

POLS 3312: Party Systems, Campaigns and Elections

Syllabus Spring 2024

Basic Course Info

Class Meeting Place: LART 209

Class Meeting Session: MW 1:30-2:50

Professor Information

Dr. Marcos Menchaca

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Office: Benedict Hall 308

Office Hours: Mon & Tue 12:00-1:30pm

Course Description

An analysis of the nature and role of political parties and interest groups and their impact on both the electoral and policymaking processes. This class is a combination of topics about political parties and elections in America. Political parties are an essential part of our democracy. They are the institutions by which public policy is decided. Yet, not too long ago, political scientists were talking about the decline of their importance in American politics. Why the resurgence? This will be a major question in this class. We will study topics such as how people develop a partisan identity and why parties even form in the first place. Elections are important because they are the means by which political parties gain power and make decisions in a democracy. We will study topics such as what factors influence a person to vote for one candidate over another and why people even turn out to vote in the first place. For both topics, I will give you a good understanding of the “great works” or seminal writings of the literature.

Textbooks/Required Readings

Marjorie Hershey (editor). (2014). *Guide to U.S. Political Parties*. CQ Press.

Course Outcomes

After successful completion of this course, the student should be able to

- Demonstrate knowledge and awareness of contemporary issues and their historical contexts;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the seminal works in the party systems and the voting behavior literature;
- Demonstrate sophisticated skills in reading these primary sources critically;
- Comprehend the process by which political scientists collect and analyze public opinion data;

- Understand the way in which political scientists go about forming hypotheses, testing them, and subsequently engage in debate when there is no consensus;
- Be able to apply the thought process of the party systems and voting behavior literature to new situations.

UTEP EDGE

Students will be able to:

- Communicate information clearly and effectively using a variety of tools, media and genres (oral, written, iconographic) in varied contexts for a variety of purposes.
- Demonstrate strategic and adaptable thinking patterns in learning and working conditions.
- Apply analysis, synthesis, and evaluative processes that enable productive problem solving and decision-making to strengthen performance in university and workforce setting.
- Reflect and assess their interests, abilities, responsibilities, cultural understanding, and ethics in order to more effectively pursue their academic, career and life goals.
- Use real world digital tools, research, and resources to access, evaluate, and apply information appropriate for authentic tasks.

Evaluation

There will be four pop quiz exams (due dates will be announced on Blackboard). The three exams are given in the schedule below. Your grade will depend on the following four items. Letter grades will be determined by a curve (percentiles of the class) of all of your scores added up.

Quizzes 6	30% (5% each)
Exam 1	20%
Exam 2	20%
Exam 3	20%
Term Paper (due Dec 1 st)	10%

Naturally, the midterm will cover all the material covered in lecture up to that point. The final is not comprehensive but will cover only topics after the midterm. The term paper will be about one of the topics we will over in this class, which I will decide at a later date and announce it through an email.

General Course Policies

I expect you to take reasonable actions if anything comes up during the semester. For example, if you must be absent from the midterm due to an emergency (such as being hospitalized), you need to email me as soon as possible when you are capable of doing so. Be sure to take obtain all the necessary paperwork.

I do not plan on making any major changes to this syllabus. But if I do change the syllabus, I will let you know through email.

You will need to save your papers to some cloud sharing service. I do not accept the “my computer crashed with all my work on it” excuse anymore.

Covid-19 Precautions

Please stay home if you have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. If you are feeling unwell, please let me know as soon as possible, so that we can work on appropriate accommodations. If you have tested positive for COVID-19, you are encouraged to report your results to covidaction@utep.edu, so that the Dean of Students Office can provide you with support and help with communication with your professors. The Student Health Center is equipped to provide COVID 19 testing.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that people in areas of substantial or high COVID-19 transmission wear face masks when indoors in groups of people. The best way that Miners can take care of Miners is to get the vaccine. If you still need the vaccine, it is widely available in the El Paso area, and will be available at no charge on campus during the first week of classes. For more information about the current rates, testing, and vaccinations, please visit epstrong.org

Land Acknowledgement Statement

We, the UTEP Department of Political Science, acknowledge that we are in the unceded territories of the Indigenous Peoples who, along with countless generations of ancestors, are the guardians and keepers of this land, both throughout history and in contemporary times: the Tigua, Mansos, Sumas, Ndé, the Piros, Mescalero Apache, Chiricahua Apache, Tarahumara, Yaqui, Jumano, Comanche, Kiowa, Rarámuri, Tohono O’odham, Yaqui, Kickapoo, Diné, Hopi, Zapotec, Mixtec, Aztec-Nahua-Mexica, Huichol, Tepehuan, Coahuilteco, Chichimeca, and the other Native communities who comprise our multinational region. As scholars and people who reside and work in these lands, we respect and honor the millennia-long history of Native peoples on this land and their ongoing presence today.

Course Assignments/Requirements/Course Schedule

Please note that this schedule is approximate. The only things are set in stone are the exam and assignment dates. Readings in the color [blue](#) are recommended but not required.

