

**Political Science 360**  
**American Political Parties**  
**Spring 2010**

Professor David Darmofal  
E-mail: darmofal@mailbox.sc.edu

Office: 316 Gambrell Hall  
Office Phone: (803) 777-5440  
Office Hours: M 4-5, W 10-11  
and by appointment

Class Meetings:  
MW 2:30 – 3:45 PM, 152 Gambrell

**Course Overview:**

Americans have long been skeptical of political parties, raising concerns about corruption among party leaders and excessive party loyalties among citizens that seem to limit responsiveness and accountability in American politics. Though these concerns are often legitimate, political parties are, to paraphrase a leading political scientist, necessary for democracy. In this course we will examine the functions that political parties perform in American politics. We will also examine the weaknesses that limit parties' effectiveness in fulfilling these functions.

The course will focus on political parties in three of the central roles they play in American politics. In the first part of the course, we will examine parties as organizations. In this part of the course, we will examine the structures that parties create to mobilize support among voters. Next, we will examine parties in elections. Here we will examine how citizens' party loyalties are formed, how these loyalties shape voting behavior, and whether these loyalties are on the decline. In the final part of the course, we will examine political parties in government. Here, we will look at how parties enact policies in a separated powers system that was explicitly designed to limit their effectiveness. By the end of the semester, students should be able to identify both how these roles have developed over the course of American political development and how they interact with each other as parties compete for citizens' support and seek to enact public policies.

**Course Objectives:**

By the end of the semester, students should be able to:

- Identify and contrast the different dimensions of party activity
- Identify and explain how and why political parties have changed over the course of American history
- Compare and contrast the central arguments and evidence in the current debate over the decline and resurgence of political parties
- Identify and contrast differing conceptions of partisan identification
- Identify the central features of the American two-party system

## **Textbooks:**

There is one required textbook that is available at the campus bookstores:

Hershey, Marjorie Randon. 2009. *Party Politics in America*, 13<sup>th</sup> Edition. New York, NY: Longman.

There are also three recommended textbooks, also available at the campus bookstores:

Hetherington, Marc J., and William J. Keefe. 2007. *Parties, Politics, and Public Policy in America*, 10<sup>th</sup> Ed. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.

Maisel, L. Sandy, and Mark D. Brewer. 2008. *Parties and Elections in America: The Electoral Process*, 5<sup>th</sup> Ed. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.

Reichley, A. James. 2000. *The Life of the Parties: A History of American Political Parties*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.

## **Course Grades and Grading:**

Course grades will be determined by student performance on three non-cumulative exams during the semester. There will be two non-cumulative midterm exams and one non-cumulative final exam (dates of each exam are noted on the syllabus). The two midterm exams will each count for 30% of the student's grade in the course, while the final exam will count for 40%. Makeup exams will only be offered in extreme circumstances (e.g., a documented death in the family or medical emergency). Verifiable proof of the emergency is required.

There will be one extra credit assignment allowed during the course. The extra credit assignment will consist of comparing and contrasting party platforms offered by American political parties. More information will be provided about the extra credit assignment during the semester. The maximum number of points awarded for the extra credit assignment will be two percentage points on the student's overall course grade.

Course grades will be based on the following grading scale:

A = 90 – 100	C+ = 77 – 79	D = 60 – 66
B+ = 87 – 89	C = 70 – 76	F = 59 and below
B = 80 – 86	D + = 67 – 69	

Course grades at the end of the semester will be rounded up a half point if they are at .5 or higher. Thus, an 89.5 will become a 90. There will be no other adjusting of grades or curving of grades. If you cannot accept this, you should not take this course.

## **Academic Honesty and Integrity:**

Students' work in this course is expected to be their own. The University's commitment to academic integrity is enshrined in the *Carolinian Creed* and is detailed in the *Rule of Academic Responsibility*. Information on violations of academic honesty and integrity and the University's

punishments for these violations can be found in the *Carolina Community Student Handbook* (Student Affairs Policy STAF 6.25). It is the student's responsibility to be aware of and adhere to the *Rule of Academic Responsibility*, which can be found online at <http://www.sa.sc.edu/carolinacommunity/housing.htm>.

### **Disabilities Issues:**

Students with disabilities should contact me during the first week of the semester about their needs and any assistance or arrangements that may be necessary. Students with disabilities should also contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 777-6742 to learn about the many programs and services that the University provides.

### **COURSE SCHEDULE:**

In order to get the most out of the course, students should read the assigned material prior to the classes for which it is assigned.

## **PART 1: INTRODUCTION AND PARTY ORGANIZATIONS**

### **Week 1 (Week of January 11th): Course Introduction and Party Systems**

Hershey, Chapter 1

### **Week 2 (Week of January 18th): The American Two-Party System**

**MONDAY, JANUARY 18<sup>TH</sup>: DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR DAY -- NO CLASS**

Hershey, Ch. 2

### **Week 3 (Week of January 25<sup>th</sup>): State and Local Party Organizations**

Hershey, Ch. 3

### **Week 4 (Week of February 1<sup>st</sup>): The Parties' National Organizations**

Hershey, Ch. 4

### **Week 5 (Week of February 8<sup>th</sup>): Party Activists**

Hershey, Ch. 5

**WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 10<sup>TH</sup>: EXAM 1**

## **PART 2: PARTIES IN ELECTIONS**

### **Week 6 (Week of February 15<sup>th</sup>): Party Identification**

Hershey, Ch. 6

### **Week 7 (Week of February 22<sup>nd</sup>): Party Coalitions and Voter Turnout**

Hershey, Ch. 7-8

**Week 8 (Week of March 1<sup>st</sup>): Choosing Candidates**

Hershey, Ch. 9-10

**WEEK OF MARCH 8: SPRING BREAK – NO CLASSES**

**Week 9 (Week of March 15<sup>th</sup>): The General Election**

Hershey, Ch. 11

**Week 10 (Week of March 22<sup>nd</sup>): Financing the Campaigns**

Hershey, Ch. 12

**MONDAY, MARCH 29<sup>TH</sup>: EXAM 2**

**PART 3: PARTIES IN GOVERNMENT**

**Week 11 (Week of March 29<sup>th</sup>): Parties in Congress and State Legislatures**

Hershey, Ch. 13

**Week 12 (Week of April 5<sup>th</sup>): The Party in the Executive and the Courts**

Hershey, Ch. 14

**Week 13 (Week of April 12<sup>th</sup>): Semi-Responsible Parties**

Hershey, Ch. 15

**Week 14 (Week of April 19<sup>th</sup>): The Place of Parties in American Politics**

Hershey, Ch. 16

**Week 15 (Week of April 26<sup>th</sup>): Course Wrap-Up**

Monday (April 27<sup>th</sup>)

**Final Examination  
Wednesday, May 5  
2:00-5:00 p.m.  
152 Gambrell Hall**