



POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTIONS

POLS 125
University of Vermont
Fall 2017
MW 3:30-4:45 PM
Lafayette Hall, Room 100

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Office hours: MW 1:00-3:00 PM (and by appointment)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines U.S. national elections and political parties. Topics to be discussed (among others) include electoral realignments throughout history, voting for President and Congress, party competition, voter turnout, incumbency advantage, and the electoral foundations of divided party control of government.

The course has several objectives—

- 1) To introduce students to important literature in the field, developing familiarity with basic theories of party organization, election mechanics, and voting behavior;
- 2) To apply these concepts to recent electoral strategies in both presidential and congressional campaigns;
- 3) To assess the current state of American electoral politics by probing deeper questions surrounding electoral systems and policy response, democratic accountability, and collective responsibility for political outcomes.

REQUIRED READING

The following books are required and may be purchased at the college bookstore:

- Brian F. Schaffner, Politics, Parties and Elections in America, 7th edition. Cengage Learning (2011). ISBN: 049589916X
- Paul S. Herrnson, Congressional Elections: Campaigning at Home and in Washington, 7th edition. CQ Press (2016). ISBN: 9781483392608.

- Stephen J. Wayne, *The Road to the White House 2016*, 10th edition. Cengage Learning (2015). ISBN: 1285865200.

All other course reading is available online. Hyperlinks are provided on our class web page under the "Calendar" heading at:

http://www.uvm.edu/~dguber/POLS125/Fall_2017/

To view each article, direct your web browser to the URL above, use the menu to select "Calendar," then click the title any article. A new window will open, from which you can either print or read online.

In addition to these formal assignments, I also expect students to stay informed of political events throughout the semester. You should scan at least one major newspaper daily (such as *The New York Times* or *The Washington Post*) and follow at least one serious political blog (such as Five Thirty Eight, The Monkey Cage, or Real Clear Politics).

CLASS REQUIREMENTS

Our emphasis throughout the semester will be on critical thinking and the development of strong, analytical writing skills. Graded assignments are designed to evaluate your growth in these areas. Assignments are also designed to give you many opportunities, using different skills, to build a strong grade in this course.

- 1) A large part of your final grade (30%) will be determined by a take-home paper due at the end of term. This work must be submitted no later than Thursday, December 14 at 1:30 PM.
- 2) Two essay-based exams will be administered in class, each worth 30% of your final grade. The dates for these are Wednesday, October 11 and Monday, December 4.
- 3) Finally, your active participation and attendance is essential to the effectiveness of this class. It will account for the remaining 10% of your grade.

The following rules regarding assigned work are important. Please read this syllabus *carefully* before deciding to enroll in class. All students are expected to read, understand, and abide by these policies:

In fairness to others, students are *not* permitted to do "extra credit," either to compensate for a poor grade or a missed class. Since a total of four grades cumulate to determine your final grade (and no one assignment dominates), there are plenty of opportunities to improve your standing.

If a student misses an exam for reasons that are both serious and outside of their control, they may make up that work, but only on a set day and time at the end of the semester. During the Fall 2017 term, make-up work is scheduled for Wednesday, December 6 from 1:00-3:00 PM. Please note that makeup exams are administered at my discretion and may use a different format than that described above.

Due dates on final papers are set by the Registrar's Office at the beginning of the term and *will not* be rescheduled, except under the conditions described in the course catalog. Written documentation of need must be provided.

Please note that forgetting about the time and place of an exam is NOT an adequate excuse for missing it!

GRADING STANDARDS

The grades I assign are based on the following criteria:

