

**Political Science 2607: American Political Parties**  
**University of Connecticut**  
**Spring 2018**  
**Wednesdays, 3:35 p.m. – 6:05 p.m.**  
**Room 237 Downtown**

**Professor:** Robert N. Lupton

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**Office:** 355 Downtown

**Office Hours:** Tues.: 2:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.  
Thurs. 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

## **Course Description and Objectives**

This course documents the formation, history, development and contemporary status of American political parties. We also will explore the origins of party politics in the United States, and we will investigate the three primary components of parties—the party in government, the party as an organization and the party in the electorate—to understand better the nature of contemporary Democratic and Republican party competition. Additionally, we will examine the polarization phenomenon to evaluate the dynamics of citizens’ relationship to the parties and the quality of political representation in this country.

The ultimate objective of this course is to enhance your knowledge of the defining groups in American politics, the two major parties, in order to improve your connection to the political system and your ability to translate your interests and values to policy outcomes.

## **Requirements and Grading**

Our course textbook is the following:

Cohen, Martin, David Karol, Hans Noel, and John Zaller. 2008. *The Party Decides: Presidential Nominations Before and After Reform*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Grossmann, Matthew, and David A. Hopkins. 2016. *Asymmetric Politics: Ideological Republicans and Group Interest Democrats*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Hershey, Marjorie Randon. 2017. *Party Politics in America*. 17<sup>th</sup> Edition. New York, NY: Routledge Press.

These books are required purchases. As you will notice on the course calendar, I also will assign various book chapters and newspaper and journal articles throughout the semester. All of the articles are available online, and I also will make them and the book chapters available on the course website. The book chapters and journal articles are marked on the course calendar with an \*.

Please note that the date for which a reading is listed indicates you should have the reading completed **before** lecture on that date. Completing the weekly reading assignments is essential in order for you to understand lecture material and succeed in this course.

## Quizzes

Eight pop quizzes will be administered randomly throughout the semester at the beginning of class. The quizzes will focus on material included in the assigned reading on the day the quizzes are given, as well as current political events. Thus, in order for you to do well on the quizzes (not to mention understand the lecture), you need to complete the assigned course reading for each day **before** class, as well as monitor recent political events. The quizzes will account for 10% of your final course grade. I will drop your worst quiz scores.

## Examinations

This course features two examinations. The midterm will account for 25% of your final course grade, and the cumulative final exam, which will focus primarily on topics discussed after the first midterm, will account for 35% of your final course grade.

The examinations will consist of multiple choice, short answer and essay questions. Their written component will require you to connect the readings, lectures and other information presented throughout the semester in the form of a coherent argument. Constructing and persuasively advancing an argument is a critical skill, and these questions will provide you with an opportunity to showcase and improve upon your argumentative writing aptitude.

The midterm examination will be held on **Wednesday, March 7**.  
The final examination is **TBD**.

Both examinations will be held in the lecture room (237 Downtown).

## Research Paper

Given that this class is an upper-level course, not to mention the importance of writing to your future, a critical component of the course is an original research paper that you will write on a topic you find relevant to American public opinion and voting behavior. You will develop the 10-to-12-page paper throughout the semester and submit a rough draft that I will grade and return to you to edit before you submit the final draft. The project will allow you to write your own academic literature review and theorize about a political science question you find substantively interesting.

The research paper will require you to explore your topic in-depth and incorporate scholarly citations beyond those that appear on the syllabus or that I discuss in lecture. I will provide additional guidance regarding the research paper as the semester progresses, but please note that the **research paper rough draft must incorporate at least five scholarly sources, and the final draft must incorporate at least ten such sources**.

Scholarly sources include academic books and articles published in peer-reviewed academic journals. Example topics are below:

- What is the state of the current American political parties?
- How are the Democratic and Republican Parties similar and different organizationally?
- How have the major parties evolved over time, and why?
- How has polarization changed each of the three major structural components of America's political parties?

Ideally, you will begin thinking of the question you would like to address very soon, perhaps even later today or right at this very moment! As always, the earlier you begin considering this project, the better your paper will be at each stage of the process, including the final product. The paper will account for 30% of your final course grade, the breakdown of which is described below by component (and the due dates for each component are listed in parentheses):

Proposal due: 5% (February 21)

Rough draft: 10% (March 28)

Final draft: 15% (May 6)

Please note that all aspects of the research paper must be submitted electronically via the course website. I will not accept emailed or hard copies of any of these documents.

## **Attendance, Participation and Politics Monitoring**

Although attendance is not formally required, I will note that failing to attend class will make performing well in the course extremely difficult given the importance of lecture to exam material, not to mention the contribution of quizzes to your overall course grade.

Participation also is not officially part of your course grade, but lively and vibrant discussion enhances all students' learning experience. Actively participating in the course will foster a more enjoyable and productive environment for you and your peers.

Additionally, **students should read about ongoing political events** from political news sources such as Politico.com (<http://www.politico.com/>) and NBC First Read (<http://www.nbcnews.com/politics/first-read>). My most preferred publications are *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and *The Economist*. I find them to report decidedly real news!

I will spend the first approximately ten minutes of each class period discussing current political debates, controversies and developments, and I expect you to help generate, facilitate and sustain these discussions. Indeed, I urge you to raise issues and questions that you find relevant, and you should feel free to email me before class with topics that you would like me to address. These discussions will form the basis of some course quizzes and exam questions.

## Summary of Grading

Quizzes: 10%  
Research Paper: 30%  
Examinations: 60%

Please note that passing this course requires completion of both examinations!

