

PARTY POLITICS FROM THE FOUNDING TO THE PROGRESSIVES

Department of Political Science, Johns Hopkins University
AS.190.452, Fall 2019
Tuesdays, 1:30 PM

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Course Description

Though the torchlight parade has long since passed, American parties still stand in the shadow of the nineteenth-century Party Period. The 19th-century United States was both a profoundly democratic polity, and a polity whose democratic promise remained unfulfilled.

This course seeks to untangle the ideologies and practices of party politics from the Founding to the Progressive Era. Topics include the rise of mass parties, political violence, the coming of the Republican Party, the party politics of Reconstruction and westward expansion, corruption and the political machine, Populism, and movements for reform. We pay particular attention to comparisons between past and present, and to opportunities taken and foregone. By the end of the course, the alternatives available to the twentieth-century polity should come into high relief.

This course is interdisciplinary by design. We want to take politics seriously, and to take history seriously. The first task means looking intensely at the institutions and practices that structured politics. The second task means paying attention to contingency, and to change over time. Above all, we want to explain how the central event in our drama, the Civil War and Reconstruction led by the Republican Party, fits inside the story of the distributive, clientelistic party politics established before and continued after the conflict.

Grading

Participation: 20 percent.
Short Papers: 30 percent.
Term Paper: 50 percent.

Books Ordered

Richard Franklin Bensel, *The American Ballot Box in the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).
Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party before the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970).
Morton Keller, *America's Three Regimes: A New Political History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

Michael McGerr, *The Decline of Popular Politics: The American North, 1865-1928* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).
James Oakes, *The Radical and the Republican: Frederick Douglass, Abraham Lincoln, and the Triumph of Antislavery Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2007).
Heather Cox Richardson, *Wounded Knee: Party Politics and the Road to an American Massacre* (New York: Basic Books, 2010).
Elizabeth Sanders, *Roots of Reform: Farmers, Workers, and the American State, 1877-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).
Richard M. Valelly, *The Two Reconstructions: The Struggle for Black Enfranchisement* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

You are welcome to find used or library copies (the public library and Interlibrary Loan are extremely helpful). All other readings will be available on electronic reserve.

Disability Accommodation

Any student with a disability who may need accommodations in this class must obtain an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services.

Academic Honesty

Cheating is wrong. Cheating hurts our community by undermining academic integrity, creating mistrust, and fostering unfair competition. The university will punish cheaters with failure on an assignment, failure in a course, permanent transcript notation, suspension, and/or expulsion. Offenses may be reported to medical, law, or other professional or graduate schools when a cheater applies.

Violations can include cheating on exams, plagiarism, reuse of assignments without permission, improper use of the Internet and electronic devices, unauthorized collaboration, alteration of graded assignments, forgery and falsification, lying, facilitating academic dishonesty, and unfair competition. Ignorance of these rules is not an excuse.

Although you are encouraged to talk about the material with other students – indeed, a successful course will stimulate frequent dialogue outside the classroom – every single word you write must be your own. You may discuss your papers with other students and seek help from the Writing Center, but you must acknowledge all assistance you receive.

For more information, see the guide on “Academic Ethics for Undergraduates” and the Ethics Board web site (<https://studentaffairs.jhu.edu/policies-guidelines/undergrad-ethics/>).

Short Papers

Before two class meetings (once weeks 2 through 7; once weeks 8 through 12), write a 4-5 page paper addressing key themes in the readings. Sign-ups the first day. Avoid summary, and do not feel compelled to address every single item on the syllabus. Build an argument about what the readings have to say about larger theoretical issues. Note that there is no single magic formula to

writing a great short paper. The intellectual exercise comes precisely in thinking through the stakes in any set of readings.

The first set of papers (weeks 2-7) will be written individually. For the second set of papers (weeks 8-12), you may write jointly with up to two other students. Papers are due via e-mail in my inbox at 8AM (let me repeat: 8 o'clock in the morning) on the morning of class.

In addition, you and the other writers in any given week will begin class with a brief presentation, giving some context and offering issues for us to discuss. Even when you are writing papers individually, you should meet with your fellow presenters to plan what you want to say. Your presentations should be professional. Don't just summarize your paper or the readings. Use hand-outs or multimedia presentations, if you wish. Your presentations will figure importantly in the participation grade for the course.

Term Paper

The final paper asks you to conduct some kind original research on some aspect of nineteenth-century politics. The choice of topics is yours, and the scope is wide. The only requirement is that you do some kind of work with primary sources, whether in an archive or simply at the library. You may profile an interesting politician; explain politics in a particular city or state at a particular juncture; look at a climactic campaign or event; or write about a particular issue. The trick is to find a topic that's broad enough that you can find some interesting things to say, and narrow enough that you delve deep and can say them in the scope of a term paper.

Just like the readings, your papers should both establish a clear and convincing narrative and then link what you have found to broader theoretical questions. What does your particular case tell us about important issues in American political history? What interpretations does the evidence support – or not. Why should we care about what you have found? What difference does it make?

