

**Southern Illinois University
Department of Political Science
Spring 2000**

**POLITICAL SCIENCE 319
AMERICAN POLITICAL PARTIES
MWF 11:00-11:50 in Faner 3512**

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INTRODUCTION

Political parties are important institutions that appear in virtually every forum of American politics. In fact, there are people who believe that the development of democracy in the United States would not have occurred without political parties. At a minimum, it is difficult to imagine politics without parties. However, the roles and activities of political parties have changed substantially over the last forty years, and many believe that parties have seen their influence decline – both as important players in national politics and as objects of public support and voter loyalty.

This course will study the role and behavior of American parties in several different forums, including the electoral process. We will also consider how the role of American parties has changed, and how the parties have responded to these changes.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of the semester, students will: (1) be able to think analytically and abstractly about political parties; (2) understand the foundations of the two-party system in the United States; (3) understand the primary roles and activities of the major political parties in American politics, and (4) understand the difficulties and strategies of third parties in America.

REQUIRED BOOKS

Beck, Paul Allen. 1997. *Party Politics in America*, 8th ed. New York: Longman.

Green, John C., and Daniel M. Shea, editors. 1999. *The State of the Parties*, 3rd ed. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Galderisi, Peter F., editor. 1996. *Divided Government*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

There may be a few short articles (which I will provide) assigned as well.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Exams: There will be a midterm and a final exam. The exams will be closed-book, in-class tests based on assigned readings, course lectures, and discussions. The exams will primarily follow an essay format, with some identification and short answer questions. The final exam will be comprehensive. Failure to take the exams at the scheduled time, unless excused by the instructor in advance, will result in an F for that exam.

Paper: All students will write a 5-page paper on the following topic: Choose a major policy issue or problem and compare how the issue is treated in three different party platforms (Democratic, Republican, and a third party of your choice). The paper should address four major questions. How prominent is the issue in each platform? What policies or solutions does each party propose to address the issue? Is each party's position on the issue consistent with its overall ideology? Are there any prominent candidates or elected officials affiliated with the party who disagree with the party platform on the issue?

All papers are due in class Monday, February 21. Students should use primary sources as much as possible. Party platforms are available on the Internet and in the library. Newspaper and magazine accounts of each party platform's creation are useful too. Be sure to include proper citations for all sources.

Group Project and Class Presentation: Working in groups of three, you will produce a 10-page "master strategy memo" for a third-party or independent candidate for president in the general election of 2000. You will use the "**Third Party Time?**" web-based case study created by the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University (<http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/case/3pt>) for much of your research. The case study was created for the 1996 election, so you will need to do some additional research to tailor your memo for the 2000 election (although many of the third parties and potential candidates are the same). I have set aside some class time for all of us to go to a computer lab to work on the assignment. Each group should divide responsibilities. For example, one may be in charge of the overall "message," another the media strategy, still another the mechanics of the campaign (such as ballot access and finances). Be clear what your campaign's objectives are: throwing the election into the House of Representatives; injecting some new issues into the debate; laying the foundation for a true national party, and so on. Then make sure that the message, media, and mechanics all work toward the objective. Refer to the Rowe memo (in the case study) as an example of a first-rate strategy memo. Memos will be graded based on how plausible, practical, and imaginative they are. Appendices of data, tables, or figures will not count toward the 10-page limit. **Strategy memos are due in class Monday, April 17.** Each group will present its strategy to the class that week.

Attendance and Participation: I expect students to read the assigned materials on time, attend class, and participate in discussions on a regular basis. I will take attendance on ten randomly chosen days during the semester. Students who miss more than two of

those days will lose points on the attendance and participation part of their grade. Regular attendance and participation is likely necessary to receive an A for the course.

Follow Political Parties in the News: Since we are in the midst of the presidential nomination season, parties will be in the news quite a bit this semester. You will get more out of the course (and you will have more information for the written assignments) if you keep abreast of party activities and other political developments. I have created a web site for this course (<http://www.siu.edu/departments/cola/polysci/ptylink.html>) with links to various sites on political parties and American politics.