## Grading Scale

93-100% =	A
90-92% =	A-
87-89% =	B+
83-86% =	B
80-82% =	B-
77-79% =	C+
73-76% =	C
70-72% =	C-
67-69% =	D+
63-66% =	D
60-62% =	D-
<60% =	F

This grading scale represents a baseline scenario. I reserve the right to curve any assignment, as well as final course grades, as I deem appropriate.

## Civil Discourse, Rights and Responsibilities

At the University of Connecticut, students and faculty are afforded an academic environment that allows for intellectual expression. Challenging issues and ideas may arise, but none of these should be expressed in an inappropriate manner either verbally or in writing. One of the goals of a university is to challenge us to think again about what we know (and that all that we don't know). This demands that we all share responsibility for creating and maintaining a civil learning environment in our classrooms and in the larger community. We will be conscious of and accept responsibility for what we say and do, how we act, how our words and actions have consequences and how our words and actions affect others.

## Academic Honesty

Academic integrity is critical to every aspect of your performance in this course. I maintain a zero tolerance policy against academic dishonesty, which includes cheating and all forms of plagiarism. You are responsible for maintaining a personal standard of integrity, and I will vigilantly hold you to that standard. Actions such as copying and pasting information from the Internet, using identical language of another author without

attribution, assisting another student on an exam or assignment or receiving similar assistance and other egregious forms of cheating should be easily identifiable and preventable — don't cheat! However, other forms of plagiarism are subtler, and committing unintentional plagiarism is possible if you are not careful. If you have any questions regarding academic honesty, please contact me **before** you insert questionable material into your work. Depending on the severity of the offense, a student caught cheating may automatically receive a zero for the course.

The University of Connecticut uses a specific process for investigating and resolving misconduct concerns. The process is outlined online at the following location:

<http://community.uconn.edu/academic-misconduct/>

## **Policy Against Discrimination, Harassment and Related Interpersonal Violence**

The University of Connecticut is committed to maintaining a safe and non-discriminatory learning, living and working environment for all members of the University community – students, employees, and visitors. Academic and professional excellence can exist only when each member of our community is assured an atmosphere of safety and mutual respect. All members of the University community are responsible for the maintenance of an environment in which people are free to learn and work without fear of discrimination, discriminatory harassment or interpersonal violence.

The University's full statement can be found online at the following location:

<http://policy.uconn.edu/2015/12/29/policy-against-discrimination-harassment-and-related-interpersonal-violence/>

## **People with Disabilities Statement**

The University of Connecticut is committed to achieving equal educational and employment opportunity and full participation for persons with disabilities. It is the University's policy that no qualified person be excluded from consideration for employment, participation in any University program or activity, be denied the benefits of any University program or activity, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination with regard to any University program or activity. This policy derives from the University's commitment to nondiscrimination for all persons in employment, academic programs, and access to facilities, programs, activities, and services.

The University's full statement can be found online at the following location:

<http://policy.uconn.edu/2011/05/24/people-with-disabilities-policy-statement/>

## Course Calendar

Articles and book chapters marked with an \* will be located on the course website. Please note that I reserve the right to alter the calendar at any time depending on our progress. I will always notify you in advance of any changes that I make to the syllabus.

### **January 17: No class (weather event?)**

### **January 24: Course overview and introduction to the American political parties**

\*Aldrich, John A. 1995. *The Origin and Transformation of Political Parties in America*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

### **January 31: Defining the political space and chronicling historical party eras**

\*Downs, Anthony. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. New York, NY: Harper Row Publishers. Selected chapters.

Hershey, Chapters 1 and 2.

### **February 7: Parties an organization**

Hershey, Chapter 4.

### **February 14: Asymmetric parties: Who are the Democrats and Republicans?**

Grossmann and Hopkins, Chapters 1-3.

### **February 21: Polarization and the parties in Congress**

Hershey, Chapter 13.

\*Lee, Frances. 2014. "American Politics is More Competitive Than Ever. And That's Making Partisanship Worse." *The Washington Post*. January 9, 2014.

### **February 28: The parties in the electorate: Partisanship, ideology and voting**

Hershey, Chapters 6 and 8.

\*Lewis-Beck, Michael, William G. Jacoby, Helmut Norpoth, and Herbert F. Weisberg. 2008. *The American Voter Revisited*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press. Selected chapters.

\*Taub, Amanda. "The Real Story about Fake News is Partisanship." *The New York Times*. January 11, 2017.

### **March 7: Midterm examination**

**March 14: No class (Spring Break!)**

**March 21: Party activists**

Hershey, Chapter 5.

\*Layman, Geoffrey C., Thomas M. Carsey, John C. Green, Richard Herrera, and Rosalyn Cooperman. 2010. "Activists and Conflict Extension in American Politics." *American Political Science Review* 104 (2): 324-46.

\*Noel, Hans. "How Ideological Activists Constructed Our Polarized Parties." *The Washington Post*. January 15, 2014.

**March 28: Campaigns and Nominations**

Cohen et al., Chapters 6, 7 and 10

Hershey, Chapter 9.

**April 4: No class (professional travel)**

**April 11: Money and political parties**

\*Franz, Michael. 2013. "Interest Group Influence in Electoral Politics: 2012 in Context." *The Forum: A Journal of Applied Research in Contemporary Politics* 10 (4): 62-79.

Hershey, Chapter 12

**April 18: Parties and representation**

Hershey, Chapter 8

\*Thomsen, Danielle. 2014. "Why Moderates Won't Run: How Party Fit Matters for Polarization in Congress." *Journal of Politics* 76 (3): 786-97.

**April 25: Contemporary challenges to parties and final examination review (no reading)**

**Final examination: TBD.**

**Final research paper draft due date: The final paper is due electronically via the HuskyCT Blackboard course website no later than Sunday, May 6, at 11:59 p.m. I will not accept emailed or hard copies of the final paper, and I cannot accept late papers, either.**