1 Course Description

In *Federalist #10* James Madison warned about the destructive influence of political faction, suggesting that organized political interests posed a threat to capture governmental power and use it for non-democratic purposes. In his warning we see the very roots of Americans’ ambivalence toward and disdain for political parties. Despite the notable weaknesses of American parties compared to those in other democracies, it is common to hear them condemned for a variety of sins such as restricting political choice, shutting minority interests out of government, and promoting narrow partisanship over national interest. Yet the parties have thrived—and continue to thrive—in a variety of institutional and historical settings. How can it be that the American parties permeate every aspect of our political lives even while we disdain their role in the political process? What is the secret of their continued success, both now and through time?

This course provides a foundation for addressing these questions by describing, explaining, and evaluating American political parties. We will confront the following issues: What is a political party and what does it do? How has the role of the parties changed through time? Why are there only two parties in America? Why does it seem that parties are more interested in fighting with each other than compromising on policy? What are the factors that influence how parties behave?

2 Course Objectives

1. To improve understanding of what a political party is and what it does in American politics.

2. To familiarize students with contemporary issues about parties, including presidential nominations, partisan polarization in the electorate, and partisan bickering in the legislature.
3. To learn analytic skills, such as conceptual thinking and the use of research for drawing conclusions.

3 Course Requirements and Graded Evaluation

3.1 Class Participation

Learning is an active exercise and you will not succeed in this class unless you participate frequently and effectively. This class is primarily run as a seminar in which students summarize and react to assigned material. Toward that end, I will grade both your attendance and participation in this class. Attendance will be taken randomly throughout the semester and points will be assigned on a percentage basis. Participation is my subjective assessment of your citizenship in the class. I will assign 100 course points on the basis of attendance and another 100 for participation, making this fully 20% of your final course grade.

3.2 Research Summaries

In addition to a basic text, there are nine journal article assigned as reading this semester. Although you must do all of the reading, you are required to write summaries for two of these articles. Each summary must be posted on the class Desire2Learn page no later than 8:00 p.m. the day before we discuss it in class. Each summary is worth 50 points toward your final grade; in all, these assignments will contribute 10% to your final grade in the class. Each summary paper should be written in essay form and answer the following questions:

1. What is the main contribution of the reading? What does it claim is its unique contribution to knowledge?
2. What theoretical argument is being made?
3. What hypotheses are offered for empirical analysis?
4. What are the data and measures used in the paper?
5. What are the main findings?
6. What are the implications of the theory and results for our understanding of political behavior?
7. What are your criticisms of the research?

3.3 Exams

You will be administered two essay exams during the semester, one at the midterm and one during finals week. The midterm exam will cover material from the first three units and the final exam will be comprehensive. Each exam contribute 150 points toward the final class grade, accounting for a total of 30% towards your final grade.
3.4 Research Paper & Presentation

The final requirement for this class is a fifteen to twenty page original research paper. The goal of your paper is to research one of the following topics, develop a thesis about the role of political parties, and to test that thesis with a close reading of relevant research materials. Appropriate resources include government documents (e.g., committee hearings or laws) and in depth newspaper reports. Please note: this is not just a summary of previous research conducted by political scientists or pundits; it must be based on original research and analysis. You may write your paper on one of two topics:

1. Pick a piece of legislation that was passed out of the last session of the House of Representatives (it need not have been signed into law by the President). Explain how the legislation changed since being introduced as a bill, how it proceeded through the legislative process, and eventually how it became passed. The paper needs to focus on whether party politics shaped the legislation and, if so, how.

2. Examine the role of party politics in the 2012 Senate elections. Research for each seat must examine the outcome of the candidate selection process, the history of elections in the state, the resources of each campaign, and the messages used in each race. Using that information for all of the races, the paper should explain the role of political parties in shaping the eventual results across all of the Senate elections.

To receive full credit on this assignment, you will be required to have at least one office appointment with the instructor, turn in an abstract and outline, turn in at least one full preliminary draft, a complete final version by April 25, and complete a class presentation. You will receive points for completing each of the preliminary steps. With the points for the preliminary steps includes, this paper and presentation accounts for 400 points—or, 40%—toward your final grade.

Papers will be graded on the depth of research, quality of analysis, and the clarity of writing. All students must turn in both a hard copy of the final paper and an electronic copy that will be checked on Turnitin.com for plagiarism.

3.5 Assignment Schedule

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<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Daily</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Summary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>March 7th</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>May 9th</td>
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<tr>
<td>Office Visit</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>February 12th - March 5th</td>
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<td>Paper Outline</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>March 19th</td>
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<td>Paper Draft</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>April 4th</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>April 25th - May 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
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<td>April 25th</td>
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3.6 Grading Scale

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<th>Score Range</th>
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<td>1000 to 900</td>
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<td>899 to 800</td>
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<td>699 to 600</td>
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<td>Below 600</td>
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4 Class Policies

4.1 Absences

You are expected to attend every class period. If you arrive after attendance is taken, you will be considered absent for the day. If you must miss class for some reason, you can receive an excused absence by contacting me in advance. I reserve the right to see documentation for your absence or to decide what constitutes a reasonable excuse. If you must miss class, you are responsible for finding out what you missed.

4.2 Missed Assignments

All assignments are due at the start of class on the date assigned unless the instructor indicates otherwise. Any assignment not turned in on time will lose half a letter grade for each day it is late. Any assignment more than 48 hours late will not be accepted. See “Problems and Emergencies” for the only exceptions to this policy.

