

**BAYLOR UNIVERSITY**  
**DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE**

PSC 4350  
American Political Parties  
TR, xx:xx- xx:xx Burleson xxx  
Office Hours: TBD

Fall 2012  
Prof. Curt Nichols, Burleson 303  
254-710-6094

**Course Goals and Objectives:**

When they are not derided as irrelevant, political parties are often portrayed simplistically in the popular media and culture as corrupt or incompetent. We must, however, remember that no democracy can survive without a multiparty system in which the people are free to organize themselves politically. Absent the organization of free and independent political parties, power has been exploited by narrow cliques that pursue their own interests. Therefore, we must not forget that the essential importance of political parties lies in their function as representative institutions. Political parties reflect the spectrum of the people's views and needs, from their basest instincts to their highest ideals. As such political parties can, on the one hand, reinforce division and be used to block needed reform. On the other hand, they can help to create balance and compromise as well as be used as the prime vehicle for bringing about social and political change. Closer examination of political parties is therefore necessary for an educated citizenry to be able to guard against their failings and take fullest advantage of their potential.

As such, this course focuses on the role that political parties play in the American republic. We will study political parties from multiple perspectives. Parts of the course are theoretical while others are descriptive and historical. Some examples will be drawn from different countries to illustrate questions and arguments. However, the vast majority of the course deals with political parties in the United States.

The principal objectives of the course are the following:

- 1) To better understand what political parties are via study of their trifurcated institutional nature: the Party-in-Government, the Party-in-the-Electorate, and the Party-Organization.
- 2) To study where political parties come from and understand how electoral rules, elite motivations, and social cleavages impact what form the party system takes.
- 3) To study how American political parties have developed over time and understand how they have been used to mobilize mass populations to achieve social and political goals.

**Required Texts (undergrads):**

Aldrich, John H. 1995. *Why Parties? : The Origin and Transformation of Political Parties in America*. University of Chicago Press.

Galvin, Daniel J. 2008. *Presidential Party Building: Dwight D. Eisenhower to George W. Bush*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Hershey, Marjorie R. 2005. *Party Politics in America*. 14<sup>th</sup> Edition. New York: Pearson.

Sundquist, James L. 1983. *Dynamics of the Party System: Alignment and Realignment of Political Parties in the United States*. Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institution.

### **Required Texts (graduate students):**

All above, plus:

Daniel, DiSalvo, 2012. *Engines of Change: Party Factions in American Politics, 1868-2010*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Karol, David, 2009. *Party Position Change in American Politics: Coalition Management*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

### **Other Readings:**

In addition to the texts listed above, the readings for the course will include articles and chapters from other sources. I will post some of these readings for you on Blackboard as PDF files (these are marked by (BB) on the reading list).

Finally, you will need to stay up on *current events* for this course by reading from among various news sources. The following is a non-exclusive “starter list” of online options. Just make sure you’re aware of each source’s political leanings and read from both sides.

#### Center – Left

[www.cnn.com](http://www.cnn.com)  
[www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)  
[www.politicsone.com](http://www.politicsone.com)  
[www.huffingtonpost.com](http://www.huffingtonpost.com)

#### Center - Right

[www.foxnews.com](http://www.foxnews.com)  
[www.wallstreetjournal.com](http://www.wallstreetjournal.com)  
[www.realclearpolitics.com](http://www.realclearpolitics.com)  
[www.nationalreview.com](http://www.nationalreview.com)  
[www.drudgereport.com](http://www.drudgereport.com)

### **Other online Resources:**

Democratic Party ([www.dems.org](http://www.dems.org))  
Republican Party ([www.rnc.org](http://www.rnc.org))  
Green Party ([www.greenpartyus.org](http://www.greenpartyus.org))  
Tea Party ~ TX ([www.teapartypatriots.org/state/Texas](http://www.teapartypatriots.org/state/Texas))  
Open Secrets ([www.opensecrets.org](http://www.opensecrets.org))

### **Undergrad Course Requirements:**

Participation (10%): Class meetings will combine some lecture with intensive small group discussion. You will be responsible for coming to class ready to discuss everything assigned for that day.

