

POSC-3215: AMERICAN POLITICAL PARTIES

Fall 2022

Instructor: Boris Heersink

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Faber Hall 667

Office Hours: Monday and Thursday, 12:30 – 2:30 PM and by appointment

Class Location and Time:

Dealy Hall 101

Monday and Thursday, 8:30 – 9:45 AM

Aim of the Course: Despite a long history of skepticism and outright hostility to the concept of factionalism from both voters and major political thinkers in the U.S. across most of American history, political parties have dominated the political process from the late 18th century until the current day. While there have been dramatic changes in the American party system, it is nearly impossible to envision what the American political system would look like without political parties. However, while parties are omnipresent, political scientists have struggled to identify how they affect political outcomes. Indeed, there remain major debates within the field about how to even define what parties actually are. The aim of this course is to provide you with a thorough understanding of the history of American political parties, and the main theories within political science about the role they play in the political system and the way they influence political outcomes. To achieve these goals, we will be reading a number of different perspectives from political scientists who have debated these issues. When reading these works, and when discussing them in class, it is important to keep in mind that these authors are proposing answers to puzzles but, that in doing so, they may get it wrong. You will be expected to have a thorough understanding of the basic arguments put forward by the authors, but you should also be critical of those arguments.

Covid Policies

Note: As the Covid pandemic continues and new strains emerge, the university and/or the instructor may update any of the policies outlined below. Make sure you stay up to date on any changes in Covid policies and, if you are at all unsure, please feel free to ask!

This class is taught in-person. Currently, the university requires all students and staff to provide evidence of full vaccination against Covid, including a booster shot. Additionally, while the university does not mandate masks, it does recommend them and allows instructors to require them in their classes. For the time being, **I require mask usage** – though I am open to discuss this as the semester continues.

Under these current rules, in class you are not allowed to take off your mask except to briefly drink something. If you remove your mask for a longer period of time, I will ask you to leave class. I strongly recommend [using \(K\)N95 masks](#) as [there is plenty of evidence](#) that these masks are much more effective than cloth or general surgical masks in slowing the spread of Covid.

If during the semester you find yourself experiencing symptoms of a possible Covid infection, or if you were in close contact with someone who has Covid, **you should not come to class**. You will not be penalized in any way for missing class for health reasons (Covid or otherwise!). If you find yourself symptomatic or exposed, you should contact Fordham student health services (health@fordham.edu or at 718-817-4160) and get tested. Just let me know you will be absent through email. I am happy to meet with you on Zoom to discuss any material you missed in class.

The pandemic has thus far affected all of us in some way, though the extent to which it has is likely to be different for each of us. However, at this point we are all, if nothing else, tired, frustrated, and facing all types of motivational issues. This is completely understandable. And, of course, some of us may be dealing with much more serious possible issues caused by Covid-19 – including its effect on our own (long and short term) physical and mental health, that of our family and other loved ones, as well as any economic struggles caused by the pandemic. If you are facing issues limiting your ability to participate and perform fully in this course, please do not hesitate to reach out so we can work on solving those problems.

Basic Rules

In-Class: You are expected to be present in class every session, and to participate in Q&A during class. You should make sure that you come to class having read all the readings for each day, and you should participate actively in our conversation about those readings.

To create an atmosphere in which all students feel comfortable participating and have the ability to achieve their full potential, civility during the discussions is vital. During our conversations we will inevitably come to talk about day-to-day politics, and it is very much possible that you will find yourself disagreeing strongly with points put forward by your fellow students (and, they with you!). While you should absolutely feel free to challenge other students, it is crucial that you should do so in a respectful way (and, of course, you can expect the same of your fellow students towards you).

Absences: If for some reason you cannot be present for understandable reasons (illness, personal circumstances clearly beyond your control, etc.) you should contact me as soon as you can (if at all possible, before the start of class). In line with Fordham's attendance policy you should report any excused absences with documentation by filling out the [Excused Absence Form](#). I keep attendance and unexcused absences result in a lowering of your participation grade. Note that Fordham's official attendance policy is that for courses that meet twice a week it is not allowed to have more than four absences in total across the course – while having more than four unexcused absences does not automatically result in failing this course, excessive absences make it very difficult to receive a passing grade.

