

# POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTIONS

Government and Politics 474

Spring 1998

P. Herrnson

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*First, this great and glorious country was built up by political parties; second; parties can't hold together if their workers don't get the offices when they win; third, if the parties go to pieces, the government they built up must go to pieces, too; fourth, then, there'll be h--- to pay.*

--George Washington Plunkitt  
Ward Boss of Tammany Hall

We will address a variety of issues pertaining to the role of elections in American politics and the roles of political parties in the electoral process and in American government in general.

Topics to be discussed include:

- public opinion
- voting behavior
- the roles of party organizations, interest groups, and the mass media in elections
- money and politics
- political parties and the governmental process
- political parties and elections as sources of continuity and vehicles for change in American politics

## PREREQUISITES

Government and Politics 170, some other introductory course in American government, or permission of the instructor.

## TEXTBOOKS AND REQUIRED READING

Paul Allen Beck, PARTY POLITICS IN AMERICA (Longman 1997).

Paul S. Herrnson, CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS (CQ Press, 1998).

William Riordan, PLUNKITT OF TAMMANY HALL (Dutton, any ed.).

Michael Nelson, *THE ELECTIONS OF 1996* (CQ Press, 1997).

(continued)

In addition, students will be required to keep up with current events related to parties and elections. Students should come prepared to discuss develop relevant stories that appear on the television or radio news, *WASHINGTON POST*, *NEW YORK TIMES*, or some other major newspaper.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

Students will be required to take an in-class exam, write a paper, and take a final exam. Each is worth 30% of the total grade. The exams are cumulative. An additional 10% of the grade will be based on class participation and possibly some quizzes and other assignments.

## **COURSE OUTLINE**

January 28 Introduction

January 30-February 2 Parties and Democracy

Herrnson, *PARTIES, ELECTIONS, AND THE BATTLE FOR TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY AMERICA*, Introduction (on reserve)

Beck, *PARTY POLITICS*, Introduction, ch.1

February 4-6 Historic and Contemporary Axes of Conflict

Beck, *PARTY POLITICS*, ch.2

February 9-16 Party Identification and Voting Behavior

Beck, *PARTY POLITICS*, pp.127-130, chs.6-8

February 18-20 State and Local Party Organizations

Beck, *PARTY POLITICS*, pp.59-63, ch.3,5

Riordan, *PLUNKITT OF TAMMANY HALL* (entire book)

February 23-27 National Party Organizations

Beck, *PARTY POLITICS*, ch.4

Herrnson, *CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS*, ch.4

March 2-6 Interest Groups and Political Consultants

Herrnson, *CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS*, ch. 5

March 9 FIRST EXAM

March 11 Review Exam

March 13-16 Mass Media

Nelson, THE ELECTIONS OF 1996, ch.3 (Kerbel)

PAPER PROPOSAL DUE IN CLASS ON MARCH 16

March 18-April 6 Congressional Elections and Other Non-presidential Elections

Beck, PARTY POLITICS, ch.9

Herrnson, CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS, ch.2,3,6-9

Nelson, THE ELECTIONS OF 1996, ch.7 (Jacobson)

April 8-24 Presidential Elections

Beck, PARTY POLITICS, ch.10-11

Nelson, THE ELECTIONS OF 1996, chs.2 (Stanley), 3 (Nelson), 5 (Elshtain and  
Beem), 8 (DiIulio)

April 27-May 1 Parties and Governance

Beck, PARTY POLITICS, ch.9

Herrnson, CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS, ch.10

Nelson, THE ELECTIONS OF 1996, ch. 6 (Quirk and Matheson)

May 4-May 6 Parties and Public Policy

PAPER DUE IN CLASS

May 8-11 Parties and Elections and Continuity and Change

Beck, PARTY POLITICS, ch.13-15

Herrnson, CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS, ch.11

May 13 Course Summary

May 20, 8:00am-10:am FINAL EXAM