Course Objectives:

Since the Kennedy Administration, scholars, reporters and individuals who practice Political Science have been debating the role and even the strength of parties (Daniel Smith). Some have argued that since the times of Chicago and Richard Daley, when the Party controlled the electoral mechanisms, however, if that is the case; if parties are as weak and estranged, as many have argued, from the American consciousness as we hear, how can we explain the uptick in polarization amongst not only the people, but also amongst the Members of Congress (MCs)? Is it possible to digest and analyze the rise of the Tea Party Movement within the Republican Party without first understanding the foundations of the Party system itself? Parties have become as much a part of the fabric of government as they have become part of the beliefs and values system of American people. E.E. Schattschneider wrote “political parties created democracy, and...democracy is unthinkable save in terms of parties,” while this may seem to be wholly impossible, it may in fact drive the very fundamental ideas in the entrenched values of American society (1942, 1).

This seminar is designed to provide students with a scholarly overview and working knowledge of American Political Parties. During the semester we will explore: the foundations, conceptualizations, evolutions, relevance and roles of the political parties in American Democracy. We will also discuss the impact on institutions, participation and fluctuations of partisan identification amongst voters. During these discussions, we will attempt to formulate answers to some of the prevalent questions in American Political Science today: What is the role of Parties? How did Parties form, evolve and thrive in our system of Democracy? What impact do Parties have on the institutions of elections, government, public policy and voters? How do Parties function when there are factions within the Party structure? Do parties matter? These questions are merely the starting point to the semester long study of Political Parties.

Textbooks:


ISBN: 9780205251773
Grading:

Attendance and Participation: 10% of your grade

In-class Reading Quizzes: 10% of your grade

Paper Topic and Annotated Bibliography: 25% of your grade

Final Draft of your Paper: 55% of your grade

Work

The readings I have selected for this class, for the most part, lay out complex arguments about what parties are and how they function. Despite their complexity, they tend to be well written and, in many cases, quite entertaining. All this is to say that doing the reading for this course is absolutely essential. Really. We will be talking about the readings in great detail during class time, so doing the readings prior to class will greatly aid your ability to contribute to discussions. I will also have occasional in-class reading quizzes, so, seriously, do the reading.

Paper Topic & Annotated Bibliography (25% of final grade)

For this first assignment, you will be expected to write one to two paragraphs describing your proposed research topic and some questions that you hope to answer or arguments that you hope to make in your research. Note that your research topic needs to be related to the broad subject area being covered by your Research Group. Additionally, you will need to provide an annotated bibliography of your preliminary sources. At this point, you should have at least five academic sources (i.e. journal articles or books) that pertain to your research topic.*Note: The week after you submit your Paper Topic & Annotated Bibliography, I will be meeting with each of you to discuss your paper topics in greater depth.

Final Draft of Proposal (55% of final grade)

You will not be expected to collect and analyze data for this proposal, but you should have completed all of the components of the research up until that point. In general, your proposal should include an introduction, literature review, theory section, hypothesis section, a description of your data and data collection, a section outlining the methods that you will use to analyze your data, a conclusion section, and a list of works cited. After reading your proposal, someone should have a complete understanding of why your research is important, how it fits into the existing literature on the topic, and how you will carry out the research. We will be discussing all of these aspects of the research process throughout the semester and you will receive more specific guidelines for your final proposal in class.
EMAIL: david.smith2@tamucc.edu

1. Please consider email as official correspondence
2. Efforts will be made to respond to address your email within 24-48 hours. If you do not receive an email response within 48 hours, please send a follow-up email.
3. No email correspondence on weekends.
4. No email correspondence on the day before an exam or deadline.
5. Emails should be in regards to class business. It is NOT the place for summaries of lectures, discussions or readings.
6. PLEASE use the subject line in a way that indicates the content of the message. Please use professional language and include your full name, section number, and a complete inquiry in the body of the email. Unprofessional emails will result in a non-response.

General Course Policies and Exam Policies:

1. Make-ups (Examinations) – Make-up exams will be offered at the end of the semester. The make-up exam (for whatever reason) will be offered at the end of the semester during the window of time of the final exam. There are no other times that a make-up will be offered. There are no exceptions to this time. Make-up exams will only be offered for the first three exams. There is not a final exam make-up that will be offered.

2. Exam format – All exams can be a combination of the following types of material: essay, short answer, multiple choice and/or true/false. The quizzes will follow this same type of formatting.

