

Political Parties

POL 358

Rachel Blum
Miami University
blumrm@miamioh.edu

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Class meets: W/F, 10:05-11:25 pm, HRN 313

Office hours: W/F, 2-4 pm, or by apt., HRN 213

1 Course Description

It has been said that democracy is unthinkable save in terms of parties. Today more than ever, perhaps, it is difficult to even discuss politics without reference to the parties. Since political parties permeate every aspect of most governments, any real understanding of civics requires an understanding of the roles that parties play. In this course, students will learn two frameworks with which to understand parties. First, they will learn the **positive** framework; what *is* the role of the political party. The second framework is **normative**; what *should be* the role of the political party. We will discuss these two frameworks in parallel, as understanding why parties are the way they can inform our beliefs about how they should be, and different arguments about how parties should be may influence what they are. Through various reading, writing, and debate assignments students will learn to apply these concepts to historical, theoretical, and contemporary debates.

2 Student Learning Outcomes

This course will further the learning outcomes for Political Science Majors in the following ways:

1. Through course readings and lectures, students will be able to define and explain concepts in the study of political parties.
2. Through written assignments and class debates, students will hone evidence-based reasoning, including identifying appropriate data, evidence, or argument for their projects.
3. Through written assignments and exit polling, students will learn to identify the appropriate methodology approach to their research design, as well as understanding the ethical components of research choices.

4. Through class debates and interactive assignments, students will practice applying political science knowledge to contemporary political issues.
5. Drawing from material in lectures and readings, students will practice formulating and advocating for positive change in our society through their written and interactive assignments.

Course Policies

The following is a summary. More detailed explanation of policies are below.

Students are expected to:

- Come to every class prepared to actively discuss and engage in the readings and participate in discussions, debates, and office hours.
- Turn in assignments on time.
- Be respectful of peers and instructor.
- Check email and read the Canvas site frequently.

In return, you can expect that I will:

- Create an encouraging class atmosphere where students feel comfortable asking questions.
- Show an interest in your learning, and respect your opinions.
- Give timely feedback on your work.
- Check email and read the Canvas site frequently.

2.1 Absences

The Student Handbook states, “Every student is expected to attend every class session for which the student is duly registered.” (Part VII, Section 01.701).

- Unexcused absences: each student has **two** unexcused absences. This means you do not need to get permission for or inform me of these absences, and they will not impact your participation grade. (You will still be responsible for any assignments, including quizzes, due that day.)
- Excused absences: these require prior written approval from me, and will not impact your grade. These include things like illness, athletic events, serious family emergencies, jury duty, pregnancy, military service, etc. In accordance with University policy (Part VII, Section 01.701.B), students must give written notice to the instructor within the first two weeks of class of a religious observance, participation in athletic events, or other academic-related group activities that prohibit class attendance.

- Turning in assignments: Exceptions to deadlines may be made for illness or serious emergencies at the discretion of the professor. Students participating in a university event, sport, or club should expect to continue to submit assignments on the regular due date.
- Inclement weather/snow: In the event of inclement weather preventing me from reaching campus, we will hold our class sessions online via Canvas. I will make slides and a lecture available, and will enable discussion via chatroom. Each student will be required to post at least one substantive comment in the class chatroom on these days. This will not impact assignment due dates.

2.2 Academic Dishonesty

- Cheating, plagiarism, and any form of academic dishonesty in any portion of the academic work for a course will not be tolerated and shall be grounds for awarding a grade of Withdrawal Academic Dishonesty (W(AD)) for the entire course. A W(AD) is calculated as an F in your grade point average.
- Your final paper will be submitted on Canvas via Turnitin.

Assignment Due Dates

- All written assignments must be turned in on Canvas at the time specified. Late assignments will not be accepted, even if the assignment is turned in one minute past the deadline.
- Computers/Internet/Printing: You will be using computers throughout this course for your assignments. Computers and computer software are not foolproof. You should take precautions so that such computer issues do not affect your ability to turn in an assignment. Make multiple copies of your written work, save another copy on a network drive, email a version to yourself. Save your drafts frequently, i.e., every five minutes. Print out copies often. If you take these reasonable precautions, you will not be deterred from meeting due dates, even if your computer should malfunction. Computer, internet, or printer malfunctions are not an excuse for a late paper.

