

American Political Parties and
the Electoral Process
PLSC 411
M 6:00-8:30, LT 203

Dr. John Frensdreis
Office: LT 601
Phone: 670-3110
508-3054

This course examines the structure and activities of contemporary American political parties within the electoral process. The course begins with an examination of elections and voting behavior. The course then considers the organizational structure of American political parties, the role of political activists, and the relationship between parties and the mass public. Finally, the course concludes by considering the connections between elections and partisan activity.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Paul R. Abramson, John H. Aldrich, and David W. Rohde. 1987. Change and Continuity in the 1984 Elections, Revised Edition. Washington, DC: CQ Press.

Gary C. Jacobson. 1987. The Politics of Congressional Elections, Second Edition. Boston: Little, Brown.

Larry J. Sabato. 1985. PAC Power. New York: W. W. Norton.

James L. Sundquist. 1983. Dynamics of the Party System, Revised Edition. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution.

Martin P. Wattenberg. 1986. The Decline of American Political Parties 1952-1980. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

"Readings for PLSC 411." Available at Kinko's, 6548 N. Sheridan Road, Chicago, IL 60626.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Readings: Students are expected to complete reading assignments before class and are responsible for material from lectures, assigned readings, and class discussions.

Attendance: Attendance is not required, but participation in weekly class discussions of the assigned readings and lecture materials is one of the components of the course (see next section).

Assignments/Examination/Grading: There will be three written assignments, two essays in which students will synthesize assigned readings and a research paper on an instructor-approved topic of the student's choice. Students will also be expected to participate in weekly class discussions. Detailed descriptions of each assignment will be handed out at a later time. The final course grade will be computed as follows:

10% class participation
30% paper #1
30% paper #2
30% paper #3

Academic Honesty: "Academic honesty demands that the pursuit of knowledge in the university community be carried out with sincerity and integrity. Failure to practice academic honesty may be defined briefly, though not completely, as an action whereby a student represents falsely that academic work submitted in his or her name as his or her own work, when in fact it is not. Failure to

practice academic honesty will, depending on the seriousness of the misconduct, result in a sanction ranging from the grade of 'F' for the assignment to expulsion from the university." (Graduate School Bulletin 1988-1990, p. 22) If anyone has any questions concerning the meaning or implementation of this policy, please contact the course instructor.

OFFICE HOURS:

My scheduled office hours are Monday from 1:30-3:00 and 5:15-6:00 and Wednesday from 1:30-2:00. I will also be available for appointments at either my Lake Shore (TTh) or Water Tower (MWF) offices.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Note: The instructor reserves the right to make adjustments in the following schedule.

Week Topic

1/16 Introduction

1/23 Parties, Elections, and American Political Development

Readings: Sundquist, DYNAMICS OF THE PARTY SYSTEM.

1/30 Voting Behavior: Presidential Elections

Readings: Abramson, CHANGE AND CONTINUITY..., Chs. 1-8.
G. Markus, "The Impact of Personal and National Economic Conditions on the Presidential Vote: A Pooled Cross-sectional Analysis," AMERICAN JOURNAL OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, 32 (Feb. 1988): 137-154.

2/6 Congressional Elections

Readings: Jacobson, THE POLITICS OF CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS
Abramson, CHANGE AND CONTINUITY..., Chs. 9 & 10.

2/13 Presidential and Congressional Elections

Readings: T. Mann and R. Wolfinger, "Candidates and Parties in Congressional Elections," AMERICAN POLITICAL SCIENCE REVIEW, 74 (Sept. 1980): 617-40.
E. Tufte, "Determinants of the Outcomes of Congressional Elections," APSR, 69 (1975): 812-26.
J. Campbell, "Evaluating the 1986 Congressional Election Forecasts," PS, 20 (Winter 1987): 37-42.
J. Campbell, "The Revised Theory of Surge and Decline," AJPS, 31 (Nov. 1987): 965-79.
B. Radcliff, "Solving a Puzzle: Aggregate Analysis and Economic Voting Revisited," Journal of Politics, 50 (May 1988): 440-55.
R. Erikson, "The Puzzle of Midterm Loss," JOP, 50 (Nov. 1988): 1011-29.

2/20 Nationalization of the American Electorate

Readings: W. Claggett, W. Flanigan, and N. Zingale, "Nationalization of the American Electorate," APSR, 78 (1984): 77-91.

