This graduate seminar provides an examination of political parties in the United States. The literature on parties is vast and is connected to almost every subfield. Our goal is survey what the best and most visible scholarship has to say about parties as they relate to representation, the policy making process, and the connection of citizens to the political process. The readings emphasize topics that are of interest to researchers today, so the material tends to be contemporary rather than classic.

Responsibilities

I expect that students will do all of the “required” reading and come to class prepared to discuss it in a thoughtful fashion. (The “recommended” reading is not required but may be helpful preparation for your final paper.) The number of pages required each week is kept at manageable level. Careful reading and participation in class discussion are the keys to making the class productive for everyone involved. You might not immediately understand everything in the readings. In particular, the methodologies deployed in the readings will be difficult to grasp if you have not yet taken courses in research design and statistics. That is fine. I ask that you give it a serious try and then bring your insights as well as your questions to class.

Each student will write three reaction papers during the semester. These should be uploaded to the Learn@UW site by Monday at 4pm for each of the three weeks you select. The papers should assess, critique, and synthesize that week’s readings. Each paper should be no longer than three double-spaced pages. I will work these into class discussion. You should be prepared to discuss the materials covered in each class, whether or not you wrote a reaction paper for that session.

A final paper is due in hard copy on Friday, May 13 at 4pm. The paper may be either a literature review or research paper. A literature review should survey in a comprehensive fashion the state of literature on a topic related to parties and identify promising areas for future research. A research paper should focus on a more specific question with original research and only a limited review of relevant literature. Most papers will be 20-30 pages long (with standard one-inch margins and double-spacing).

To facilitate development of the paper, a tentative paper proposal of about one single-spaced paged submitted in hard copy on Friday March 11 at 4pm for feedback. The proposal should indicate what question you are planning to investigate and what literature and/or data you will draw upon.
We should discuss your paper projects sometime in the middle of the semester before you get too deep into them. Be aware of the IRB requirements and act early if you decide to collect original data.

With my permission you may co-author the paper with a fellow student. All co-authored projects should be research papers rather than literature reviews.

Reaction papers and class participation account for half of the overall course grade. The final paper accounts for the other half.

Readings

The seminar revolves around the readings. Many of the course readings are from recent journal articles or isolated book chapters. They will be posted to Learn@UW.

Several books recommended for purchase because of the amount of reading:


These books are on reserve at the library, but should be purchased if possible. Interlibrary loan is also possible. Note that the Hajnal and Lee and Karol books are available as an e-book through the library’s web site.


Other Considerations

Your success in this class is important to me. All students are strongly encouraged to visit office hours not only to discuss your paper but also to let me know how the course is working for you.

If you have a disability or circumstance that could affect your performance, please contact me early in the semester so that we can consider accommodations. The McBurney Center for Disability Services can provide official documentation of disabilities.

If you must miss class due to illness or another valid, unavoidable conflict, please contact me in advance.

I reserve the right to modify the syllabus timeline or specific readings as needed.
Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. This includes using someone else’s words or ideas without proper attribution. I will report any cases of academic dishonesty to the appropriate dean’s office.

Please only use electronic devices in class for referencing course materials, taking notes, and occasionally tracking down online items that are necessary for our discussions. Everything else should be quieted and stowed away for later use.

**Syllabus**

**January 19: A Brief Introduction**

**January 26: No Class**

**February 2: What is a Party?**

**Required**
Aldrich, *Why Parties?* [chapters 1-5 & 8]
Cohen et al., *The Party Decides* [chapters 2-3]

**Recommended**

**February 9: Party Dynamics**

**Required**
Carmines and Stimson, *Issue Evolution* [chapters 2, 3, & 5-8]

**Recommended**
February 16: Partisanship in the Public Mind

Required
Hajnal and Lee, Why Americans Don't Join The Party [chapters TBD]

Recommended
Green, Palmquist, and Schickler, Partisan Hearts and Minds (2002 Yale University Press)

February 23: Partisanship and Ideology

Required
Levendusky, The Partisan Sort [chapters TBD]

Recommended

March 1: Party Brands

Required
Egan, Partisan Priorities (2013 Cambridge University Press) [chapters TBD]

Recommended
Snyder and Ting, “An Informational Rationale for Political Parties” (2002 American Journal of Political Science)
March 8: Parties and Groups

Required
Schlozman, When Movements Anchor Parties [chapters TBD]

Recommended
Grossman and Dominguez, “Party Coalitions and Interest Group Networks” (2009 American Politics Research)

March 15: Geographic Polarization

Required:

Recommended:

March 22: No Class – Spring Break

March 29: Issue Alignments and Policies

Required
Karol, Party Position Change in American Politics [chapters 1-3 & 5]
[Also review Carmines & Stimson, Issue Evolution]

Recommended
Bartels, Unequal Democracy (2008 Princeton University Press) [chapter 2]
Mayhew, Electoral Realignments (2002 Yale University Press)
Shafer and Claggett, The Two Majorities
April 5: Presidential Nominations

Required
Cohen et al., *The Party Decides* [chapters 4-9]

Recommended
Ware, *The American Direct Primary.* (2002 Cambridge University Press)

April 12: Sub-Presidential Nominations

Required

Recommended
Adams and Merrill, “Candidate and Party Strategies in Two-Stage Elections Beginning with a Primary” (2008 *American Journal of Political Science*)
Burden, Jones, and Kang, “Sore Loser Laws and Congressional Polarization” (2014 *Legislative Studies Quarterly*)

April 19: Activists

Required
Carmines and Stimson, *Issue Evolution* [chapter 4]

Recommended
April 26: Parties in Government

Required
Aldrich, *Why Parties?* [chapter 7]
Cox and McCubbins, *Setting the Agenda* (2005 Cambridge University Press) [chapters 1 & 2]

Recommended
McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal, “The Hunt for Party Discipline in Congress” (2001 *American Political Science Review*)

May 3: Factions and Minor Parties

Required
Williamson, Skocpol, and Coggin, “The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism” (2011 *Perspectives on Politics*)

Recommended:

May 13: Final Paper Due