Office Hours

If you have any questions or want to chat about the course, you can come to my office hours on **Monday between 12:30 and 2:30 PM** (unless otherwise noted) or email me to set up a Zoom meeting. My office is in 667 Faber Hall. If you want to meet in person, please make sure you wear a mask at all times while you are in the political science department and in my office. You can also e-mail me with any questions or concerns – I try to respond to every e-mail within 24 hours. Office hours do not require an appointment so if you want to chat feel free to drop by. Also, you should not feel like you can only stop by if you have really specific questions: it's fine to stop by if you want to talk about the course more broadly.

Grade

Components: Your grade is based on participation in class (15%), a midterm (25%), a final (30%) and a research proposal (30%).

The midterm and final will both follow the same format. The questions will be open ended essay questions regarding the readings and material discussed in class. The midterm will cover all the material dealt with up until then; the final covers all material from the course but will predominantly focus on the material covered after the midterm. The midterm will be a take-home exam on **October 13**. The final will be a take-home exam and available **at the assigned time for this course during finals week**.

The research proposal will exist of a 6-page single-spaced paper engaging a specific puzzle regarding political parties in relation to the readings you will read in this course. On **November 21**, we will use our class to talk about how to design a research project in political science. We will use part of this time for you to brainstorm and design a research question for the proposal paper. You will share a draft of your research proposal with other students and discuss it in class on **December 5**. The paper itself must be submitted on **December 9** as a Word or PDF file on **Blackboard**. Specific guidelines regarding the components of the research design will be distributed after the first midterm. However, while doing the readings keep your eye open for a topic you might be interested expanding on for this assignment.

For participation, you are expected to actively engage in class discussion during each session. Your physical presence in class is a necessary but insufficient element of participation. That is, if you miss class for unexcused reasons you are not adding to your participation grade. However, being present but not participating does not add much either. The best way to participate is to make sure you have done the readings ahead of class and to answer questions raised by the instructor or other students. Raising your own questions also counts as participation.

Grading Scale and Calculation of Final Course Grade: For the midterm and final exams you can earn up to 100 points. Those points subsequently are converted to a letter grade which builds towards your final course grade in line with the scale below. For your research paper

and participation you will receive a single letter grade which follows the point value outlined below.

Exam Points	Letter Grade	Points toward Final Grade
100-93	A	4.0
92-90	A-	3.7
89-87	B+	3.3
86-83	B	3.0
82-80	B-	2.7
79-77	C+	2.3
76-73	C	2.0
72-70	C-	1.7
69-60	D	1.0
59 and below	F	0.0

Your final grade is based on a weighted average of each of the points earned based on the percentages outlined above. For example, if you received a B+ for your midterm, that earns you $3.3 * 0.25 = 0.825$ points towards your final grade. Similarly, an A- for participation earns you $3.7 * 0.15 = 0.555$ points towards your final grade. Your final letter grade is based on the following scale:

Total Earned Final Grade Points	Final Letter Grade
4.0 – 3.84	A
3.83 – 3.50	A-
3.49 – 3.17	B+
3.16 – 2.84	B
2.83 – 2.50	B-
2.49 – 2.17	C+
2.16 – 1.84	C
1.83 – 1.34	C-
1.34 – 1.0	D
0.99 and below	F

Grade Complaints: I will grade your performance in this course in comparison to your fellow students as well as predetermined expectations. This means that the grade you earn should be a fair representation of how you have performed in comparison both to my general expectations of all participants, as well as your fellow classmates' work in this course.

It is possible that you may be unhappy with a grade, and I am always willing to discuss your progress during the course to help you improve. If you believe the grade you received is an **incorrect** assessment of the quality of the work you produced, you can challenge your grade. If you want to do so, please email me to set up an appointment and send me a copy of your work and a written description explaining in detail why you believe your grade does not accurately represent the quality of the work you submitted. We will subsequently discuss your work and I will assess whether I believe your grade should be changed.