92-100	A	Excellent (A range): Grades in the "A" range are reserved for work that is superior in quality. "A" papers are lively, interesting, and intellectually sophisticated. The writer develops a clear and creative thesis, and supports their argument with solid and persuasive evidence. The paper itself is polished and beautifully written, free of grammatical and typographical errors. Above all, "A" papers reflect originality. The writer's own voice and logic are present on the page.
90-91	A-	
88-89	B+	Good (B range): Grades in the "B" range reflect work that is good to very good in quality. The paper completes all of the requirements of the assignment at hand. It may have minor errors and flaws, but the foundation of the work is solid, clear, and reasonably well-organized. "B" papers address topics in a thoughtful way, but offer less insight and originality than "A" papers.
82-87	B	
80-81	B-	
78-79	C+	Fair (C range): A "C" paper represents work that is satisfactory. The writer offers a thesis, but it is usually too broad, or too vague. The paper tends to make assertions without offering specific examples or supporting evidence from class lectures, discussions, and reading assignments. The overall impression of the paper is that of a rough draft. More effort at revision is encouraged and spelling and grammatical errors often require correction.
72-77	C	
70-71	C-	
68-69	D+	Poor (D range): A "D" paper is an unsatisfactory paper. It is sloppy, incoherent and poorly written, marred by mechanical faults (e.g., errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling), and/or factual errors. The writer has difficulty developing an idea, and holding a paragraph together. The thesis of the paper—that is, what the paper is arguing—is usually absent or incomplete.
62-67	D	
60-61	D-	
≤ 59	F	Failing (F): A failing grade is given for work that is exceedingly poor, cannot be understood, or has little relevance to the course.
0		No Credit (O): A grade of "zero" is given for any work that is not completed.

CLASS ATTENDANCE

Attendance accounts for 10% of your final grade in this class. It is recorded by your signature on the attendance sheets passed around in class each day. All students receive two excused absences to cover minor illnesses and family emergencies, but 10 points will be

deducted from your attendance grade for every class you miss after the first two. In other words, if you miss class frequently it is possible for your score to fall into negative numbers.

Please note that you may NOT use excused absences for frivolous events (e.g., oversleeping, skiing, a shopping trip to Montreal, etc.) and then request more later when serious circumstances develop.

You need also to be aware of the following:

- You are solely responsible for making sure you sign the attendance sheet before leaving class. If you do not, your name *cannot* be added at a later point.
- Any student involved in the forgery of signatures—either on the “giving” or “receiving” end—will receive an automatic zero for that entire portion of their grade, and will in addition be subject to the university’s policy on academic honesty.
- Beyond the two “free” absences described above, I *do not* grant excused absences unless the circumstances are exceptional, or you travel out of town as a member of a UVM club or sports team. If you are a member of a sports team, please be sure to forward a copy of your schedule to me in writing as soon as it becomes available, so that attendance sheets can be marked accordingly on those days when your team travels out of town.

In addition to daily attendance, you are also encouraged to participate actively in class discussions. Thoughtful and frequent participation in class is typically rewarded as a “tie-breaker,” in the event that your final score is close to the next higher grade.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students are expected to be familiar with the UVM “Code of Academic Integrity” and with its standards, in particular. For instance:

1. Students may not plagiarize. All ideas, arguments, and phrases, submitted without attribution to other sources must be the creative product of the student. Thus, all text passages taken from the works of other authors (published or unpublished) must be properly cited. The same applies to paraphrased text, opinions, data, examples, illustrations, and all other creative work. Violations of this standard constitute plagiarism.
2. Students may not fabricate. All experimental data, observations, interviews, statistical surveys, and other information collected and reported as part of academic work must be authentic. Any alteration, e.g., the removal of statistical outliers, must be clearly documented. Data must not be falsified in any way. Violations of this standard constitute fabrication.
3. Students may work cooperatively, but not collude. Students are encouraged to collaborate on academic work within any limits that may be prescribed by their instructors. Students may only provide, seek or accept information about any academic work that will be submitted for a grade, to or from another student, with the authorization of the instructor. Violations of this standard constitute collusion.

4. Students may not cheat. Students must adhere to the guidelines provided by their instructors for completing academic work. Students may not claim as their own work any portion of academic work that was completed by another student. Students may only use materials approved by their instructor when completing an assignment or exam. Students may not present the same (or substantially the same) work for more than one course or within the same course without obtaining approval from the instructor of each course. Students must adhere to all course reserves regulations. Students may not act dishonestly or convey information that the student knows or should know to be false, by actions such as lying, forging or altering any document or record in order to gain an unfair academic advantage. Violations of this standard constitute cheating.

