

**AMERICAN POLITICAL PARTIES****Professor Paul Allen Beck**[beck.9@osu.edu](mailto:beck.9@osu.edu)

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Office Hours: 10:30-12 T,Th; 3:30-4:30 T

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**Focus.** Political parties are key institutions in the political process in the United States and other democracies. They appear in one form or another in virtually every forum of democratic politics. In the United States, these forms include three components: (1) the legally-recognized organizations under political party names that have appeared in the localities, the states, and the nation; (2) the coalitions of voters who are united in professing loyalty to the same party; and (3) the teams of politicians who organize under the same label to contest and hold public office. This course will study the role and behavior of the American parties in each of these forms, as well as in the electoral process, and how they are interrelated. It will pay particular attention to how American parties have changed in recent years, and what these changes imply for the operation of American politics.

For all of their importance to democratic politics, there is considerable normative disagreement over the desirability of political parties and the roles they play. On the one hand, some claim that parties are indispensable to the development and operation of political democracy, especially in clarifying policy and candidate choices so that ordinary citizens can participate in the governmental process. It is difficult for them to imagine how democratic politics would operate without them. On the other hand, political parties have been the objects of considerable criticism throughout their existence. In the United States, reformers have championed initiatives, referenda, and nonpartisan elections as more attractive alternatives, and many reforms have been adopted with the express purpose of weakening American parties. What their proponents see as their critical function in framing choices for the electorate, their critics see as tiresome partisan bickering, and the manufacturing of unnecessary political conflict. We will wrestle with these normative questions as well in this course.

**Required Readings.** The required text for the course is Paul Allen Beck and Marjorie Ransom Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, 9<sup>th</sup> edition (New York: Longman, 2001). All of the chapters in the book are required reading for the course, so students are strongly encouraged to purchase it from one of the campus bookstores. In addition, a small course pack of required readings on party politics in Ohio is available from the Cop-ez facility on the bottom floor of the parking garage next to the University bookstore. Not only are these readings designed to provide more specific information on Ohio than the textbook and lectures will contain, but they also will be discussed in class as guides to how students might approach their research paper on another state. Students are encouraged to purchase the course pack as well.

**Grading Policy.** Course grades will be based on a midterm (33%), a final (33%), and research paper (34%). Class attendance and participation also will be taken into account at the margins in determining final grades. The mid-term will cover the readings and lectures for the first

half of the course; the final will cover readings/lectures for the second half. Lectures and discussion are designed mainly to complement, and only occasionally review, the readings, so careful reading of the texts and regular class attendance are both necessary for a satisfactory grade in the course. Failure to take examinations at the scheduled times or to turn in the research paper by the November 7 and December 5 deadlines, unless excused in advance by the instructor, will result in an E for that assignment. Hard copies of the research papers must be turned in directly to the course instructor or TA; no electronic copies will be accepted.

**The Research Paper.** The research paper is to be an original paper of no more than 10 pages in length, which describes and analyzes the contemporary standing of the political parties in an American state other than Ohio through the 2000 election. It is to contain information on the background and recent history of the state's politics; the level of competition between the major parties and the standing and success of third parties; the strength of state and local party organizations; the membership of the party coalitions, and the frequency of independents; the role of the parties in the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government; and the extent of unified vs. divided government. Students are expected to become experts on that state and to write a research paper demonstrating their expertise by covering the aforementioned points. Choice of state to be studied is open, but students are encouraged to do some preliminary research to make sure that there is sufficient material available as the basis for their research.

A polished first draft of the research paper, covering all material but the parties in government, is due on November 7. It will be given a tentative grade, which will become the paper's final grade if a revised paper is not turned in by the December 5 deadline. The final version of the research paper should be the result of serious revision of the first draft in response to comments and suggestions provided by the instructors, plus the addition of information on the party in government. The best research papers will have smoothly integrated the various information required into an informative essay on that state and will have demonstrated an understanding of the various concepts employed in studying political parties. Students who have selected the same state are welcome to work together in doing the basic research on their state, but the first draft and final draft must be entirely their own work (see section on Academic Honesty below). Papers on the same state will be compared to make sure they were written independently of one another.

**Academic Honesty.** All of the work that students do in this course is expected to be their own. Cheating or plagiarism (using someone else's words or ideas, including material from web sites, without proper citation) will not be tolerated. Any case of possible academic misconduct in the form of cheating or plagiarism will be reported automatically to the University Committee on Academic Misconduct and handled according to University policy.

**Arrangements for Students with Disabilities.** Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disabilities Services will be appropriately accommodated, and they should inform the course instructor immediately of their needs.

**Course Syllabus.** The following pages contain a topical outline for the course, the reading assignments for each topic, and the schedule of exam dates and paper deadlines. All readings should be completed in the week for which they are assigned.

Month/days    Topics and Readings

## **PUTTING PARTIES IN THEIR PLACE**

### **Sept 19    What Are Parties and What Do They Do?**

Paul Allen Beck and Marjorie Randon Hershey, "Parties and Party System," *Party Politics in America* (New York: Longman, 2001), Part One, pp. 1-3 + 337.  
Beck and Hershey, "In Search of the Political Parties," *Party Politics in America*, Chap. 1, pp. 5-26 + 337-39 (endnotes).

### **Sept 24/26    The American Party System: Why Only Two Major Parties?**

Beck and Hershey, "The American Two-Party System," *Party Politics in America*, Chap. 2, pp. 27-50 + 339-42 (endnotes).