3. Freedom of Speech – Feel free to raise your hand with a question or comment. Reducing confusion, providing clarification, or responding to student curiosity is an important part of the classroom process and will be undertaken to the extent that time and class size permit. In most cases, if you did not understand something, it is because I did not explain it clearly, so you will be doing your colleagues and yourself a service if you request a clarification.

4. Academic etiquette – Universities must maintain standards of academic etiquette in order to affect an atmosphere conducive to learning. You are expected to demonstrate courtesy to one another in and out of the classroom. Talking to one’s neighbor(s) during class lectures or general discussions, chronic lateness, leaving class before it has been dismissed, etc., is inherently disruptive and thus injurious to the rights of others to the opportunity to learn. As such, it is unacceptable in a university classroom. Please do not bring things to eat into the classroom, but drinks are okay. As a courtesy to others, take your trash with you when class is over. Students who are unable to abide by these rules of academic etiquette and normal civility will be removed from the class.
5. Academic Honor Code – Students are expected to uphold the Academic Honor Code published in the University Student Handbook. The Academic Honor Code is based on the premise that each student has the responsibility (1) to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity in the student’s own work, (2) to refuse to tolerate violations of academic integrity in the university community, and (3) to foster a high sense of integrity and social responsibility on the part of the university community. Violations of the Academic Honor Code will not be tolerated.

6. Academic Dishonesty, Cheating and Plagiarism – Academic dishonesty, cheating and plagiarism of any kind are unacceptable. There are no exceptions. Consequences for academic dishonesty, cheating and plagiarism include, but are not limited to: a failing grade for the assignment, a failing grade for the course, noncredit for the assignment, additional work and/or direct referral to university officials.

7. Dropping a Class – I hope no student needs to drop this course. However, events sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. April 7th is the last day to drop a course for the semester with an automatic grade of “W”.

8. Grade Appeals – As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures (available at http://academicaffairs.tamu.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C2.01_student_grade_appeal_procedure.pdf). For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, http://cla.tamu.edu/about/student-resources.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s Office.

9. Accommodations – The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Driftwood 101. If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.
10. Advising – The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. The Academic Advisor will set up a degree plan, which must be signed by the student, a faculty mentor, and the department chair. The College’s Academic Advising Center is located in Driftwood 203E, and can be reached at 825-3466.

11. Computer Usage and Cell Phones in the Classroom: Understandably, many students now use laptops to take notes in class. Please know that laptop usage is a privilege, not a right, and I will ban all computers in class if they become a distraction to others. If you must use a computer in class, please sit in the back 2 rows or the first row of the class. Do not use your computer for anything other than note taking. Use of computers to play games, Skype your friends, update your Facebook status, or for any other reason than note taking is strictly prohibited. If you are found doing these things, at the very least your computer will be closed and you will not be able to use it for the remainder of the class period. You may also be asked to leave the class. Additionally, cell phone use is prohibited. In fact, you should not have your cell phones out or visible during class. If you are waiting for an emergency phone call, please notify me before class. Otherwise, if you use your cell phone for any reason during class, you will be asked to leave and will be given a zero for any in-class assignments due that day.
Readings:

**Parties and Party Systems:**

Week 1: Introduction and What is a Political Party?
Hershey, Ch.1 – What are Political Parties? (pg 1-13)

Week 2: The History and Structure of the American Parties.
For Tuesday:
George Washington’s Farewell Address
Tom DeLay’s Farewell Address
Federalist 10
For Thursday:
Hershey, Ch.2 – The American Two-Party System
Hershey, Ch. 1 – What are Political Parties (pg 14-26)

Week 3-4: History and Structure (cont.) & Realignments
Hershey, Ch.7 – Party Coalitions and Party Change

**Parties as Organizations**

Week 5:
Hershey, Ch. 3 – State and Local Party Organizations
Hershey, Ch. 4 – National Party Organizations
Week 6:
Hershey, Ch. 5

*Literature Review Due by Friday at 5pm.*

*Parties in the Electorate*

Week 7:
Hershey, Ch.9&10 – Party Organizations and Candidate Nominations

Week 8:
Hershey, Ch.6 – Party Identification

*Parties in Government*

Week 9:
Hershey, Ch.15 – The Semi-Responsible Parties

Week 10:
Hershey, Ch.13 – Parties in Congress and State Legislatures

Week 11:
Hershey, Ch.14 – The Party in the Executive and the Courts

Week 12:
Hershey, Ch.16 – The Place of Parties in American Politics

Week 13: TBA

Week 14: TBA

Wrap-up and final paper workshop