Offenses against this code are deemed serious and insult the integrity of the entire academic community. Suspected violations will be reported immediately to the Center for Student Ethics & Standards for further investigation and may result in sanctions as serious as an automatic "F" in the course, or even expulsion from the university.

RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS

Students have the right to practice the religion of their choice. Please submit your documented religious holiday schedule for the semester to me by the end of the second full week of classes. Students who miss work for the purpose of religious observance will be permitted either a make-up exam or a penalty-free extension.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

In keeping with University policy, any student with a documented disability interested in utilizing accommodations should contact ACCESS, the office of Disability Services on campus. ACCESS works with students and faculty in an interactive process to explore reasonable and appropriate accommodations via an accommodation letter to faculty with recommended accommodations as early as possible each semester.

Location: A170 Living/Learning Center
Telephone: (802) 656-7753
E-mail: access@uvm.edu
Website: <http://www.uvm.edu/access>

CLASSROOM PROTOCOL

In coordination with the Department of Political Science, I have adopted the following protocol for classroom behavior:

1. Students are expected to attend and be prepared for *all* regularly scheduled classes.
2. Students are expected to arrive on time and remain in class until the class period ends. If a student knows in advance that he or she will need to leave early, he or she must notify the instructor before the class period begins.

3. Students are expected to treat faculty and fellow students with respect. For example, students must not disrupt class by leaving and reentering during class, must not distract class by making noise, and must be attentive to comments being made by the instructors and by peers.
4. Students must turn off and stow *all* electronic devices (e.g., laptops, iPads, cell phones, etc.) before class begins. Why don't I allow such devices for taking notes? This post from Buzzfeed says it all: "11 Things You're Actually Doing on Your Laptop During a Lecture" (<http://tinyurl.com/kqpdmbmh>).

Students who violate any of these rules may be subject to whatever *grade penalty* I deem appropriate.

ASKING FOR HELP

Be sure to ask questions whenever you need to. Here is how:

- I am generally available to answer quick questions both before and after class.
- I hold office hours on a first-come, first-serve basis every Monday and Wednesday from 1:00-3:00 PM. If those hours are not compatible with your schedule, please do not hesitate to ask for an appointment. My office is located on the 5th floor of Old Mill, room 519.
- While you can reach me by telephone at (802) 656-4062, e-mail is generally faster. I check e-mail on a regular basis, but please understand that I may not be able to respond immediately to messages sent in the evening or on weekends. My e-mail address is: Deborah.Guber@uvm.edu

CLASS CALENDAR

Note: All reading assignments marked [online] can be found on the POLS 125 website under the heading "Calendar."

I. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Monday, August 28: *How Did We Get Here?*

Jonathan Rauch, "How American Politics Went Insane," [The Atlantic](#) (July/August 2016) [online].

II. POLITICAL PARTIES IN THEORY AND PRACTICE

Wednesday, August 30: *The American Two-Party System*

Brian F. Schaffner, [Politics, Parties and Elections in America](#) (2011): Preface and Chapter 1, 3-5.

APSA, "Toward a More Responsible Two-Party System" (1950): Part 1 [online].

Mickey Edwards, "How to Turn Republicans and Democrats into Americans," [The Atlantic](#) (July/August 2011) [online].



LABOR DAY HOLIDAY: Monday, September 4

Wednesday, September 6: *Understanding Ideology*

"The Split," [The New Republic](#) (June 14, 2016) [online].

Mark Lilla, "The End of Identity Liberalism," [The New York Times](#) (November 18, 2016) [online].

Amanda Taub, "After Trump: How Authoritarian Voters Will Change American Politics," [Vox](#) (April 28, 2016) [online].

Uri Friedman, "What is a Populist? And is Donald Trump One?" [The Atlantic](#) (February 27, 2017) [online].

Christopher Caldwell, "What the Alt-Right Really Means," [The New York Times](#) (December 2, 2016) [online].

Monday, September 11: *Electoral Realignments and Party Systems*

Brian F. Schaffner, [Politics, Parties and Elections in America](#) (2011): Chapter 2.

David R. Mayhew, [Electoral Realignments: A Critique of an American Genre](#) (2004): Chapters 2-3 [online].

Michael Lind, "This Is What the Future of American Politics Looks Like," [Politico](#) (May 22, 2016) [online].

