

POLS 3312: Party Systems, Campaigns and Elections

Syllabus Spring 2020

Basic Course Info

Class Meeting Place: Quinn Hall 203

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

Professor Information

Dr. Marcos Menchaca

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Office: Benedict Hall 308

Office Hours: TR 1:00-2:30pm and by appointment

Course Description

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 institution by which public policy is decided. Yet, not too long-ago, political scientists were talking about the decline of their important 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

Green, Coffey, and Cohen. (2018). *The State of the Parties 2018*. (GCC)

Mason, Lilliana (2018). *Uncivil Disagreement*.

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. The midterm and the final 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 4	20%
Midterm	30%
Final	35%
Term Paper	15%

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 (the lecture schedule may change slightly based on how fast/long I take to finish each lecture). But if I do change the syllabus, I will let you know through email.

Email will be my main method of communication with you. If you are not receiving my emails, please notify me immediately because each email will contain important announcements.

There is to be no talking in class. When I am giving lectures, you are allowed to use a laptop but only to take class notes.

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 22 – Class Introduction

- Syllabus
- GCC chapter 1

Jan 27 – Introduction to the Study of Political Parties

- GCC chapter 2
- Federalist 10
- [Federalist 51](#)

Jan 29 – Partisanship

- Campbell, Converse, Miller, Green, and Stokes (1960). *The American Voter*, chapter 6
- Hetherington (2001). *Resurgent Mass Partisanship*

Feb 3 – Partisanship and Political Evaluation

- Lewis-Beck, Jacoby, Norpoth, and Weisberg (2008). *The American Voter Revisited*, chapter 6
- [Green, Palmquist, Schickler \(2002\). *Partisan Hearts and Minds*, chapter 1](#)

Feb 5 – Political Ideology

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

Feb 10 – The Formation of Political Attitudes

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

Feb 12 – Parties in Government

- Cox and McCubbins (2005). *Setting the Agenda*, chapters 1-2
- Sinclair (1992). *The Emergence of Strong Leadership in the 1980s House of Representatives*
- [Sinclair \(2012\). *Unorthodox Lawmaking*, chapter preface and 1-2](#)

Feb 17 – Theories of Political Parties Part I

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

Feb 19 – Theories of Political Parties Part II

- Bawn, Cohen, Karol, Masket, Noel, and Zaller (2012). *A Theory of Political Parties*
- [Menchaca \(2020\). *A Factional Theory of Parties*](#)

Feb 24 – American Party System History

- Brewer and Stonecash (2009). *Dynamics of American Political Parties*, chapters 1-2
- [Stonecash \(2010\). *Class in American Politics*](#)
- [Chris Baylor \(2013\). *First to the Party*](#)

Feb 26 – Party Activists

- GCC chapters 5-6
- [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*](#)

Mar 2 – The Party as Organization

- GCC chapters 2 and 10
- Cohen, Karol, Noel, Zaller. (2008). *The Party Decides*, chapter 7

Mar 4 – Party Nominations

- Cohen, Karol, Noel, Zaller. (2016). *Party versus Faction in the Reformed Presidential Nominating System*.
- GCC chapters 9 and 11

Mar 9 – Review

Mar 11 – **MIDTERM**

Mar 16 – Spring Break

Mar 18 – Spring Break

Mar 23 – Partisanship as Group Identity

- Mason (2018). *Uncivil Disagreement*, chapters 1-3

Mar 25 – Partisan Sorting

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

Mar 30 – Partisan Polarization

- Levendusky and Malhotra (2015). *(Mis)perceptions of Partisan Polarization in the American Public*
- Levendusky (2009). *The Partisan Sort*, chapter 7

Apr 1 – The American Electoral System

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

Apr 6 – Theories of Voting Behavior

- GCC chapter 14
- Downs (1957). *An Economic Theory of Democracy*

Apr 8 – Voter Turnout and Participation

- Riker and Ordeshook (1968). *A Theory of the Calculus of Voting*
- Brennan and Hamlin (1998). *Expressive Voting and Electoral Equilibrium*

Apr 13 – 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 15 – Strategies for Winning a Campaign

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

Apr 20 – 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 22 – In Class Video: War Room

Apr 27 – Elections and American Democracy

- Achen and Bartels (2016). *Democracy for Realists*, chapters 1-2

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

- GCC chapters 15-17

May 4 – The 2020 Elections

May 6 – Review (**TERM PAPERS DUE**)

May 13 – **FINAL EXAM 4:00-6:45pm**