

Political Science 327
American Political Parties
Spring 2007
MWF, 11:00-11:50
203 Graham Building

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SYLLABUS

This course examines political parties and elections in the United States. Among the topics we will cover are the structure of competition between the parties; social and ideological differences between the parties; how the parties are organized; how parties nominate candidates and attempt to elect them; and the overall role of political parties in the democratic process. Students should leave this course with a critical understanding of the functioning of political parties in contemporary America, including a perspective on how the electoral process in general and political parties in particular might be improved.

The concern will be primarily with the Democratic and Republican Parties, since they are the major political parties in this country and have been so for well over 100 years. Nevertheless, some consideration will be given to minor parties and independent candidates, as this topic raises some interesting questions about the political party system. Also, while this is a course in American political parties, some attention will be paid to political parties in other democracies in order to provide a comparative perspective.

An overriding concern of this course is to assess the role that political parties play in the democratic process in this country. In doing so, we will discuss why political parties are important for democracy, how well American political parties fulfill the role that we think that they should be playing in the political system, and what changes might be desirable in our political parties or electoral politics. The position paper topics all deal in some way with this general topic.

Because this is a course in political science, we will be concerned with how parties and elections can be studied. The collection and assessment of information to analyze and examine political phenomena will be discussed throughout the course, and the research paper will provide "hands-on" experience. I expect students to leave this course with an improved understanding of social science research. In order to achieve this goal, I have assigned a number of scholarly articles that report empirical research on political parties, and we will discuss the research methods and analysis of these studies in class.

This course has been designated as writing intensive. To help you develop your writing skills, two different types of papers will be required, along with brief reading summaries. The goal of this course is to improve your social science writing ability. This means, among other things, being able to make cogent arguments supported by relevant evidence. These points are discussed in more detail in the accompanying handout on writing in political science.

Finally, this course is a companion to PSC 332 (Voting and Elections) and PSC 328 (North Carolina and Southern Politics). These courses are designed to complement each other, but any one of them can be taken without having taken either of the other two. Also, this course overlaps PSC 322 (American State Politics), which also may be of interest to students desiring work in this area. PSC 330 (Workshop in Practical Politics), which provides students with the opportunity to be directly involved in election campaigns, is another related course that may be of interest to students interested in political parties and electoral politics.

Course Goals

As a result of taking this course, students should be able to:

1. Critically discuss theories of the role of political parties in American democracy.
2. Analyze and evaluate the extent to which contemporary political parties fulfill the role that parties should play in American politics.
3. Collect, analyze, and interpret data on various aspects of political parties.
4. Analyze and evaluate proposals for reforming or improving the electoral process in the United States.

Books

The following books are available at the bookstore in paperback editions:

Marjorie Randon Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, 12th edition, New York: Longman, 2007.

Jeffrey Cohen, Richard Fleisher, and Paul Kantor, eds., *American Political Parties: Decline or Resurgence?*, Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2001.

John Clark and Charles Prysby, eds., *Southern Political Party Activists*, Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2004.

While the three required books for the course cover a great deal of material, there are topics where some supplementary material is useful, so there also is a set of reserve readings for this course. Two of the reserve readings are journal articles; the other items come from the books listed below:

Green and Coffey, eds., *The State of the Parties*, 5th ed. (2006).

Green and Farmer, eds., *The State of the Parties*, 4th ed. (2003).

Herrnson, *Congressional Elections*, 4th ed. (2004).

Maisel, ed., *The Parties Respond*, 3rd ed. (1998).

Jewell and Morehouse, *Political Parties and Elections in American States*, 4th ed. (2001).

All of the reserve reading items are available on-line. The course schedule portion of this syllabus provides further information on the assigned reserve readings, including when the readings should be completed.

I also have placed several books on closed library reserve because they may be useful to you for the research paper. All of these books are ones with chapters on politics in individual states. One (Appleton and Ward) has a chapter on each of the 50 states; the others have chapters on the southern states. Consult the reserve list for the details on these books, which are listed below.

Appleton and Ward, eds., *State Party Politics* (1996).

Bullock and Rozell, eds., *The New Politics of the Old South* (2007).

Clark and Prysby, eds., special issue of the *American Review of Politics* (2003).

Lamis, ed., *Southern Politics in the 1990s* (1999).

Moreland and Steed, special issue of the *American Review of Politics* (2005).

Course Requirements

The grades for this course will be based on the following:

1. A research paper, based on library research, which focuses on the political party system of a specific state. This paper will involve drafts of individual sections, along with a final paper. Details of this assignment will be found on another handout.

2. A position paper, based on library research, which argues for or against a proposed change in political parties or in related aspects of the electoral system, accompanied by participation in a class debate. Details of this assignment will be found on another handout.

3. Reading summaries, due throughout the course. There will be 15 summaries assigned. Each will be worth up to 10 points. Your best 8 summaries will be counted. The reading assignment to be summarized and the due date will be announced at least two class periods in advance. The summaries should be typed and limited to one single-spaced typed page. Summaries must be submitted in person during the class period in which they are due. If you are not present for a class session, you may not submit a reading assignment due that day, regardless of the reason for your absence. Since only 8 of the 15 summaries will count toward your grade, you have ample allowance for illness and other unavoidable absences. The purpose of these assignments is twofold: (a) to help you understand the readings better by having to summarize the key points; and (b) to make sure that you are prepared to engage in class discussions about the readings.