Before you contact me about your grade(s), consider the following things.

First, the goal of a grade reassessment is to produce a grade that is a fair representation of your performance: this means that any errors that lowered your grade will be corrected, but any potential errors that *increased* it will also be adjusted. A re-grading process can thus result in a higher grade, the exact same grade, or a lower grade than what you received through the original grading process.

Second, a grade challenge means you must make a **specific argument** about why you think the grading does not reflect the **quality** of your work. It is not enough to state that you are confused by your grade, or that you feel that it does not reflect the amount of time and effort you put into the course. I understand that both of those feelings can be very frustrating. But they are not arguments for why the grade is not correct, and I will not entertain grading challenges based solely on these arguments.

Third, as you are assessing your work in comparison to the answer keys or my comments, make sure you do not just look at the things you did right. You also have to incorporate those things you missed or got wrong. It is quite common for students who received, for example, an A- to list the things they got right. But those things are what earned you the A-. The question is whether there were things that reasonably cost you enough points to keep you below an A.

Fourth, students sometimes try to 'challenge' their grade through a roundabout way – effectively having the instructor defend why they graded the work the way they did. Often, those students do not provide arguments for why they disagree with the grade. If you are unsure what you did wrong and you'd like me to clarify, I am of course always happy to do so. But I will not engage the 'roundabout grade challenge': if you think the grade is incorrect, you have to identify what it is you think I did wrong and engage with me on that basis. If you cannot articulate why you think the grade is wrong, then that might just mean it is in fact a correct assessment of your performance.

Finally, grades are not a negotiation. They should reflect the quality of the work you produced. If you believe I made a mistake, you should feel free to challenge the grade. But the correct use of this process is not to look at your different grades at the end of the semester and to try to up one, or multiple, grade(s) with the sole goal of collecting enough points to increase your final letter grade. If you want to ensure you get the highest grade possible I would advise you to spend your time reaching out to me with questions *before* the exams and paper deadline, and not on trying to haggle about a grade afterwards.

Plagiarism and Other Violations of Code of Conduct: All assignments in this course fall under Fordham University's code of conduct. Any violation (including, but not limited to, cheating on exams, and plagiarism) will result in the student being held accountable to the full extent of university guidelines. Note that this includes self-plagiarism – that is, taking (parts of) assignments you did for other courses and resubmitting them for this course. While self-plagiarism might seem like an innocent act, it means you did not do original work as required

for this course. It too can lead to negative consequences, including failing this course, suspension, or even expulsion from the university. If you aren't sure whether what you are doing is right or not, check in with the writing center or with me!

Notes

Fordham provides me with a class list that includes your legal name. If you prefer to be addressed by an alternate name and/or gender pronoun, please do not hesitate to let me know! You can do so in class, by email, or during an office hour appointment – whichever you are comfortable with. Also, if during the semester I mispronounce your name or use an incorrect gender pronoun please do correct me – I want to get these things right.

Fordham's Writing Center (in Walsh Library at Rose Hill and in Quinn Library at Lincoln Center) provides individualized assistance to students for writing assignments. You can make an appointment – free of charge! – to meet with someone who will read your paper and discuss it in detail with you. I strongly recommend using this system. You can sign up for an appointment at https://www.fordham.edu/info/20126/writing_center.

As a faculty member, I am – by law – a mandatory reporter and I am required to contact and provide information to Public Safety, the Dean of Students, or Fordham's Title IX Coordinator if I am provided with any information indicating that a Fordham student has been sexually harassed (verbally or physically), sexually assaulted, stalked, had domestic violence or dating violence occur in a relationship, or been a victim / survivor of any behavior that is prohibited by Fordham's Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedures. Once reported, Fordham will seek to support any student and make efforts to stop the negative behavior, prevent it from recurring, and remedy its effects. It is important for you to be aware that there are three confidential places on campus where you can seek support or guidance from Fordham staff members who are **not** mandatory reporters: clinical counselors in Counseling & Psychological Services, pastoral counselors in Campus Ministry, and medical service providers in University Health Services. You can read more about this in the Student CARE brochure or visit www.fordham.edu/care or www.fordham.edu/sexualmisconduct for more information.