You will have to undertake some serious research in the library, so it would behoove you to get started early. Please stop by my office hours to bounce off ideas for a topic! Papers should be properly annotated using a standard citation method. Please keep any notes and outlines, as well as a hard copy of anything you hand in to me, until I return your graded paper. Submit the marked-up draft copies from me and your peer along with your final paper. Suggested approximate length is 15-18 pages (double spaced; standard font and margins).

Topic due October 29. Annotated bibliography due November 19. Full draft due December 3; I'll take a look, and you'll also exchange papers and written comments with a classmate. Final paper due via email at noon on December 18, which is the time when the registrar has scheduled the final exam.

WEEK 1-INTRODUCTION (SEPTEMBER 3)

WEEK 2-EARLY REPUBLIC (September 10)

Federalist 10, 51. [Robert Scigliano, ed., *The Federalist: A Commentary on the Constitution of the United States* (New York: Modern Library, 2000), 53-61, 330-335.]

“The Federal Farmer,” in Herbert Storing, *The Anti-Federalist* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 73-79.

Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, ed. J.P. Mayer, trans. George Lawrence (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 174-79, 197-203, 220-26, 231-45, 503-28.

Morton Keller, *America's Three Regimes: A New Political History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 7-66.

WEEK 3-RISE OF MASS PARTIES (September 17)

Keller, *America's Three Regimes*, 67-104.

Richard Hofstadter, *The Idea of a Party System: The Rise of Legitimate Opposition in the United States* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 212-252.

Amy Bridges, “Rethinking the Origins of Machine Politics,” in *Power, Culture, and Place: Essays on New York City*, ed. John Hull Mollenkopf (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1989), 53-73.

Daniel Walker Howe, *The Political Culture of the American Whigs* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 11-42.

WEEK 4-POLITICAL LIFE IN THE PARTY PERIOD (September 24)

Richard Franklin Bensel, *The American Ballot Box in the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 26-85, 123-137, 286-297.

Joel H. Silbey, *The American Political Nation, 1838-1893* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), 46-71.

Richard L. McCormick, *The Party Period and Public Policy: American Politics from the Age of Jackson to the Progressive Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 197-227.

WEEK 5-THE REPUBLICAN PARTY (October 1)

Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party before the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 1-73, 261-300.

James Oakes, *The Radical and the Republican: Frederick Douglass, Abraham Lincoln, and the Triumph of Antislavery Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2007), 3-38,

WEEK 6-THE CIVIL WAR (October 8)

James Oakes, *The Radical and the Republican*, 133-245.

Joel H. Silbey, *A Respectable Minority: The Democratic Party in the Civil War Era, 1860-1868* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1977), 62-88.

WEEK 7-RECONSTRUCTION (October 15)

Richard M. Valelly, *The Two Reconstructions: The Struggle for Black Enfranchisement* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 1-97.

W.E.B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction: An Essay toward a History of the Part which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860-1880* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1935), 320-380.

WEEK 8-GILDED AGE AND BEYOND (October 22)

Michael McGerr, *The Decline of Popular Politics: The American North, 1865-1928* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 12-106.

Keller, *America's Three Regimes*, 133-173.

William L. Riordan, *Plunkitt of Tammany Hall: A Series of Very Plain Talks on Very Practical Politics* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1963), 3-6, 25-28.

WEEK 9-LIMITS OF DEMOCRACY, SOUTH AND WEST (October 29)

Valelly, *The Two Reconstructions*, 99-148.

Heather Cox Richardson, *Wounded Knee: Party Politics and the Road to an American Massacre* (New York: Basic Books, 2010), 32-53, 131-68, 205-316.

WEEK 10-THE LABOR QUESTION (November 5)

Elizabeth Sanders, *Roots of Reform: Farmers, Workers, and the American State, 1877-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 30-100.

Martin Shefter, *Political Parties and the State: The American Historical Experience* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 101-168.

WEEK 11-POPULISM AND AGRARIAN POLITICS (November 12)

Sanders, *Roots of Reform*, 101-72, 387-419.

Rebecca Edwards, *Angels in the Machinery: Gender in American Party Politics from the Civil War to the Progressive Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 91-110.

WEEK 12-PROGRESSIVISM AND BEYOND (November 19)

Keller, *America's Three Regimes*, 174-200.

Elisabeth S. Clemens, *The People's Lobby: Organizational Innovation and the Rise of Interest Group Politics in the United States* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 184-234.

James T. Kloppenberg, "Barack Obama and the Traditions of Progressive Reform," in *The Progressives' Century: Political Reform, Constitutional Government, and the Modern American State*, eds. Stephen Skowronek, Stephen M. Engel, and Bruce Ackerman (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), 431-52.

Daniel Schlozman and Sam Rosenfeld, "The Progressives as Prophets of Party," typescript, 2019.

WEEK 13-PAPER PRESENTATIONS (December 3)