## **Oct 1/3    THE POLITICAL PARTY ORGANIZATIONS**

Beck and Hershey, "The Political Party as an Organization," *Party Politics in America*, Part Two, pp. 51-53.

### **What Organizational Presence at the Grass Roots?**

Beck and Hershey, "The State and Local Party Organizations," *Party Politics in America*, Chap. 3, pp. 55-73 + 342-46 (endnotes).

### **Oct 8/10    What Is the Role of the National Party Organizations?**

Beck and Hershey, "National Organizations: A New Presence at the Summit," *Party Politics in America*, Chap. 4, pp. 74-91 + 346-48 (endnotes).

### **Who Are the Party Activists? What Motivates Their Activism?**

Beck and Hershey, "The Political Party of the Activists," *Party Politics in America*, Chap. 5, pp. 92-109 + 348-52 (endnotes).

## **Oct 15/17    THE POLITICAL PARTY COALITIONS**

Beck and Hershey, "The Political Party in the Electorate," *Party Politics in America*, Part Three, pp. 111-13 + 352.

### **Who Are Democrats, Republicans, Independents? How Have They Changed?**

Beck and Hershey, "The Loyal Electorates," *Party Politics in America*, Chap. 6, pp. 115-32 + 352-56.

Month/days    Topics and Readings

Beck and Hershey, "The Party within the Voter," *Party Politics in America*, Chap. 7, pp. 133-47 + 356-58.

Beck and Hershey, "The Active Electorate," *Party Politics in America*, Chap. 8, pp. 148-67 + 358-62.

<b>Oct 22</b> <b>MID-TERM EXAMINATION [3:30-5:18 pm]</b>
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**Oct 24**    **A LOOK AT PARTY POLITICS IN OHIO**

Michael Barone and Richard E. Cohen, "Ohio," *The Almanac of American Politics 2002* (Washington, DC: National Journal, 2001), pp. 1181-90. [Cop-ez course pack]

John C. Green and Daniel M. Shea, "Ohio," in *State Party Profiles*, ed. Andrew M. Appleton and Daniel S. Ward (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly, Inc., 1997), pp. 253-58. [Cop-ez course pack]

David E. Sturrock, Michael Margolis, John C. Green, and Dick Kimmins, "Ohio Elections and Political Parties in the 1990s," in *Ohio Politics*, ed. Alexander P. Lamis (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1994), Chap. 15, pp. 331-48 and 376-78. [Cop-ez course pack]

Beck and Hershey, "Party Politics on the Internet," *Party Politics in America*, pp. 333-36.

**Oct 29/31**    **POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE ELECTORAL PROCESS**

Beck and Hershey, "The Political Parties in the Electoral Process," *Party Politics in America*, Part Four, pp. 169-70.

**How Do Parties Recruit and Select Their Candidates?**

Beck and Hershey, "The Naming of the Party Candidates," *Party Politics in America*, Chap. 9, pp. 171-86 + 362-65 (endnotes).

Beck and Hershey, "Choosing the Presidential Nominees," *Party Politics in America*, Chap. 10, pp. 187-208 + 365-68 (endnotes).

**Nov 5/7**    **What Role for Parties in the Electoral Campaigns?**

Beck and Hershey, "Parties and the Campaign for Election," *Party Politics in America*, Chap. 11, pp. 209-29 + 368-73 (endnotes).

**Money and Politics: What Is the Party Role?**

Beck and Hershey, "Financing the Campaigns," *Party Politics in America*, Chap. 12, pp. 230-53 + 373-75 (endnotes).

Month/days    Topics and Readings

<b>Nov 7</b>	<b>FIRST DRAFT OF RESEARCH PAPERS DUE [by 5:18 pm]</b>
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<b>Nov 12</b>	<b>NO CLASS: Veteran's Day Holiday</b>
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**Nov 14**    **POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE GOVERNMENT**

Beck and Hershey, "The Party in Government," *Party Politics in America*, Part Five, pp. 255-57 + 375 (endnotes).

**Do Parties Dominate Legislative Politics?**

Beck and Hershey, "Party and Partisans in the Legislature," *Party Politics in America*, Chap. 13, pp. 259-79 + 375-79 (endnotes).

**Nov 19/21**    **Where Is the Party in the Executive and Judiciary?**

Beck and Hershey, "The Party in the Executive and Judiciary," *Party Politics in America*, Chap. 14, pp. 280-96 + 379-82 (endnotes).

**Party Control of Government: How Much? How Desirable?**

Beck and Hershey, "The Quest for Party Government," *Party Politics in America*, Chap. 15, pp. 297-315 + 382-85 (endnotes).

**WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF AMERICAN PARTIES?**

**Nov 26/28**    Beck and Hershey, "The Place of Parties in American Politics," *Party Politics in America*, Chap. 16, pp. 316-31 + 385-87.

<b>Nov 26</b>	<b>SENIOR TERM PAPERS DUE [by 5 pm]</b>
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<b>Nov 28</b>	<b>SENIOR FINAL EXAMINATION [3:30-5:18 pm]</b>
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<b>Dec 3</b>	<b>FINAL EXAMINATION [3:30-5:18 pm]</b>
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<b>Dec 5</b>	<b>RESEARCH PAPERS DUE [by 5 pm]</b>
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