If you or someone you know is struggling with emotional or mental health concerns, and/or gender, sexual, or domestic violence, Fordham's Counseling and Psychological Services (CPS) can provide (free) assistance. The Rose Hill office of CPS is open Monday through Friday and can be reached by phone at 718-817-3725. If you, or a student you know, is experiencing a mental health crisis or emergency that requires immediate attention contact Fordham's office of Public Safety at Rose Hill at 718-817-2222 (available 24/7). If you prefer to access mental health services outside of Fordham, New York City provides free mental health support through NYC Well (<https://nycwell.cityofnewyork.us/en/>).

Course Materials

Nearly all readings for this course will be made available online through Blackboard. The only exception concerns:

Marjorie Randon Hershey, *Party Politics in America* (Boston: Pearson, 2021, 18th edition).

Note that the Fordham bookstore price matches textbooks with Amazon and Barnes and Noble on rentals and purchases. Previous editions are also available on Amazon and at other online retailers at a considerably lower rate. I expect the differences between the 18th edition and recent other editions to be minor, so it might be cheaper to buy one of the (recent) other editions instead.

Course Syllabus

Thursday, September 1

Topic: Introduction to Political Science and the Study of Political Parties

Readings:

Amelia Hoover Green, "How to Read Political Science: A Guide in Four Steps."

Monday, September 5

Topic: No class due to Labor Day

Readings: No readings.

Wednesday, September 7

Note: we have class on Wednesday this week

Topic: Why Do We Have Parties?

Readings:

Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, Chapter 1.

John Aldrich, *Why Parties? A Second Look* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), Chapters 1 and 3.

Thursday, September 8

Topic: Parties and History: Realignment Theory I

Readings:

Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, Chapter 7.

Monday, September 12

Topic: Parties and History – Realignment Theory II

Readings:

David Mayhew, *Electoral Realignments: A Critique of an American Genre* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), Chapters 2 and 4.

Thursday, September 15

Topic: No class due to conference travel

Readings: No readings.

Monday, September 19

Topic: Parties and History – Party Machines in the Late 19th Century

Readings:

Scott C. James, “Patronage Regimes and American Party Development from ‘the Age of Jackson’ to the Progressive Era,” *British Journal of Political Science* vol. 36, no. 1 (2006) 39-60.

Thursday, September 22

Topic: Parties and History – Towards a Polarized Party System

Readings:

Sam Rosenfeld, *The Polarizers: Postwar Architects of Our Partisan Era* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2018) Chapters 1 and 3.

[“The Partisan Divide on Political Values Grows Even Wider,”](#) *Pew Research Center* (October 5, 2017).

Monday, September 26

Topic: Parties in Congress I

Readings:

Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, Chapter 13.

Gary W. Cox and Mathew D. McCubbins, *Legislative Leviathan: Party Government in the House* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993 – 2nd edition, 2007) Chapters 5 and 7.

Thursday, September 29

Topic: Parties in Congress II

Readings:

Gary W. Cox and Mathew D. McCubbins, *Setting the Agenda: Responsible Party Government in the U.S. House of Representatives* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005) Chapters 1 and 2.

Monday, October 3

Topic: Party Brands

Jeffrey D. Grynviski, *Partisan Bonds: Political Reputations and Legislative Accountability* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), Chapter 2.

Thursday, October 6

Topic: Presidents and Parties

Readings:

Daniel J. Galvin, *Presidential Party Building: Dwight D. Eisenhower to George W. Bush* (Princeton; Princeton University Press, 2010), Chapter 1.

Boris Heersink, "Trump and the Party-in-Organization: Presidential Control of National Party Organizations," *The Journal of Politics* vol. 80, no. 4 (2018) 1474-1482.

Monday, October 10

Topic: No class due to Indigenous People's Day / Columbus Day

Readings:

No readings.