Classroom Conduct

- Cellular Phones: My expectation is that you will turn your phone off and place it in a bag or otherwise out of view during class time.
- Laptop computers/tablets: My expectation is that you will not bring these to class, or will keep them in a bag. If you will need computers for a class activity, I will let you know in advance.
- Engagement and Civility: My expectation is that students will be highly engaged and active in our learning environment. While politics is at times a contentious and controversial subject, I expect students to maintain the highest level of civility and

respect to one another and to the professor in the class regardless of differences of opinions.

Emails

- You are responsible for reading and following any instructions I send via email/Canvas.
- You are encouraged to email with questions, but follow this checklist first:
 - If your question can be answered by the syllabus, a classmate, the university's resources (IT, library, etc.), or google, do not email me until you have exhausted other options. Otherwise, I may not respond.
 - Only email me with reasonable and appropriate requests. E.g. a request for a recommendation with adequate time is reasonable; a request to print your paper is not.
 - Although I attempt to respond quickly, please allow at least two business days for response.
- Be professional and courteous in your emails. Address me by my correct title (Dr. Blum or Professor Blum), use complete sentences, and keep your request clear and concise.

Grades

Grading System

- A range (90-100): Achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.
- B range (80-89): Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.
- C range (70-79): Achievement that meets course requirements in every respect.
- D range (60-69): Achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to meet fully the course requirements.
- F (0-59): Represents failure (or no credit) and signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit or (2) was not completed.

Grade Disputes

- Disputing a grade on an exam or paper: submit a written statement (no more than 1 page, hard copy) with the original assignment explaining why the grade should be changed. I retain the right when re-grading an assignment to raise or lower your grade.
- Disputing a grade on canvas or banner: if you feel that I have mis-entered a grade, please show me the grade on the hard-copy assignment, and I will correct the error.

3 Graded Components

- Class participation: 20%
 - Voting simulations (20%)
 - Reading quizzes (20%)
 - Reading sheets (40%)
 - Other participation (20%)
- Class debates: 10%
- Current events paper: 15%
- Midterm Exam: 15%
- Final paper: 20%
- Final exam: 20%

Class Participation: 5%

This includes attendance, participation in class discussions, group work, and participation in office hours. A combination of these factors will determine this final component of your participation grade.

Voting simulations: 5%

We will hold two in-class voting simulations with additional online components. More instructions will be given in class. Additional opportunities may exist for extra credit.

Reading quizzes: 5%

Reading pop quizzes will occasionally be given throughout the semester.

Reading sheets: 10%

Occasionally, we will tackle more technical or difficult readings. On those days, students will be provided with a reading sheet to help them with the readings. These dates are listed on the syllabus. Students will need to use the readings to fill in information from these sheets. These sheets will be due, on Canvas, by class time on the dates they are assigned.

Debates: 10%

Each student will take part in a miniature debate in class on one of the bigger themes. There will be two debates: one earlier in the semester, and one later in the semester. Students will be allowed to sign-up for the date and side they prefer, or can choose to be assigned to a date and side by me. Topics and instructions will be provided. Each student's performance will be graded individually. Opportunities for extra credit will be available.

Current Events Paper (15%)

Early in the semester, students will write an op-ed style paper on a contemporary political event. They will use one of the theories we discuss about political parties to approach this paper. Papers will be 3-5 pages long. More instructions will be provided.

Midterm and Final exams (15% and 15%)

There will be a midterm during our regular class period, and a final exam during exam week. Both will involve some combination of multiple choice, short identifications, and short essays. Any kind of question is possible for the exams. Both will be closed book and closed notes. If you do not attend the midterm or the final without prior arrangements, you cannot make up the exam.

Final Paper (20%)

A final paper will be due in the final class. It will be due in hard copy at class time and also online through turnitin on Canvas. It will be 7-10 pages. More instructions will be provided on Canvas.

