

# American Political Parties

Political Science 4530, Spring 2015

MWF: 12:20-1:10, Baldwin 305

Instructor: Justin Norris

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Office Hours: TBA

## Course Overview & Goals

This class will help students familiarize themselves with the different roles political parties play within the American republic. We will study the electoral roles of political parties, the role of political parties in legislative politics, and study the different ways political parties influence the national discourse. To these ends, we shall also discuss the creation of the American party system, its development over time, and its powers and organizational structure compared to political parties internationally. This will help students understand the importance of political parties in contemporary American politics, as well as help students understand how American political parties have evolved over time. By the end of the semester, students should be able to develop their own ideas about the efficacy of political parties as tools for democratic control, evaluate how changes in the political system influences party behavior and activities, and be able to understand contemporary party politics.

## Required Texts

All texts are required, and can be found in the UGA bookstore or online.

*Party Politics in America, 16th Edition.* Hershey, Addison, Wesley, Longman.

Additional required Readings will be made available through access to eLC.

## Student Responsibilities

Students are expected to carefully read the assigned course materials before each lecture, regularly attend class, participate in class discussions, take exams at their appointed time,

and turn in assignments on time.

I will not accept late assignments without a verifiable emergency or illness, in which case students will have five days to turn in the late assignment. Students shall turn in a physical copy of their assignment at the beginning of class the day the assignment is due. I will not accept an electronic copy of the assignment unless arrangements for which are made prior to the due date.

Students are expected to take exams on test day. Missed exams can be made up only if students have a verifiable excuse. If you know you will miss an exam, and can provide acceptable verification for your absence, arrangements for a makeup can be made.

Attendance is not mandatory, but your presence is necessary to earn an acceptable grade, and attendance is part of your participation grade. Students that miss class are responsible for what was covered. I will not provide notes from the lecture if you miss class.

Students are allowed to use electronic devices in class so long as it is not disruptive. You are adults, and if you want to spend class on Facebook, Reddit, Tumblr, or whatever else, that is your prerogative, but keep in mind that you are responsible for knowing the material.

Students shall be respectful of one another during in-class discussions. Students shall not bully their peers, or use derogatory language. Such behavior will not be tolerated.

If students have questions about the syllabus, or any of the class materials they are encouraged to ask questions.

## **Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the UGA Disabilities Services office will be accommodated according to university policy. For more information, contact Disabilities Services at 542-8719.

## **Academic Honesty**

Students are expected to maintain academic integrity in all of their course related work. Cheating, plagiarism, and dishonesty will not be tolerated. Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with University policies related to academic honesty, which are posted here: <http://www.uga.edu/honesty/>. Penalties for violating these policies are severe, and ignorance of said policies is not an acceptable excuse.

# Course Grade

Your course grade is based on your performance in the following components:

- Attendance & Participation 10%
- Assignments and/or Quizzes 10%
- Midterm Exam 25%
- Final Exam 25%
- Research Paper 30%

The midterm exam will take place during regular class time. The final exam will take place during the university proscribed test period.

Final course grades are assigned as follows:

- 100-93: A, 90-92: A-
- 87-89: B+, 83-86: B, 80-82: B-
- 77-79: C+, 73-76: C, 70-72: C-
- 60-69: D
- 0-59: F

# Tentative Schedule

**Note: topics and dates subject to change**

## **Week 1: What are Political Parties?**

*Readings:*

Hershey Chapter 1

## **Week 2: The American Party System**

*Readings:*

Hershey Chapter 2

1/16 NO CLASS (SPSA Conference)

## **Week 3: State & Local Party Organizations**

*Readings:*

Hershey Chapter 3

1/19 NO CLASS (MLK Day)

**Week 4: Party National Organizations**

*Readings:*

Hershey Chapter 4

**Week 5: Party Activists**

*Readings:*

Hershey Chapter 5

**Week 6: Party Identification**

*Readings:*

Hershey Chapter 6

**Week 7: Party Coalitions & Party Change**

*Readings:*

Hershey Chapter 7

**Week 8: Parties & Voter Turnout**

*Readings:*

Hershey Chapter 8

**Week 9: How Parties Choose Candidates & Midterm Exam**

*Readings:*

Hershey Chapter 9

Hershey Chapter 10

3/6 MIDTERM EXAM

**Week 10: Spring Break**

NO CLASS (Have Fun!!)

**Week 11: The General Election**

*Readings:*

Hershey Chapter 11

3/19 Withdrawal Deadline

**Week 12: Campaign Finance**

*Readings:*

Hershey Chapter 12

**Week 13: Parties in the Legislature**

*Readings:*

Hershey Chapter 13

**Week 14: Parties in the Executive and the Courts**

*Readings:*

Hershey Chapter 14

**Week 15: Political Polarization**

*Readings:*

Hershey Chapter 15

4/15 & 4/17 NO CLASS (MPSA Conference)

**Week 16: Where are We Now?**

*Readings:*

Hershey Chapter 16

**Week 17: Tying Up Loose Ends**

4/27 Review & Closing Remarks

4/28 Reading Day

Final Exam: May 4, 12-3 pm