Thursday, October 13

Topic: **Take-home midterm exam**

Readings:

No readings.

Monday, October 17

Topic: Does the Party Decide?

Readings:

Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, Chapter 10.

Marty Cohen, David Karol, Hans Noel, and John Zaller, *The Party Decides: Presidential Nominations Before and After Reform* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2008) Chapters 1 and 7.

Thursday, October 20

Topic: Parties as (Ideological) Coalitions

Readings:

Kathleen Bawn, Martin Cohen, David Karol, Seth Masket, Hans Noel, and John Zaller, "A Theory of Political Parties: Groups, Policy Demands, and Nominations in American Politics," *Perspectives on Politics*, vol. 10, no. 3 (2012) 571-597.

Monday, October 24

Topic: Parties and Policy Change

Readings:

David Karol, *Party Position Change in American Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), Chapters 1 and 2.

Thursday, October 27

Topic: Parties in the Electorate

Readings:

Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, Chapters 6 and 8.

Monday, October 31

Topic: Intra-Party Coalition Politics: Civil Rights I

Readings:

Eric Schickler, *Racial Realignment: The Transformation of American Liberalism, 1932-1965* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016), Chapters 2 and 7.

Thursday, November 3

Topic: Intra-Party Coalition Politics: Civil Rights II

Readings:

Paul Frymer, *Uneasy Alliances: Race and Party Competition in America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), Chapters 2 and 4.

Leah Wright Rigueur, *The Loneliness of the Black Republican* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University press, 2015), Chapter 7.

Monday, November 7

Topic: Partisanship and Gender: The Gender Gap in American Politics

Readings:

Susan J. Carroll, "Voting Choices: The Significance of Women Voters and the Gender Gap," in Susan J. Carroll and Richard L. Fox, *Gender and Elections: Shaping the Future of American Politics* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2018, 4th edition) 78-115.

Jane J. Mansbridge, *Why We Lost the ERA* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1986) Chapter 9.

Thursday, November 10

Topic: Partisanship and Religion: The Religious Right

Readings:

Christopher Baylor, *First to the Party: The Group Origins of Political Transformation* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018) Chapters 8 and 9.

Monday, November 14

Topic: Quantitative methods in political science research

Readings:

Boris Heersink and Jeffery A. Jenkins, "Whiteness and the Emergence of the Republican Party in the Early Twentieth-Century South," *Studies in American Political Development* vol. 34, no. 1 (2020) 71-90.

Thursday, November 17

Topic: Experimental methods in political science research

Readings:

Camille D. Burge, Julian J. Wamble, and Chryl N. Laird, "Missing the Mark? An Exploration of Targeted Campaign Advertising Effect on Black Political Engagement," *Politics, Groups, and Identities* vol. 8, no. 2 (2020) 423-438.

Monday, November 21

Topic: Research Methodology in Political Science

Readings:

Lisa A. Baglione, *Writing a Research Paper in Political Science: A Practical Guide to Inquiry, Structure, and Methods* (Sage, 2016) Chapter 7.

Thursday, November 24

Topic: No class due to Thanksgiving

Readings:

No readings.

Monday, November 28

Topic: National Party Organizations – The DNC and RNC

Readings:

Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, Chapter 4.

Boris Heersink, "Party Brands and the Democratic and Republican National Committees, 1952-1976," *Studies in American Political Development*, vol. 32, no. 1 (2018) 79-102.

Boris Heersink, "Examining Democratic and Republican National Committee Party Branding Activity, 1953-2012," *Perspectives on Politics* (Forthcoming).

Thursday, December 1

Topic: Can We Get Rid of Parties? Evidence from State Politics

Readings:

Seth Masket, *The Inevitable Party: Why Attempts to Kill the Party System Fail and How they Weaken Democracy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), Chapters 1, 3, and 8.

Monday, December 5

Topic: Research Proposal Workshop

Assignment: Prepare draft of your research proposal and share with group members *before* class.

Readings:

No readings.

Thursday, December 8

Topic: Q&A / Catch-up Day

Readings:

No readings.