GRADING

Final grades will be based on the following proportions:

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Weight</u>	<u>Due date</u>
Paper	20%	Feb. 21
Midterm Exam	20%	March 8
Final Exam	30%	May 10
Group Project	25%	April 17
Attendance and Participation	5%	

ACADEMIC HONESTY

I take academic misconduct (plagiarism, cheating, etc.) very seriously, and any cases of cheating or plagiarism will be reported to the university committee on academic misconduct and handled according to university policy. In addition, students will receive a grade of "0" for that assignment. According to the American Heritage Dictionary, plagiarism is "stealing and using the ideas or writings of another as one's own" (p. 524). If you are uncertain about this definition or how it applies to your work, please come see me. You may also want to read the university-approved writing handbook, *The Little, Brown Compact Handbook*, 3rd edition (1998), by Jane Aaron.

COURSE OUTLINE

I. Introduction to Political Parties

January 19-January 31

The Evolution of American Parties and the Party System

Readings

Beck, chapter 1

Green and Shea, "The State of the Parties at Century's End" (ch. 1 in *SOP*)

Reichley, "The Future of the American Two-Party System after 1996" (ch. 2 in *SOP*)

Silbey, “Divided Government in Historical Perspective, 1789-1996” (ch. 2 in *DG*)

Ryden, “The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly” (ch. 4 in *SOP*)

February 2-9

The Two-Party System and Minor Parties in American Politics

Readings

Beck, chapter 2

Lowi, “Toward a Responsible Three-Party System: Plan or Obituary” (ch. 11 in *SOP*)

Stone et al., “The Activist Base of the Reform Party in 1996: Problems and Prospects” (ch. 12 in *SOP*)

Berg, “Beyond a Third Party: Other Minor Parties in the 1996 Elections” (ch. 13 in *SOP*)

II. Political Parties as Organizations

February 11-16

Party Organizations and Party Activists

Readings

Beck, Part Two (chapters 3, 4, and 5)

Bibby, “Party Networks: National-State Integration, Allied Groups, and Issue Activists” (ch. 5 in *SOP*)

Green et al., “Issue Networks and Party Elites in 1996” (ch. 7 in *SOP*)

III. Political Parties as Coalitions of Voters

February 18-25

Party Loyalties and Political Behavior

Read:

Beck, Part Three (chapters 6, 7, and 8)

Beck, “The Changing American Party System” (ch. 3 in *SOP*)

Jacobson, "Divided Government and the 1994 Elections" (ch. 3 in *DG*)

Petrocik and Doherty, "The Road to Divided Government: Paved Without Intention" (ch. 4 in *DG*)

Papers Due Monday, February 21

IV. Political Parties in the Electoral Process

February 28-March 6

Parties and the Selection of Candidates

Readings

Beck, chapters 9 and 10

March 8: Midterm Exam

March 10-31

Parties in the General Election

Readings

Beck, chapters 11 and 12

Herrnson and Dwyre, "Party Issue Advocacy in Congressional Election Campaigns" (ch. 6 in *SOP*)

Blumberg et al. "Do the Grassroots Matter? The Coordinated Campaign in a Battleground State" (ch. 10 in *SOP*)

Coleman, "Party Images and Candidate-Centered Campaigns in 1996: What's Money Got to do With it?" (ch. 20 in *SOP*)

V. Political Parties as Governing Coalitions

April 3-14

Parties in Government

Readings

Beck, Part 5 (chapters 13, 14, and 15)

Pomper, "Parliamentary Government in the United States?" (ch. 15 in *SOP*)

Kolodny, “Moderate Party Factions in the U.S. House of Representatives” (ch. 16 in *SOP*)

April 17-21

Group Presentations of Strategy Memos

April 17: Strategy Memos Due

April 24-28

Consequences of Divided Government

Read:

Fiorina, “The Causes and Consequences of Divided Government: Lessons from 1992-1994” (ch. 2 in *DG*)

Rieselbach, “It’s the Constitution, Stupid! Congress, the President, Divided Government, and Policymaking” (ch. 5 in *DG*)

Milkis, “The New Deal, the Modern Presidency, and Divided Government” (ch. 6 in *DG*)

Herzberg, “Unity Versus Division: The Effect of Divided Government on Policy Development” (ch. 7 in *DG*)

McNamara, “Doing One’s Job: A Constitutional Principle and a Political Strategy for an Uncertain Future” (ch. 8 in *DG*)

VI. The State of Political Parties

May 1-5

Parties in American Politics

Readings

Beck, Part Six (chapter 16)

Little, “The 1996 State Legislative Elections: The Fate of Responsible Parties in America” (ch. 18 in *SOP*)

Final Exam

Monday, May 10, 7:50-9:50 AM