If you are unprepared to contribute fully to discussion of readings and current events, declare this to me via a signed and dated note presented at the beginning of the class. I will not call on you that day. You may do this twice in the semester with no penalty. Starting with your third notification, you will lose .5 (of 10) points for each note you leave me. **HOWEVER IF YOU ARE NOT PREPARED TO CONTRIBUTE AND YOU DO NOT NOTIFY ME, YOU WILL LOSE 1.0 POINTS EACH TIME YOU ARE CAUGHT.** Maximum (failure to) participate penalty is 10 points or 10% of your total grade. Anyone with no participation penalties will max out on participation.

Groupwork (5 x 4% each) ~ 20% : Students will be divided into groups responsible for helping to lead select discussions. Groups will be responsible for preparing a “*daily highlights handout*” for

each member of class and taking turns (within the group) presenting it in front of the class. Treat this like you have been assigned to brief part of a larger project to someone who is familiar with it, but who may or may not have read as closely as you. Impress by showing you can cover all the essentials while knowing (but not boring with) all the details -- unless asked.

Handouts will be NO LONGER THAN 1 PAGE, front and back (or equivalent). About three-fourths of the handout should be dedicated to summarizing the most important highlights of the reading and about one quarter should be dedicated to covering new developments in relevant current events. DO NOT outline the reading in painful detail on the handout. Focus on daily highlights by identifying and covering all the most important concepts, graphs/charts, events. Less is often more, but provide complete coverage of essentials.

Presentation of the readings portion will be 8-10 minutes. DO NOT simply regurgitate the handout in the presentation. We can all read. You have latitude within the presentation to go into detail not printed on the handout. You also have latitude to cover different topics in varying amounts of detail. Be prepared to answer follow-up questions on any aspect of the reading and to lead discussion on current events.

This is a team project. Everyone in your group will receive the same grade on both the handout and its presentation. Besides rotating the presenter, you can divvy up the workload in any way you'd like. However, it is best to work and practice together.

Three (3) Short Essays (3 x 10% each) ~ 30% : You will have one/two weeks to respond, in 750-900 words, to a short question put to you in class. Turn in a paper copy of your essay on the day marked in the schedule. You will be provided detailed instructions on what I am looking for. We will go over an example together in class.

Long Paper (Proposal 5% + Rough Draft 10%) ~ 15%: All undergraduate students will complete a 9 – 12 page research paper on a subject relevant to this course. We will have one scheduled meetings about this paper where you will bring a short proposal to discuss. This proposal is graded. I will 'green-light' all topics. You will turn in a rough draft for grade as per the course schedule.

Long Paper (Final Draft) ~ 25% : As your final exam, you will turn in a final draft as per the course schedule. Do not make the assumption that you cannot receive a lower grade on the final draft than you received on your rough draft. I expect improvement and will penalize otherwise.

### **Graduate Course Requirements:**

Participation (10%): Come to class with undergrads on days indicated, as well as to breakout discussion group meetings, and always be fully prepared to discuss the readings. Graduate students will also be required to attend one additional undergrad class in each of the four major sections of the course. The object here is mainly to observe the undergrad teaching environment. You are invited to attend as many classes as you'd like for this purpose.

Discussion Leadership (2 x 10) ~ 20%: Every student will be responsible for helping to lead two breakout discussions. Leaders will prepare discussion questions, find scholarly reviews, and lead discussion as indicated below.

Leaders will e-mail all other breakout discussion group participants two items NLT 24 hours before the group meets. First, leaders will submit 3-5 thoughtful questions to guide and focus

discussion. Wide discretion is allowed, but your questions will reflect how well you have thought about the readings. Second, leaders will locate and forward the 2-3 most informative scholarly reviews on the book in discussion (if possible).

Leaders will begin discussion by summarizing the author's research question and locating the reading(s) within the literature, describing its relationship to other seminal works, approaches, and books we've read (use the author's own description and scholarly reviews to help you at first). The leader will then provide a brief sketch of the method / research design employed to answer this question, ending with assessment of these mechanics. Finally, the leader will select one of their questions to begin group discussion.

Short Essay I (10%): Write a 1000-1250 word review essay of David Karol's book *Party Position Change in America*.

Short Essay II (20%): Identify an interesting question relating to political parties that you'd like to research. Write a 6-8 page literature review essay describing how the question relates to / grows out of previous scholarship. Set your question within past debates with an eye toward justifying how answering the question would contribute to the ongoing discussion.

Short Essay III (10%): Using the Hershey text as a start point, design an assigned readings portion of a political parties undergrad course syllabus. You can emphasize / deemphasize this text in any way you'd like and should add supplemental readings to give the course your own personalized flavor. Ensure there is a clear organizational logic to whatever decisions you make.

