

Politics 523  
Voting and Elections  
Dr. White  
Fall 1997

In a seminal work, political scientist Harold Lasswell once defined politics as “who gets what, when, and how.” Applying Lasswell's definition to the narrower concept of a political party, we know what it gets--votes, and when--election day. But understanding the structures of voting patterns, how to construct a winning *and* governing coalition, and what moves voters to support particular candidates and parties is a much more complicated process

This seminar is devoted to the study of elections in the United States. Using the seminal works in the field the following topics will be examined: (1) who votes and why; (2) the definition of voter choice; (3) the nature of political conflict; (4) the forming of political coalitions; and (5) how recent elections illuminate our understanding of contemporary voting behaviors.

*Course Format:* The course will combine lectures, assigned readings, class discussions, and a term paper. Each session will begin with an introductory lecture followed by discussion. *All* students should be prepared to discuss the readings for the week.

*Undergraduate Requirements:* Undergraduate seniors are required to complete the assigned readings, a final examination, a term paper typed and double-spaced not exceeding thirty-five pages in length.

*Graduate Requirements:* Graduate students are required to complete the assigned readings, a final examination, and a term paper not exceeding fifty pages typed and double-spaced.

*Term Paper:* Each student will be asked to write a term paper on some aspect of voting and elections in the United States. Topics must be approved by the professor in advance. *To assist students in preparing these papers there is a Selected Bibliography attached to this syllabus.* Many of these books are available at Mullen Library. Please consult this bibliography. In addition, students are *strongly encouraged* to consult a writing guide (e.g. Kate L. Turabian, A Manual for Writers; Theodore M. Bernstein, The Careful Writer; or Thomas E. Cronin, The Write Stuff. *How* you write is just as important as *what* you write. Late term papers will result in a full grade reduction *per day late*. Students must submit research notes with their term papers.

*Course Evaluation:* (undergraduates and graduates): Term paper, 35 percent; midterm examination, 25 percent; class attendance and discussion, 10 percent; final examination, 30 percent.

### Required Readings

1. Crotty, William and Jerome M. Mileur, eds. *America's Choice: The Election of 1996*. Sluice Dock, Connecticut: Dushkin/McGraw Hill, 1997.
2. Pomper, Gerald M. *Passions and Interests*. Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 1992.
3. Scammon, Richard M. and Ben J. Wattenberg. *The Real Majority*. New York: Donald I. Fine, 1992. Originally published in 1970.
4. Shafer, Byron E. *The End of Realignment? Interpreting American Electoral Eras*. Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991.
5. White, John Kenneth. *Still Seeing Red: How the Cold War Shapes the New American Politics*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1997.
6. White, John Kenneth and Jerome M. Mileur. *Challenges to Party Government*. Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1992.
7. White, John Kenneth and John C. Green, eds., *The Politics of Ideas: Intellectual Challenges to the Major Parties After 1992*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 1995.

### Office Hours

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## Class Sessions and Assignments

1. August 28. Introduction

Review of course readings, assignments, and the literature on voting and elections.

### PART ONE: THE HISTORICAL VIEW

2. September 4. Political Parties and the American Electorate.

Assigned Reading:

Pomper, *Passions and Interests* (all)

White and Green, *The Politics of Ideas* (all)

3. September 11. How Do Voters Think?

Assigned Reading:

Scammon and Wattenberg, *The Real Majority* (all)

4. September 18-September 25. Do Parties Act Responsibly?

Assigned Reading:

American Political Science Association, Committee on Political Parties, "Toward A More Responsible Two-Party System." (1950 summary) Appendix to *Challenges to Party Government*.

White and Mileur, *Challenges to Party Government* (all)

5. October 2. Midterm.

**PART TWO: THEORIES OF VOTING**

6. October 9-16. Different Perspectives on American Party Realignment.

Guest lectures by party activists.

7. October 23-30. Historical Eras of Party Politics

Assigned Reading:

White, *Still Seeing Red: How The Cold War Shapes the New American Politics* (all)

8. November 6-13. Partisan Realignment: Is the Balance Shifting?

Assigned Reading:

Key, V.O., Jr., "A Theory of Critical Elections," *Journal of Politics*, 17: (February 1955) (xerox; in-class handout).