Jan 17 – Class Introduction

- Syllabus

Jan 22 – Introduction to the Study of Political Parties

- Hershey chapter 1
- Federalist 10
- [Federalist 51](#)

Jan 24 – Partisanship and independence

- Hershey chapters 18 & 20
- Campbell, Converse, Miller, Green, and Stokes (1960). *The American Voter*, chapter 6-7
- Klar and Krupnikov (2015). *Independent Politics*, chapters 1-3
- Nie, Verba, and Petrocik (1979). *The Changing American Voter*, chapter 4
- Hetherington (2001). *Resurgent Mass Partisanship*

Jan 29 – Partisanship and Political Evaluation

- Hershey chapter 22
- Klar and Krupnikov (2015). *Independent Politics*, chapters 4
- Green, Palmquist, Schickler (2002). *Partisan Hearts and Minds*, chapter 1
- Lewis-Beck, Jacoby, Norpoth, and Weisberg (2008). *The American Voter Revisited*, chapter 6 (7 is recommended)

Jan 31 – Political Ideology

- Converse (1964). *The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics*, pp. 1-10

Feb 5 – The Formation of Political Attitudes

- Zaller (1992). *The Nature and Origins of Public Opinion*, chapters 1-2

Feb 7 – Parties in Government

- Hershey chapter 24
- Cox and McCubbins (2005). *Setting the Agenda*, chapters 1-2
- Mayhew (2005). *Divided We Govern*
- Sinclair (1992). *The Emergence of Strong Leadership in the 1980s House of Representatives*
- Sinclair (2012). *Unorthodox Lawmaking*, chapter preface and 1-2

Feb 12 – Party Activists

- Hershey chapter 16
- Carmines and Woods (2002). *The Role of Party Activists in the Evolution of the Abortion Issue*
- Moon (2004). *Party Activists, Campaign Resources, and Candidate Position Taking*

Feb 14 – **EXAM 1**

Feb 19 – Theories of Political Parties Part I

- Aldrich (1995). *Why Parties?*, chapters 1-2
- Hershey chapter 4

Feb 21 – Theories of Parties Part II

- Bawn, Cohen, Karol, Masket, Noel, and Zaller (2012). *A Theory of Political Parties*

- [Menchaca \(2020\). *A Factional Theory of Parties*](#)

Feb 26 – American Party System History I

- Hershey chapters 5-6
- [Aldrich \(1995\). *Why Parties?*, chapter 3](#)

Feb 28 – American Party System History II

- Hershey chapters 7-8
- [Brewer and Stonecash \(2009\). *Dynamics of American Political Parties*, chapters 1-2](#)

Mar 4 – American Party System History III

- Hershey chapter 9
- [Stonecash \(2010\). *Class in American Politics*](#)

Mar 6 – American Party System History IV

- Hershey chapter 10
- [Chris Baylor \(2013\). *First to the Party*](#)

Mar 18 – American Party System History V

- Hershey chapter 11
- [Layman and Carsey \(2002\). *Party Polarization and “Conflict Extension” in the American Electorate*](#)

Mar 20 – **EXAM 2**

Mar 25 – Partisanship as Group Identity

- [Mason \(2016\). *A Cross-Cutting Calm*](#)
- [Mason \(2018\). *Uncivil Disagreement*, chapters 1-2](#)

Mar 27 – Partisan Sorting

- [Mason \(2015\). *I Disrespectfully Agree*](#)
- [Mason \(2018\). *Uncivil Disagreement*, chapters 4-6](#)
- [Levendusky \(2009\). *The Partisan Sort*, chapters 1-3 and 6](#)

Apr 1 – Polarization

- Hershey chapters 19 and 23
- [Menchaca \(2021\). *Are Americans Polarized on Issue Dimensions?*](#)
- [Levendusky and Malhotra \(2015\). *\(Mis\)perceptions of Partisan Polarization in the American Public*](#)
- [Levendusky \(2009\). *The Partisan Sort*, chapter 7](#)

Apr 3 – Party as Organization and Party Nominations

- Hershey chapters 12-14
- [Cohen, Karol, Noel, Zaller \(2008\). *The Party Decides*, chapter 7](#)

- Hershey chapter 21
- Cohen, Karol, Noel, Zaller (2016). *Party versus Faction in the Reformed Presidential Nominating System*.

Apr 8 – The American Electoral System

- Sides, Shaw, and Grossman (2018). *Campaigns and Elections*, chapter 2
- Hershey (2017). *Party Politics in America*, chapter 2

Apr 10 – Theories of Voting Behavior

- Nie, Verba, and Petrocik (1979). *The Changing American Voter*, chapter 10
- Downs (1957). *An Economic Theory of Democracy*

Apr 15 – Voter Turnout and Participation

- Klar and Krupnikov, *Independent Politics*, chapter 5
- Riker and Ordeshook (1968). *A Theory of the Calculus of Voting*
- Brennan and Hamlin (1998). *Expressive Voting and Electoral Equilibrium*

Apr 17 – Congressional Elections

- Davidson, Oleszek, Lee, and Schickler (2015). *Congress and Its Members*, chapter 4
- Erikson and Wright (2017). *Voters, Candidates, and Issues in Congressional Elections*, in Dodd and Oppenheimer (eds), *Congress Reconsidered*
- Abramowitz (2014). *Nationalization of Senate Elections Poses Challenge to Democrats in 2014*

Apr 22 – Strategies for Winning a Campaign

- Vavreck (2009). *The Message Matters*, chapters 1-2 (3 is recommended)

Apr 24 – Media Effects on Political Campaigns

- Zaller (2002). *The Statistical Power of Election Studies to Detect Media Exposure Effects in Political Campaigns*
- Shaw (1999). *A Study of Presidential Campaign Effects from 1952 to 1992*

Apr 29 – Interest Group Strategies and the Role of Money in Politics

- Hershey chapter 29
- Page and Gilens (2014). *Testing Theories of American Politics*
- Page and Gilens (2017). *Democracy in America?* Chapters 1-3
- Hershey chapter 30
- Achen and Bartels (2016). *Democracy for Realists*, chapters 1-2

May 1 – **EXAM 3**