Project Proposal (30%): Build off of your previous work, or start anew, and design a parties centered dissertation length research project in 8 or more pages. Start by identifying a research question and suggesting a hypothesized answer. Design a research strategy to investigate / test this premise. Within your proposal discuss data availability and viability. Anticipate and discuss how you will overcome critics and other schools of thought. Identify how you would know you are right versus what it would look like if you were wrong. End by justifying the significance of the project as designed.

### **Policies:**

*Grading Scale:* The following grade scale applies to both undergraduates and graduates.

A = 100.0 -- 89.95;  
B+ = 89.94 -- 88.50;  
B = 88.49 -- 79.95;  
C+ = 79.94 -- 78.50;  
C = 77.49 -- 69.95;  
D = 69.94 -- 60.00;  
F = 59.99 -- 0.0.

*Attendance Policy:* I expect that every student will come to every class on time, actively participate in course discussions, and demonstrate that he/she has completed and reflected upon the assigned readings. According to Baylor University policy, a student who misses more than 25% of the classes in a course must receive an F. Additionally, to counteract the perverse incentives this policy creates -- to miss the most classes possible without failing -- every absence after your second can, at my discretion, result in a deduction of one and a half (1.50) percentage

points from your final grade. Finally, tardiness is rude. Repeated tardiness (more than once) can impact your participation grade negatively.

*Honor Code:* Students in this course will abide by the Baylor Honor Code. This includes, but is not limited to, the requirement for academic integrity. Plagiarism, cheating, and any other form of academic dishonesty are serious offenses and, at a minimum, constitute grounds for failure of the course.

*Cell Phones and Laptops:* Please turn off your cell phone and other gadgetry before the class begins. Individual laptop privileges will be revoked upon *appearance* of causing distraction.

*Email:* e-mail is a courtesy and not a substitute for attending the course or for a discussion during office hours. If you have questions or issues you need to discuss, please come to my office hours or schedule an appointment.

*Accommodations:* Anyone needing special accommodations or having difficulty with the course should see me right away, after class or in office hours. If I can't solve the problem myself, I can point you towards one of the many excellent Baylor University support systems for students who need to improve their writing, research, or study skills.

### **Schedule and Assignments: (draft)**

*Note:* my wife will be having our baby boy on or about Aug 28<sup>th</sup>. If little Jim comes earlier, we will move the reading day (tentatively scheduled for Aug 28<sup>th</sup>) up and if he comes later, we will move it back. Be prepared to come to class every session and cover the next topic. I'll let you know as soon as I know, but one of the days in the first three weeks of the semester will likely turn into a reading day.

Aug 21&23 ~ **Introduction to course: What are political parties?**

All: Come to class, print out and bring your syllabus, discuss MRH chpt 1.

Aug 28 ~ Most probable date for reading day... may come earlier may come later (welcome to my world ;)

Aug 30 ~ **Section I: The Origins of Political Parties / The Party in Government (PIG)**

Undergrads: Discuss Aldrich, chpt 1. Talk about short papers.

Grads: reading day. Get a start on Aldrich, chpt 1-5 and Karol, all.

Sep 4 Undergrads: Discuss Aldrich, chpt 2-3. Short Essay #1 assigned.

Grads: Aldrich chpt 1-5, discussion day #1. Karol book review assigned.

Sep 6 Undergrads: Discuss Aldrich, chpt 2-3. Short Essay #1 assigned.

Sep 11 Undergrads: Discuss Aldrich, chpt 3-4.

Grads: Aldrich 1-5, discussion day #2.

Sept 13 Undergrads: Discuss Aldrich, chpt 3-4.

Sep 18\* Undergrads: Discuss Aldrich, chpt 3-4. Short Essay #1 due.

Grads: Discussion Jaffa (BB) and "prefiguring institutions" (BB).

Sept 20 ~ **Section II: Party Systems / The Party in the Electorate (PIE)**

Undergrads: Discuss MRH, chpt 6 and 7 (pp. 121-129 only).

