

Political Science 8300 – American Political Parties (& Elections)

Section I – M, 5:20 – 7:20 PM, St. Augustine Center, Room 310

Lara M. Brown, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science

Office: St. Augustine Center, Room #266

Office Hours: Mondays, 3:00–5:00 PM, Tuesdays & Thursdays, 2:30–3:30pm, or by appointment.

Phone: 610-519-8904 (office)

E-mail: lara.brown@villanova.edu

Course Description

This course is designed to engage students in the study of political parties and electoral politics. We will begin with the origins of faction, the founders' reluctance to parties, and the historical development of parties in America. We will then discuss modern political parties and their roles in campaigns and in governing institutions. Throughout the course, we will discuss the evolution of suffrage requirements and the changing nature of American democracy. Lastly, we'll delve into the debate about the state of polarization in American politics.

Required Readings

- Adkins, Randall. 2008. *The Evolution of Political Parties, Campaigns, and Elections: Landmark Documents, 1787-2007*. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.
- Green, John C. and Daniel J. Coffey. 2010. *The State of the Parties, sixth edition*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Press.
- Hershey, Marjorie Randon. 2011. *Party Politics in America, fourteenth edition*. New York: Longman/Pearson Publishers.

Additional required readings will be available digitally on Blackboard/WebCT.

Students are expected to stay current with politics. The site <http://www.realclearpolitics.com> is the easiest way to do this. Three other good political sources are: <http://www.rollcall.com/> and <http://www.politico.com> and <http://www.memorandum.com>

Class Attendance & Missed Work

Attendance is mandatory, and absences will only be excused for legitimate reasons (e.g., car accident, ill health, or other emergencies). Students are responsible for assignments, announcements, and materials covered, if classes or portions of classes are missed.

Academic Honesty & Plagiarism

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in this class. As the catalog states: "Academic honesty and integrity lies at the heart of the values expressed in the University's mission statement and inspired by the spirit of Saint Augustine" (Discipline and Integrity Section, http://catalog.villanova.edu/catalog/univ/univb.htm#academic_policies).

Please also take some time to learn what constitutes the plagiarism of others' ideas as well as how to properly credit sources in your written work for this course. You can find a primer on the subject, along with a complete description of the possible sanctions that may come from behaving dishonestly at: <http://library.villanova.edu/Help/AcademicIntegrity>.

Learning Disability Support Services

Students with disabilities needing accommodation should make requests to the Office of Learning Support Services, which is located on the second floor of Kennedy Hall. For more information, see: <http://learningsupportservices.villanova.edu>.

Points and Grades

Third Party Evaluation – Case Study Paper (25 points – 25% of grade)

2012 Election Prediction – Data Analysis Paper (25 points – 25% of grade)

Final Research Paper (35 points – 35% of grade)

Class Participation (15 points – 15% of grade)

Total maximum: 100 points

93–100 points = A

90–92 points = A –

88–89 points = B+

83–87 points = B

80 –82 points = B –

78–79 points = C+

73–77 points = C

70–72 points = C –

68–69 points = D+

63–67 points = D

60–62 points = D –

59 or below = F

Class Participation, Papers & Exams

The **Case Study Paper** (5 pages) is due on **Monday, February 21**. Your assignment is to investigate a third party, an independent candidate, and/or a popular movement. The purpose is to learn not only about the history of third parties and independent candidates in America, but also to help you learn how to use the case study method. To assist with this, I've uploaded (on Blackboard/WebCT) an article on case study methodology & a book excerpt on third parties.

The **Data Analysis Paper** (5 pages) is due on **Monday, March 28**. Your assignment is to investigate past elections results and develop an informed prediction about the 2012 presidential election. The purpose of this paper is to learn how to analyze data in ways that may help you develop descriptive & hopefully, predictive models. I will grade the plausibility of your model, not its prediction. You are encouraged to read some literature on election forecasting (I've uploaded a few on Blackboard/WebCT) and delve into both national and state-level data.