Andrew Prokop, "How Republicans Went from the Party of Lincoln to the Party of Trump, in 13 Maps," [Vox](#) (November 10, 2016) [online].

Wednesday, September 13: *Party Polarization*

Michael Barone, "The 49 Percent Nation," National Journal (June 9, 2001): 1710 [online].

Morris P. Fiorina, Samuel J. Abrams, and Jeremy C. Pope, Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America (2004): Chapters 1-2.

Marc J. Hetherington, "Putting Polarization in Perspective," British Journal of Political Science, 39 (2009): 413-448 [online].

Monday, September 18: *Third Party Insurgents*

Steven J. Rosenstone, Roy L. Behr, and Edward H. Lazarus, Third Parties in America: Citizen Response to Major Party Failure (1996): Chapters 2 & 5 [online].

Ezra Klein, "A Third Party Won't Fix What's Broken in American Politics," Vox (December 8, 2014) [online].

III. THE CITIZEN AS VOTER

Wednesday, September 20: *The Vanishing (or Resurgent) Voter?*

Brian F. Schaffner, Politics, Parties and Elections in America (2011): Chapter 7.

Thomas Patterson, "The Vanishing Voter: Why Are the Voting Booths So Empty?" National Civic Review (Winter 2002): 367-378 [online].

Marshall Ganz, "Motor Voter or Motivated Voter?" The American Prospect, 28 (1996): 41-48 [online].

Sasha Issenberg, "How Obama's Team Used Big Data to Rally Voters," MIT Technology Review (December 19, 2012) [online].

Monday, September 25: *The Politics of Voter Turnout: Fraud and Suppression*

Spencer Overton, Stealing Democracy: The New Politics of Voter Suppression (2006): Chapter 6 [online].

Jim Rutenberg, "A Dream Undone," The New York Times Magazine (July 29, 2015) [online].

Wednesday, September 27: *How We Vote, Part I: Identity Politics*

Brian F. Schaffner, Politics, Parties and Elections in America (2011): Chapter 7.

Donald R. Kinder and Cindy D. Kam, Us Against Them: Ethnocentric Foundations of American Opinion (2010): Chapters 1-3 [online].

Nathan Heller, "Feeling the Bern with the Youth Vote," The New Yorker (August 25, 2015) [online].

Monday, October 2: *How We Vote, Part II: Class and the Culture Wars*

Ronald Brownstein, "The Class Inversion of American Politics Accelerates," The Atlantic (July 26, 2016) [online].

Thomas Frank, "Millions of Ordinary Americans Support Donald Trump. Here's Why," The Guardian (March 7, 2016) [online].

Margaret Talbot, "The Populist Prophet: Bernie Sanders has Spent Decades Attacking Inequality. Now the Country is Listening," The New Yorker (October 12, 2015) [online].

Wednesday, October 4: *How We Vote, Part III: Reason and Emotion*

Donald Green, Bradley Palmquist, and Eric Schickler, Partisan Hearts and Minds: Political Parties and the Social Identities of Voters (2004): Chapters 1-2 [online].

Drew Westen, The Political Brain: The Role of Emotion in Deciding the Fate of the Nation (2007): Chapters 1-2 [online].

Kurt Andersen, "How America Lost Its Mind," The Atlantic (August 7, 2017) [online].

Elizabeth Kolbert, "Why Facts Don't Change Our Minds," The New Yorker (February 27) [online].

 **FALL RECESS: Monday, October 9**

 **EXAM #1: Wednesday, October 11**

IV. CANDIDATES AND CAMPAIGNS

Monday, October 16: *The Incumbency Factor in Congressional Elections*

Paul S. Herrnson, Congressional Elections (2016): Preface, Introduction, and Chapters 1-9.

Wednesday, October 18: *Drawing District Lines*

Steven Hill, "Behind Closed Doors: The Recurring Plague of Redistricting and the Politics of Geography," National Civic Review (Winter 2002): 317-330 [online].

Seth E. Masket, Jonathan Winburn, and Gerald C. Wright, "The Gerrymanderers are Coming! Legislative Redistricting Won't Affect Competition or Polarization Much, No Matter Who Does It," PS: Political Science & Politics (January 2012) [online].