4.3 Makeup Exams

There will be no make-up exams. If you miss an exam, you will receive a zero. If you are late to an exam, you must take it in the time that remains when you arrive. See “Problems and Emergencies” for the only exceptions to this rule.

4.4 Cheating and Academic Misconduct

Any student engaging in academic misconduct will receive an F in the course and reported to the Dean of Liberal Arts for further disciplinary action as outlined in the University Code of Student Conduct. If you have any questions about constitutes cheating, academic misconduct, or plagiarism, examine the university policy and/or ask the instructor prior to turning in any assignment. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with university policy.

4.5 Problems and Emergencies

If a problem or emergency arises that prevents you from attending an exam, turning in a paper, or coming to class, you should contact Professor McClurg as soon as possible. The best way to contact me is via email (mcclurg@siu.edu). If you do not hear back from me within a reasonable amount of time you may call me. Students contacting me prior to missing an assignment will receive greater leniency. Examples of excuses that do not qualify as problems and emergencies include, but are not limited to, the following: oversleeping, taking too much medication, being incarcerated, or having
You are welcome to clarify what I consider to be an acceptable excuse at any point in the semester.

4.6 Grading Policies and Standards

Graded material is returned as promptly as possible. When students receive an exam or assignment back and are dissatisfied with their grade, they must wait at least two days before asking for a review. To request such a review, the student must submit a single-spaced, one paragraph note explaining why the original grade is inappropriate. All assignments submitted for review can be graded up or down by the Professor.

4.7 Disability Policy

It is the policy of this university and professor to help disabled students succeed in the classroom. The student is responsible for notifying the professor and university of any special problems or needs as soon as possible. The professor and university is responsible for doing whatever they can within university policy to accommodate that student’s needs. It is in your best interest to notify the professor and university immediately so that arrangements can be made as soon as possible. More information is available from Disabled Student Services.

4.8 Contacting the Instructor

If you have questions, please send an email to the professor and he will reply as soon as possible (usually within 24 hours). If your question requires a lengthy explanation, please come to office hours or make an appointment. Whenever you contact me, it is important to be professional, meaning that written communication must be properly addressed and follow common rules of English grammar. If an email or note does not meet the following criteria, you will not receive a response.

1. It respectfully addresses the professor.
2. It clearly identifies the student and class.
3. It has capital letters, periods, and appropriate grammar.
4. It includes information on how we can best reply with an answer to your question.

4.9 Policy Acknowledgment

To ensure that everyone understands these policies and to help the class function smoothly, I will not record grades for any student who does not read and sign the policy acknowledgment attached to this syllabus. To be clear, you will receive no credit in this course for work turned in until I have your policy acknowledgment on record.

5 Following Political Developments in the Media

The study of American government cannot be divorced from current events. I strongly recommend you monitor politics regularly through the national media. Along with any local papers you read,
The New York Times and The Washington Post have high quality, free versions of their papers on-line. Additionally, you may want to examine news magazines for more in-depth coverage of particular issues and events. Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report and The National Journal are two particularly informative sources. Other options include Time, Newsweek, and the Economist.

6 Reading Assignments

Because this class will be run as a seminar, it is crucial that you obtain all of the assignment materials and read them carefully. Most of the assigned work will come from a single book, though you will be required to read the occasional news report or journal article that is on the Desire2Learn page.


7 Course Schedule and Reading Assignments

7.1 Core Concepts

January 15. Course introduction
   No reading.

January 17. What do you know about parties?
   Find & read at least three newspaper articles that focus on contemporary American politics. These articles must be from the sources discussed in Section 5.

January 22. What is a political party?
   Hershey, Chapter 1

January 24. America as a two-party system
   Hershey, Chapter 2

January 29. Reading research in political science

January 31. Introduction to the research paper.
   Read the Assignment Sheet

7.2 Political Parties as Organizations

February 5. Local and state organization.
   Hershey, Chapter 3.

February 7. Party networks as a form of organization.

   Hershey, Chapter 4.
February 14. What drives party organization?

   Hershey, Chapter 5

February 21. The Tea Party

7.3 Political Parties in the Electorate

   Hershey, Chapter 6

February 28. What does it mean to be “independent?”

March 5. Party coalitions.
   Hershey, Chapter 7

March 7. Midterm Exam.


7.4 Political Parties in Elections

   *No reading*

   Hershey, Chapters 9 & 10.

March 26. General elections.
   Hershey, Chapter 11.

March 28. Campaign effects.

April 2. Campaign finance.
   Hershey, Chapter 12.
April 4. Parties and interest groups.
American Politics Research. 37(5):767-800.

7.5 Political Parties in Government

Hershey, Chapter 13.

April 11. Polarization.

Hershey, Chapter 14.

April 18. Political parties and representation.
Hershey, Chapter 15.

April 23. More on representation.

April 25. Presentations.

April 30. Presentations.

May 2. Presentations.

May 9. Final Exam. 10:10 a.m. - 12:10 p.m.
Policy Acknowledgment

I, ____________, (print your name), acknowledge that I have read and understand the following information about Political Science 319 “American Political Parties” with Professor McClurg. I understand that this information and these policies apply to me in the context of this course. I also understand that this syllabus represents a plan for the semester and that the instructor reserves the right to change the requirements, policies, and schedule of topics for the course as deemed necessary for instructional purposes.

___ Instructor Office Hours
___ Instructor Email
___ Course Requirements
___ Attendance Policy
___ Missed Assignment Policy
___ Make-Up Exam Policy
___ Problems / Emergency Policy
___ Grading Policy Standards
___ Disability Policy
___ Contacting the Instructor Policy
___ Reading Assignments

__________________________ (signature and date)