On **Monday, May 2, 2011 by 4:00PM**, you are expected to turn in your **Final Research Paper** (20-25 pages) to my department mailbox. Your final research paper may be on any topic related to political parties that is interesting to you. You must, however, discuss your topic and your methodology with me sometime prior to April 4, 2011.

Class participation is expected. More importantly, class discussions are fun! Blackboard discussions will be conducted throughout the semester where you can register your opinion online. Both forms of participation will account for 15% of your grade.

LECTURE TOPICS & WEEKLY READINGS*

Week 1: Welcome

January 10 – Introduction & “Gerrymandering” video – the most partisan activity of 2011

Week 2: Holiday!

January 17 – NO CLASS – MLK, JR. HOLIDAY

Week 3: Introduction to Parties

January 24 – What Are Parties & Why Do They Exist?

- Read: Hershey, Chapters 1 & 2; “Controversy” Folder (on Blackboard/WebCT)
- *Note: This is a lot of reading (9 chpts. from 4 books!), so begin as soon as possible!

Week 4: The Early Republic

January 31 – The Framers, Factions & the First Parties

Read: Adkins, Chapters 1-8; Hershey, Chapter 7; “Jefferson” Folder (on Blackboard/WebCT)

Week 5: Democrats & Republicans in Antebellum America

February 7 – Jacksonian Democracy & the Parties of the 1850s & the Republicans

- Read: Adkins, Chapters 9-15; “Lincoln” Folder (on Blackboard/WebCT)

Week 6: The Machines & the Progressives

February 14 – Machine Politics & the Progressive Movement

- Read: Adkins, Chapters 16-28; “McKinley” Folder (on Blackboard/WebCT)

Week 7: The New Deal & Modern Parties (Organization & Coalitions)

February 21 – 1930s-1970s & Today’s Parties (Case study paper due)

- Read: Adkins, Chapters 29, 31, 33, 35-39; Hershey Chapters 3 & 4

-----SPRING BREAK-----

Week 8: Modern Parties & Elections (Rules & Reforms)

March 7 – Structures & More Electoral Reforms

- Read: Hershey, Chapters 9-11; Adkins, Chapters 40, 42, 43, 45, 46, 48-50; and “Pro/Con Electoral College” Folder (on Blackboard/WebCT)

Week 9: Modern Parties & Elections (Campaign Finance & Media Strategy)

March 14 – Money & Media – Guest Speaker: John Marcus (political media consultant)

- Read: Hershey, Chapter 12; Adkins, Chapters 41 & 47; Green & Coffey, Chapters 11 & 13

Week 10: Voters, Parties & Activists in the Electorate

March 21 – Party Identification & Voting

- Read: Hershey, Chapter 5, 6 & 8; Green & Coffey, Chapters 2-4 & 6

Week 11: Gender, Class, Race & Genes (!) in Elections

March 28 – Social constructions, biological inclinations & voting (Data analysis paper due)

- Read: “Voter Behaviors” Folder (on Blackboard/WebCT)

Week 12: Parties in Government – Congress

April 4 – Parties in Congress & Partisan redistricting – remember the movie!

- Read: Hershey, Chapter 13; Green & Coffey, Chapters 19 & 20; “Pro-Con Partisan Redistricting” Folder (on Blackboard/WebCT)

Week 13: Parties in Government – Presidency & the Courts

April 11 – Parties and the Presidency & the Courts

- Read: Hershey, Chapter 14; Green & Coffey, Chapters 14 & 18; “Bush & Polarization” Folder (on Blackboard/WebCT)

Week 14: Responsible Parties or Polarization?

April 18 – What is polarization & How far does it reach?

- Read: Hershey, Chapter 15; “Towards De-Polarization” Folder (on Blackboard/WebCT)

Week 15: NO CLASS – EASTER RECESS

Week 16:

Monday, May 2, 2010 – FINAL RESEARCH PAPER DUE – in my department mailbox by 4:00PM.

*Topics are subject to change with notice.