L. Vertz, J. Frendreis, and J. Gibson, "Nationalization of the Electorate in the United States," APSR, 81 (1987): 961-66.
K. Sadafumi, "Nationalization and Partisan Realignment in Congressional Elections," APSR, 81 (1987): 1235-50.
D. Stokes, "Parties and the Nationalization of Electoral Forces," in W. Chambers and W. Burnham (eds.), THE AMERICAN PARTY SYSTEM.

2/27 Partisan Identification

Readings: P. Converse and G. Markus, "Plus ca change...: The New CPS Election Study Panel," APSR, 73 (March 1979): 32-50.
C. Hadley, "Dual Partisan Identification in the South," JOP, 47 (Feb. 1985): 254-268.
D. Allsop and H. Weisberg, "Measuring Change in Partisan Identification in an Election Campaign," AJPS, 32 (Nov. 1988): 996-1017.
W. Jacoby, "The Impact of Party Identification on Issue Attitudes," AJPS, 32 (Aug. 1988): 643-661.
J. Stanga and J. Sheffield, "The Myth of Zero Partisanship," AJPS, 31 (Nov. 1987): 829-855.

3/6 No Classes Mid-Semester Break

3/13 Party-in-the-Electorate

Readings: Wattenberg, THE DECLINE OF AMERICAN POLITICAL PARTIES 1952-1980.

3/20 Party-as-Organization

Readings: J. Schlesinger, "The New American Political Party," APSR, 79 (1985): 1152-1169.
J. Schlesinger, "On the Theory of Party Organization," JOP, 46 (May 1984): 369-400.
J. Gibson, et al., "Whither the Local Parties?" AJPS, 29 (Feb. 1985): 139-160.
J. Gibson, et al., "Assessing Party Organizational Strength," AJPS, 27 (May 1983): 193-222.
J. Gibson, J. Frendreis, and L. Vertz, "Party Dynamics in the 1980s," AJPS, 32 (1988): in press.

3/27 Party Activists

Readings: D. Nesbit, "Changing Partisanship among Southern Party Activists," JOP, 50 (November 1988): 322-334.
A. Abramowitz, J. McGlennon, and R. Rapoport, "Incentives for Activism," pp. 61-74 in R. Rapoport, A. Abramowitz, and J. McGlennon (eds.), THE LIFE OF THE PARTIES Lexington (KY: University of Kentucky Press, 1986).
M. Conway and F. Feigert, "Motivations, Incentive Systems, and the Political Party Organization," APSR, 62 (1968): 1159-73.

4/3 Parties and Elections

Readings: W. Crotty, "Party Effort and Its Impact on the Vote," APSR, 65 (June 1971): 439-450.
P. Beck, "Environment and Party," APSR, 68 (1974): 1229-1244.
C. Barrilleaux, "A Dynamic Model of Partisan Competition in the American States," AJPS, 30 (1986): 822-840.

S. Patterson and G. Caldeira, "The Etiology of Partisan Competition," APSR, 78 (Sept. 1984): 691-707.

G. Jacobson and S. Kernell, "Strategy and Choice in the 1982 Congressional Elections," PS, 15 (Summer 1982): 423-430.

4/10 Parties and Elections

Readings: J. Frendreis, J. Gibson, and L. Vertz, "The Electoral Relevance of Local Party Organizations," unpublished manuscript.

P. Herrnson, "Do Parties Make a Difference? The Role of Party Organizations in Congressional Elections," JOP, 48(Aug. 1986): 589-615.

B. Norrander, "Determinants of Local Party Campaign Activity," SOCIAL SCIENCE QUARTERLY, 67: 561-571.

4/17 New Political Organizations: PACs

Readings: Sabato, PAC POWER.

4/24 Elections and the Party System: The Future

Readings: Abramson, CHANGE AND CONTINUITY..., Ch. 11.

S. MacDonald and G. Rabinowitz, "The Dynamics of Structural Realignment," APSR, 81 (1987): 775-796.

C. Brown, "Mass Dynamics of U. S. Presidential Competitions, 1928-1936," APSR, 82 (1988): 1153-81.

R. Erikson and K. Tedin, "The 1928-1936 Partisan Realignment: The Case for the Conversion Hypothesis," APSR, 75 (1981): 951-962.

H. Stanley, "Southern Partisan Changes: Dealignment, Realignment or Both?" JOP, 50 (Feb. 1988): 64-88.