Matthew Yglesias, "Democrats' 2018 Gerrymandering Problem is Really Bad," Vox (August 24) [online].

Monday, October 23: *Decoding Midterm Elections*

Paul S. Herrnson, Congressional Elections (2016): Chapters 10-11.

Robert S. Erikson, "The Puzzle of Midterm Loss," Journal of Politics, 50 (November 1988): 1011-1029 [online].

Wednesday, October 25: *The Electoral College*

Stephen J. Wayne, The Road to the White House 2016 (2015): Chapters 1, 3-5, 10.

Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., "Not the People's Choice: How to Democratize American Democracy," The American Prospect (March 25, 2002): 23-27 [online].

Monday, October 30: *The Presidential Nomination Process: Caucuses and Primaries*

Marty Cohen, David Karol, Hans Noel, and John Zaller, The Party Decides Presidential Nominations Before and After Reform (2008): Chapter 7 [online].

William Saletan, "The Primaries Aren't Democratic? They're Not Supposed to Be Democratic," [Slate](#) (April 20, 2016) [online].
Lee Drutman, "Why are all our Presidential Candidates So Bad?" [Vox](#) (September 25, 2015) [online].

Wednesday, November 1: *A History of Presidential Campaigns*

Stephen J. Wayne, [The Road to the White House 2016](#) (2015): Chapter 9.
Richard J. Ellis and Mark Dedrick, "The Presidential Candidate, Then and Now," [Perspectives on Political Science](#), 26 (Fall 1997): 208-216.

Monday, November 6: *From Broadsides to Broadcasts: The Changing Role of the Media*

Stephen J. Wayne, [The Road to the White House 2016](#) (2015): Chapter 8.
Mary E. Stuckey, "Here We Go Again: Presidential Elections and the National Media," [Perspectives on Political Science](#) (Spring 2000): 99 [online].
Evgenia Pertez, "Going After Gore," [Vanity Fair](#) (October 2007) [online].
Paul Waldman, "Why the Media Treats Donald Trump Differently," [The Week](#) (August 9, 2016) [online].

Wednesday, November 8: *"I Approve this Message:" Campaign Advertising in the Modern World*

Stephen J. Wayne, [The Road to the White House 2016](#) (2015): Chapters 6-7.

Monday, November 13: *Show Me the Money: The Politics of Campaign Finance*

Stephen J. Wayne, [The Road to the White House 2016](#) (2015): Chapter 2.

Wednesday, November 15: *When Pigs Fly: In Search of Real Campaign Finance Reform*

Bradley A. Smith, "Campaign Finance Regulation: Faulty Assumptions and Undemocratic Consequences," [Cato Policy Analysis](#) (1995) [online].
Jeffrey Toobin, "Money Unlimited: How Chief Justice John Roberts Orchestrated the Citizens United Decision," [The New Yorker](#) (May 21, 2012) [online].

 **THANKSGIVING RECESS: November 20-24**

V. PARTIES IN GOVERNMENT

Monday, November 27: *Gridlock and Divided Government*

Brian F. Schaffner, [Politics, Parties and Elections in America](#) (2011): Chapter 9.
David R. Mayhew, "Divided Party Control: Does It Make a Difference?" [PS: Political Science and Politics](#) (December 1991): 637-640 [online].

Wednesday, November 29: *Partisanship and Polarization*

Marc J. Hetherington and Thomas J. Rudolph, [Why Washington Won't Work](#) (2015): Chapters 1-2 [online].

Jonathan Chait, "What's So Great about Bipartisanship?" The New Republic (January 15, 2001): 17 [online].

 **EXAM #2: Monday, December 4**

Wednesday, December 6: *Fixing Elections*

Morris P. Fiorina, "The Decline of Collective Responsibility in American Politics," Daedalus, 109 (1980): 25-45 [online].

Andrew Sullivan, "Democracies End When They Are Too Democratic," New York (May 1, 2016) [online].

Caleb Crain, "The Case Against Democracy," The New Yorker (November 7, 2016) [online].

 **FINAL PAPER DUE: Thursday, December 14 by 1:30 PM.**