4. Class participation, including both the debate presentation and general contributions to class discussions (the debate will count for one-third of the class participation grade). Regarding class participation, simply showing up for class is not enough; you should come prepared to discuss the readings in class and you should participate in the class discussion. If you have questions about the readings, you should raise them in class. It also will be helpful for you to bring the assigned readings for that day to class, as we often will examine tables or charts in the readings.

The contribution of each component to the course grade is:

Research paper drafts (3)	60 pts
Research paper, final version	100 pts
Position paper	100 pts
Reading summaries (8)	80 pts
Class participation	<u>60 pts</u>
	400 pts

Students are expected to abide by the UNCG academic integrity policy for all written work submitted in this course. Among other things, this means that you should be careful not to plagiarize when you are writing your papers. Further information on the academic integrity policy, including information on plagiarism, can be found at: <http://academicintegrity.uncg.edu/>.

Course Outline and Reading Assignments

A. The political party system

1. Introduction to political parties and party systems (Jan. 10-22)

Hershey, chpt. 1.
Cohen et al., chpt. 5 (by Sandy Maisel).

[January 17 and 19 will be devoted to library sessions; meet in the library computer lab across from the circulation desk.]

2. Party competition (Jan. 24-26)

Hershey, chpt. 2.
Schlesinger, Joseph A. 1955. "A Two-Dimensional Scheme for Classifying the States According to Degree of Inter-Party Competition." *American Political Science Review* 49: 1120-1128 (library reserve).

3. Minor parties (Jan. 29 to Feb. 2)

Cohen et al., chpt. 11 (by Theodore Lowi).
John C. Berg, "Spoiler or Builder? The Effect of Ralph Nader's 2000 Campaign on the U.S. Greens," chpt. 20 in Green and Farmer (library reserve).
Ronald Rapoport and Walter Stone, "The Dynamic of Third Parties and the Perot Constituency," chpt. 14 in Green and Coffery (library reserve).

B. Political party differences--ideological and social

1. Party differences in the electorate (Feb. 5-9)

Hershey, chpts. 6, 7.
Cohen et al., chpt. 2 (by David Lawrence) and chpt. 3 (by Richard Fleisher and Jon Bond).
Paul Allen Beck, "A Tale of Two Electorates: The Changing American Party Coalitions, 1952-2000," chpt. 3 in Green and Farmer (library reserve).

2. Party differences among elites (Feb. 12-19)

Hershey, chpt. 13.
Cohen et al., chpt. 6 (by William Crotty) and chpt. 9 (by Roger Davidson).
Clark and Prysby, chpt. 5 (by Patrick Cotter and Samuel Fisher).

3. Mass-elite differences (Feb. 21-23)

Jackson, John S. III, Barbara L. Brown, and David Bositis. 1982. "Herbert McClosky and Friends Revisited: 1980 Democratic and Republican Party Elites Compared to the Mass Public." *American Politics Quarterly* 10: 158-180 (library reserve).

Clark and Prysby, chpt. 8 (by Barbara Patrick et al.).

4. The responsible party government model (Feb. 26 to March 2)

Hershey, chpt. 15.

Cohen et al., chpt. 8 (by Gerald Pomper).

C. Political party activists

1. Recruitment of party activists (March 12)

Hershey, chpt. 5.

Clark and Prysby, chpt. 10 (by James Newman et al.).

2. Political attitudes and orientations of party activists (March 14)

Clark and Prysby, chpt. 6 (by Jonathan Knuckey) and chpt. 9 (by Charles Prysby).

3. Organizational activity of party activists (March 16)

Clark and Prysby, chpt. 11 (by Robert Hogan) and chpt. 12 (by John Bruce and John Clark).

D. Political party organization

1. State and local organization (March 19)

Hershey, chpt. 3.

2. National organization (March 21).

Hershey, chpt. 4.

Paul S. Herrnson, "National Party Organizations at Century's End," chpt. 3 in Maisel (library reserve).

3. Party factionalism (March 26-28)

Clark and Prysby, chpt. 2 (by John Clark), chpt. 3 (by Jay Barth), and chpt. 7 (by John McGlennon).

Howard Reiter, "Party Factions in 2004," chpt. 3 in Green and Coffey (library reserve).

E. Nominating candidates

1. State and local nominations (March 30 and April 2)

Hershey, chpt. 9.

2. Presidential nominations (April 4-9)

Hershey, chpt. 10.

F. Election essentials.

1. The campaign context (April 11)

Hershey, chpt. 11.

2. Campaign finance (April 13-16)

Hershey, chpt. 12.

Cohen et al., chpt. 7 (by Victoria Farrar-Myers and Diana Dwyre).

Diana Dwyre et al., "Committee and Candidates: National Party Finance after BCRA," chpt. 6 in Green and Coffey (library reserve).

3. Electoral participation (April 18)

Hershey, chpt. 8.

Cohen et al., chpt. 4 (by Matthew Crenson and Benjamin Ginsberg).

G. The general election.

1. Presidential and congressional elections (April 20)

Cohen et al., chpt. 1 (by James Campbell).

Herrnson, chpt. 4 (library reserve)

2. State government elections (April 23-25)

Jewell and Morehouse, chpt. 7 (library reserve).

H. Parties, government, and the political process (April 27-30 and May 1).

Hershey, chpt. 16.

Cohen et al., chpt. 10 (by Sarah Binder) and chpt.12 (by Jeffrey Cohen and Paul Kantor).