- Sept 25\*\* All: Come to class. Discuss MRH, chpt 2; Schattschneider (BB).  
Undergrads: Short essay #2 assigned.  
Grads: Karol book review due. Start working on lit review essay.
- Sept 27 All: Come to class. Discuss Sundquist chpt 1-3.
- Oct 2 Undergrads: Discuss MRH chat 7 (pp 117-121). Apply Sundquist to each era.  
Grads: Discuss Sundquist chpt 4-7; Nichols and Myers (BB).
- Oct 4 Undergrads: Discuss MRH chat 7 (pp 117-121). Apply Sundquist to each era.
- Oct 9\* Undergrads: Discuss MRH chat 7 (pp 129-135). Apply Sundquist to each era.  
Short essay II due. Start work on long paper proposal (one para minimum).  
Grads: Discuss Sundquist chpt 10-12. Apply method through rest of history.
- Oct 11 ~ **Section III: Parties, Nominations, and Elections**  
Undergrads: discuss MRH chpt 5.
- Oct 16\* Undergrads: Individual long paper meetings. Bring 2 copies long paper proposal.  
Grads: project discussion day. Bring copy of draft of lit review essay and discuss.
- Oct 18 Undergrads: Discuss MRH chpt 8. Short essay III assigned.
- Oct 23\*\* Undergrads: Discuss MRH chpt 9.  
Grads: DiSalvo all, discussion day #1. Turn in lit review essay.
- Oct 25 Undergrads: Discuss MRH chpt 10.
- Oct 30\* Undergrads: Discuss MRH chpt 11. Short essay III due.  
Grads: DiSalvo all, discussion day #2.
- Nov 2 Undergrads: Discuss MRH chpt 12.
- Nov 6&8 ~ **Election Week**  
All: come to class ready to discuss election preview and review.
- Nov 13 ~ **Section IV: The Party-Organization**  
Undergrads: Discuss MRH chpt 3.  
Grads: Discuss Galvin, all.
- Nov 15 Undergrads: Discuss MRH chpt 4.
- Nov 20\* Undergrads: Discuss Galvin, chpt 1-2. Draft of long paper due.  
Grads: Research and writing day.
- Nov 22 No class.
- Nov 27\*\* Undergrads: Discuss Galvin, chpt 3-7.  
Grads: project discussion day. Bring copy of project proposal and discuss.  
Syllabus essay due.
- Nov 29 Undergrads: Discuss Galvin, chpt 8-afterward.
- Dec x\* \*\* **Final Exam**  
All: long papers / project proposals must be turned in before finals begin.

Undergraduate Quiz Reference Table

Month	Tuesday	Notes:	Thursday	Notes:
Aug 21&23	Hc1		Hc1	
Aug 28&30		← ? Variable Reading Day ? →	Ac1	
Sept 4&6	Ac3		Ac3	
Sept 11&13	Ac4		Ac4	
Sept 18&20	Hc13-14	Short Essay #1	Hc6,7(part)	
Sept 25&27	Hc2,EES		Sc1-3	
Oct 2&4	Hc7(part)		Hc7(part)	
Oct 9&11	Hc7(part)	Short Essay #2	Hc5	
Oct 16&18	Meeting day	Long Paper Proposal	Hc8	
Oct 23&25	Hc9		Hc10	
Oct 30/Nov 1	Hc11	Short Essay #3	Hc12	
Nov 6&8	Election day		Post election	
Nov 13&15	Hc3		Hc4	
Nov 20	Gc1-2	Draft Long Paper	XX	Thanksgiving!
Nov 27&29	Gc3-7		Gc8-12	
Dec xx	No meeting	Long Paper	XX	

Graduate Quiz Reference Table

Month	Tuesday	Notes:	Thursday	Notes:
Aug 21&23	Come to Class		Come to Class	
Aug 28&30	Reading Day		XX	
Sept 4&6	Aldrich		XX	
Sept 11&13	Aldrich		XX	
Sept 18&20	Jaffa		XX	
Sept 25&27	Come to Class	Karol Review Essay	Come to Class	
Oct 2&4	Sundquist; Nichols		XX	
Oct 9&11	Sundquist		XX	
Oct 16&18	Project day		XX	
Oct 23&25	DiSalvo	Lit Review Essay	XX	
Oct 30/Nov 1	DiSalvo		XX	
Nov 6&8	Come to Class		Come to Class	
Nov 13&15	Galvin		XX	
Nov 20	Reading day		XX	Thanksgiving!
Nov 27&29	Project day	Syllabus Essay	XX	
Dec xx	No meeting	Project Proposal	XX	