp; 12</b>	<b>Tues: Welcome! What are Political Parties?</b> <u>Reading Assignment</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hershey. Chpt 1.</li> <li>• George Washington's Farwell Address (Canvas)</li> </ul> <b>Thurs: What are Political Parties? Con't</b>
<b>Week 2</b> <b>Jan 17 &amp; 19</b>	<b>Tues: America's Two-Party System</b> <u>Reading Assignment</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hershey. Chpt 2</li> </ul> <b>Thurs: State and Local Party Organizations</b> <u>Reading Assignment</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hershey. Chpt 3</li> <li>• Mike Royko. <i>Boss: Richard J. Daley of Chicago.</i> (The Penguin Group, 1971) Chpt 1</li> </ul>
<b>Week 3</b> <b>Jan 24 &amp; 26</b>	<b>Tues: National Party Organizations</b> <u>Reading Assignment</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hershey. Chpt 4</li> </ul> <b>Thurs: Party Activists</b> <u>Reading Assignment</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hershey. Chpt 5</li> </ul>
<b>Week 4</b> <b>Jan 31 &amp; Feb 2</b>	<b>Tues: Party Identification</b> <u>Reading Assignment</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hershey. Chpt 6</li> <li>• The Growing Partisan Divide in Views of Higher Education (Canvas)</li> </ul> <b>Thurs: Party Coalitions and Realigning Elections</b> <u>Reading Assignment</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hershey. Chpt 7</li> </ul>
<b>Week 5</b> <b>Feb 7 &amp; 9</b>	<b>Tues and Thurs: Who Votes?</b> <u>Reading Assignment</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hershey. Chpt 8</li> </ul>
<b>Week 6</b> <b>Feb 14 &amp; 16</b>	<b>Tues: MIDTERM 1</b> <b>Thurs: Polling</b> <u>Reading Assignment</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zukin. "Polling Primer." (Canvas)</li> </ul>
<b>Week 7</b> <b>Feb 21 &amp; 23</b>	<b>Tues: Nominating Candidates</b> <u>Reading Assignment</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hershey. Chpt 9</li> </ul> <b>Thurs: Nominating Presidential Candidates</b> <u>Reading Assignment</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hershey. Chpt 10</li> </ul>
<b>Week 8</b> <b>Feb 28 &amp; Mar 2</b>	<b>Tues: Targeting Voters</b> <u>Reading Assignment</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hershey. Chpt 11</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sides, Shaw, Grossmann, Lipsitz. 2023. <i>Campaigns and Elections, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition</i>, Chapter 5 (Canvas)</li> </ul> <p><b>Thurs: Targeting Voters, Con't</b></p>
<b>Week 9 Mar 7 &amp; 9</b>	<p><b>Tues: Campaign Finance</b> <u>Reading Assignment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hershey. Chpt 12.</li> </ul> <p><b>Thurs: More Campaign Finance</b> <u>Reading Assignment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Casey Dominguez. "Money: The Resource Race." (Canvas)</li> </ul>
<b>Week 10 Mar 14 &amp; 16</b>	<b>Spring Break</b>
<b>Week 11 Mar 21 &amp; 23</b>	<p><b>Tues: MIDTERM 2</b> <b>Thurs: Legislative Parties</b> <u>Reading Assignment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hershey. Chpt 13</li> </ul>
<b>Week 12 Mar 28 &amp; 30</b>	<p><b>Tues: Legislative Parties, Con't</b> <b>Thurs: Party in Government</b> <u>Reading Assignment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aldrich, John H. and David W. Rhode. 2001. "The Logic of Conditional Party Government: Revisiting the Electoral Connection." In <i>Congress Reconsidered, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition</i>.</li> </ul>
<b>Week 13 Apr 4 &amp; 6</b>	<p><b>Tues: Congressional Leadership</b> <u>Reading Assignment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Davidson, Oleszek, Lee, Schickler, and Curry. <i>Congress and Its Members, 18<sup>th</sup> Edition</i>. Chpt 6. (CQ Press 2022).</li> </ul> <p><b>Thurs: Congressional Leadership Continued</b></p>
<b>Week 14 Apr 11 &amp; 13</b>	<p><b>Tues: Congressional Committees</b> <u>Reading Assignment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Roger Davidson, Walter Oleszek, Francis Lee and Eric Schickler. <i>Congress and Its Members, 18<sup>th</sup> Edition</i>. Chpt 7. (CQ Press 2022).</li> </ul> <p><b>Thurs: The Executive and the Courts</b> <u>Reading Assignment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hershey. Chpt 14</li> <li>Richard Skinner. "The Partisan Presidency" in <i>The State of the Political Parties, 6<sup>th</sup> Edition</i> (Rowman and Littlefield, 2007)</li> </ul>

<b>Week 15</b> <b>Apr 18 &amp; 20</b>	<b>Tues: Semi-Responsible Parties</b> <u>Reading Assignment</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hershey. Chpt 15</li> </ul> <b>Thurs: The Future of Parties in the United States</b> <u>Reading Assignment</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hershey. Chpt 16</li> </ul>
<b>Week 16</b> <b>Apr 25</b>	<b>Tues: MIDTERM 3</b>
<b>Week 17</b> <b>May 3</b>	<b>FINALS WEEK (No Final Scheduled)</b>