Extra Credit

I will give extra credit opportunities throughout the semester. These could include attending relevant talks at Miami, participating in extra group work, and so forth. Opportunities will be announced as they arise.

4 Required Readings

Many of the readings will be available electronically (on Canvas), but you are required to purchase the following books from your favorite retailer. I'm personally a fan of Amazon and half.com.

Abramowitz, Alan. 2011. *The Disappearing Center: Engaged Citizens, Polarization, and American Democracy*. New Haven: Yale University Press

Hershey, Marjorie. 2010. *Political Parties in America*. 16th Edition. Pearson.

Riordon, William 1963. *Plunkitt Of Tammany Hall: A Series of Very Plain Talks on Very Practical Politics*. Penguin.

5 Schedule

- *All readings should be completed by the assigned date.*
- *As we go through the semester, occasional changes to the schedule may be necessary. I will both discuss these in class and publish these on Canvas in advance.*

August 30: Online assignment: NO CLASS (I'll be at a conference)

Following instructions posted on canvas, write a blog post on the canvas discussion board.

September 1: NO CLASS. I'll still be at the conference. Happy Labor Day!

Start reading Abramowitz for Sept 8. This is the most important reading in the course.

Module 1: Why We Care About Parties

September 6: Introduction and Overview

Noel overview (online)

Quiz

Debate sign up live on canvas

September 8: Lecture 1: Problems with Parties: Polarization

Abramowitz (ch. 1-3 and 5): **Group work in class**

September 13: Lecture 2: Normative Issues (Why We Care)

Madison (Federalist 10 and 51, online)

Washington, 'Farewell Address to Congress' (online)

Rosenblum (online)

September 15: Lecture 3: What is a Political Party?

Bawn et al. 2013 (online): **Reading Sheet**

Debate sides announced

September 20: Lecture 4, Origins of Parties

Aldrich, Chapters 1-2 (online): **Reading sheet**

September 22: Lecture 5: Three Parts of a Party

Hershey, Part I.1

Schattschneider, Chapter 3 (online)

Quiz

September 27: Class debate 1: RESOLVED: POLITICAL PARTIES ARE GOOD FOR DEMOCRACY:

Module 2: Party in Government

September 29: Lecture 6, Party in Government (Presidential and Parliamentary Systems)
Hershey, Part V.13-14

Current Events Paper Due by Class Time

October 4: Voting Simulation 1

October 6: Midterm Review

October 11: MIDTERM EXAM

October 13: NO CLASS: Fall Break!

Read ahead for October 18

Module 3: Parties in Organization

October 18: Lecture 7: Machine Politics

Current events papers and midterm exams handed back by or in this class.

Riordan (all)

Masket and Noel (online): **Reading Sheet**

October 20: Lecture 8: Parties in Local Government

Brainstorm questions for guest speaker

October 25: Parties in Local Government

Guest Speaker

October 27: IAMA: I am a political science professor specializing in political parties, ask me anything.

November 1: Lecture 9, Parties in Nominations

Masket and Noel, Nominations in Presidency (online)

Quiz

Module 4: Parties in Electorate

November 3: Lecture 10: Activism

Masket and Noel, Activism (online)

Hershey, Part II.V

Quiz

November 8: Lecture 11: The Tea Party
Blum, online
Quiz

November 10: Lecture 12, Parties in Elections and Electoral Systems
Hershey, Part IV
Duverger (1955, online)
Group work

November 15: Lecture 13, Party Identification and Independent Voters
Hershey, Part III.6-8

November 17: Voting Simulation 2
Read ahead for November 29.

Module 5: Parties in Review

November 29: Lecture 14: Party Ideology and Realignment
Noel (online)
Quiz

December 1: Class Debate 2. RESOLVED: THE US SHOULD CHANGE ITS PARTY SYSTEM

December 6: Lecture 15, Reviewing Why We Care
Goodin (2008, online)
Hussey and Zaller (2011, online)
Group work

December 8: Review for Final
Final Papers Due in Class, Hard Copy

FINAL EXAM, Wednesday, December 13, 10:15am-12:15 pm