Key, V.O., Jr. "Secular Realignment and the Party System." *Journal of Politics* 21 (May 1959) (xerox in-class handout).

Shafer, Byron E. *The End of Realignment* (all).

9. November 20. The 1996 Election in Retrospect.

Assigned Reading:

Crotty and Mileur, eds., *America's Choice: The Election of 1996* (all)

**TERM PAPERS DUE NOVEMBER 20**

10. November 27. Thanksgiving Recess.

11. December 4. Conclusions and Interpretations.

In-class discussion of course and final examination assignment.

**FINAL EXAMINATION: Thursday, December 11, 4-6 P.M.**

### **Selected Bibliography**

- Alexander, Herbert E. Financing Elections: Money, Elections and Political Reform. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, 1984.
- Barber, James David. The Pulse of Politics. New York: W. W. Norton, 1980.
- Barone, Michael. Our Country: The Shaping of America from Roosevelt to Reagan. New York: Free Press, 1990.
- Barta, Carolyn. Perot and His People. Fort Worth, Texas: the Summit Group, 1993.
- Berelson, Bernard R., Paul F. Lazarsfeld and William N. McPhee. Voting: A Study of Opinion Formation in a Presidential Campaign. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954.
- Briggs, B. Bruce, ed. The New Class? New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Books, 1979.
- Broder, David S. The Party's Over. New York: Harper and Row, 1972.
- Brown, Peter. Minority Party: Why the Democrats Face Defeat in 1992 and Beyond. Washington, D.C.: Regnery Gateway, 1991.
- Bruce, Steve. The Rise and Fall of the New Christian Right Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990.
- Burner, David. The Politics of Provincialism: The Democratic Party in Transition: 1918-1932. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968.
- Burnham, Walter Dean. Critical Elections and the Mainsprings of American Politics. New York: W. W. Norton, 1970.
- Burns, James MacGregor. Presidential Government: The Crucible of Leadership. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1973.
- Burns, James MacGregor. The Power to Lead. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984.
- Campbell, Angus, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller, and Donald E. Stokes. The American Voter. Midway Reprint Series. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980.
- Campbell, Bruce A. and Richard J. Trilling, eds., Realignment in American Politics: Toward A Theory. Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1980.

Chambers, William Nisbet and Walter Dean Burnham. The American Party Systems: Stages of Development. New York: Oxford University Press, 1975.

Cox, Gary W. and Samuel Kernell. The Politics of Divided Government. Boulder: Westview Press, 1991.

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Davis, Lanny J. The Emerging Democratic Majority: Lessons and Legacies from the New Politics. New York: Stein and Day, 1974.

Dionne, E.J. They Only Look Dead: Why Progressives Will Dominate the Next Political Era. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996.

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Duverger, Maurice. Political Parties: Their Organization and Activity in the Modern State. London: Lowe and Brydone, 1964.

Edsall, Thomas B. The New Politics of Inequality. New York: W.W. Norton, 1984.

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Elshtain, Jean Bethke. Democracy on Trial. New York: Basic Books, 1995.

Fenno, Richard F., Jr. Home Style: House Members in Their Districts. Boston: Little, Brown, 1978

Gamm, Gerald H. The Making of the New Deal Democrats: Voting Behavior and Realignment in Boston, 1920-1940. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1989.

Harmel, Robert, ed. Presidents and Their Parties: Leadership or Neglect? New York: Praeger Publishers, 1984.

Hartz, Louis. The Liberal Tradition in America. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1955.

Herrnson, Paul S. Congressional Elections: Campaigning at Home and in Washington. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, 1995.

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Kirkpatrick, Jeane J. The New Presidential Elite. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1976.

Klinkner, Philip A. The Losing Parties: Out-Party National Committees, 1956-1993. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994.

Kusnet, David. Speaking American: How the Democrats Can Win in the Nineties. New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1992.

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