

## **PARTIES AND ELECTIONS IN AMERICA**

Department of Political Science, Johns Hopkins University  
AS.190.387

Fall 2020  
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12:00-1:15PM

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### Course Description

This course examines American political parties and elections from a variety of points of view. We will examine campaigns, the behavior of voters, the past and future of party coalitions, and the role of parties in office. Underlying our consideration of these topics will be a concern for three fundamental intellectual issues: the way that our system of parties and elections has – and has not – changed over time; the role of political parties in structuring social and political conflict; and the extent to which the American electoral system contributes to democratic control of government.

We are in the midst of an election season, and will frequently use the campaign to understand the electoral process and its role in American democracy. You are expected to follow the elections in *The New York Times* or *The Washington Post*. You are also encouraged to experience electoral politics directly by volunteering on a campaign.

### Grading

*Class Participation and Presentation:* 10 percent  
*Weekly Responses:* 15 percent; due weekly on Mondays at 4:00PM  
*Mini-Midterm:* 15 percent; handed out on October 13 and due October 22 at 12:00PM  
*Paper:* 30 percent; due November 19 at 12:00PM  
*Take-Home Final Exam:* 30 percent; handed out on date TBD as determined by registrar

You must complete all written work to get a SAT grade in the course. If you'll be absent from class due to illness or other emergency, please let me know and we'll work out a plan to get you up to date and insure your command of the material.

If I can be of help, about class material or anything else, during an unusually difficult time, please reach out. I am here to support you, and to get you in contact with others who can support you.

## Readings

All readings will be available on electronic reserve via the MSE Library website. You may wish to buy the following books, all easily available.

Marty Cohen, David Karol, Hans Noel, and John Zaller, *The Party Decides: Presidential Nominations before and after Reform* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

Frances E. Lee, *Insecure Majorities: Congress and the Perpetual Campaign* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016).

James L. Sundquist, *Dynamics of the Party System: Alignment and Realignment of Political Parties in the United States*, rev. ed. (Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 1983).

If it's feasible, I'd highly recommend printing everything out so you can read and annotate in hard copy (rather than enduring yet more screen time) and easily refer to the readings as we're discussing them in class.

## Zoom Etiquette

Needless to say, we'd all prefer a world where we could meet in person, unmasked and undistanced. As we cannot, a few notes. Please let me know if broadband access is an issue. Since we want to see each other, please show your face. Mute yourself when not speaking so we don't hear background noise. I'll try to monitor the chat in class, but it's a better place for little notes than for a free-wheeling discussion.

## Inclusive Classroom

We treat contentious issues in this course about which we all have strong feelings. Our goal is to shed light, not to generate heat, and to learn from one another. You should not check your political opinions at the door, far from it, but it is imperative that you are willing to learn new things, and that we all treat everybody in the class with dignity and respect.

If you ever have concerns in this course about harassment, discrimination, or any unequal treatment, or if you seek accommodations or resources, I invite you to share directly with me. I promise that we will take your communication seriously and to seek mutually acceptable resolutions and accommodations. Reporting will never impact your course grade. You may also share concerns with the Political Science department chair, Samuel Chambers (samchambers@jhu.edu), the Director of Undergraduate Studies, Steven David (sdavid@jhu.edu), the Assistant Dean for Diversity and Inclusion, Darlene Saporu, (dsaporu@jhu.edu), or the Office of Institutional Equity (oie@jhu.edu). In handling

reports, people will protect your privacy as much as possible, but faculty and staff are required to officially report information for some cases (e.g. sexual harassment).

### Presentation

Each student will deliver a brief (five-minute) presentation that connects the week's readings to themes we see in the news. You should rehearse your remarks. Be clear, and have a theme. Sign-ups the week of September 8.

### Weekly Responses

Every week starting the second week of class (September 7) except for the week of Election Day, you will write a short (roughly 300-500 words) response, due by 4PM in a Google Doc that we can all read. You can skip one response without penalty. The format is somewhat flexible and the goal is to get you thinking, and to spark conversation that we can continue during class time. Offer some thoughts on the readings, questions you have, important themes, connections between the readings and developments in the news.

### Paper Assignment

The *Homewood Review of Books* has assigned you to write an essay for its November, 2020, issue. You are to review two books, chosen from the list below, about particular presidential elections. The books are all available on electronic reserve and easy to purchase, often in a cheap used copy.

- 1800: John Ferling, *Adams vs. Jefferson: The Tumultuous Election of 1800* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).
- 1912: James Chace, *1912: Wilson, Roosevelt, Taft and Debs--The Election that Changed the Country* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2004).
- 1948: Irwin Ross, *The Loneliest Campaign* (New York: New American Library, 1968).
- 1960: Theodore White, *The Making of the President 1960* (New York: Atheneum House, 1961).
- 1968: Lewis Chester, Godfrey Hodgson, and Bruce Page, *American Melodrama: The Presidential Election of 1968* (New York: Viking, 1969).
- 1972: Hunter S. Thompson, *Fear and Loathing on the Campaign Trail '72* (New York: Popular Library, 1973).
- 1988: Richard Ben Cramer, *What It Takes: The Way to the White House* (New York: Random House, 1992).
- 1992: Anonymous, *Primary Colors: A Novel of Politics* (New York: Random House, 1996).

Use your close reading of these books as an entry point into a broader discussion of presidential elections and their place in American democracy. Your essay will require attention to the content and style of each book have chosen and some indication as to whether a reader curious about American politics and history would find it worth reading. Beyond that, however, you have a great deal of latitude in shaping your essay.

Depending upon the particular books you have selected, you might wish, for example, to compare the books to one another with regard to style or substantive coverage, to compare the elections in the books you have chosen to one another and discuss their historical significance, or to draw parallels between these elections and their attendant campaigns and more recent ones.

Book reviewing is an art, and there is no single formula. I will circulate a series of multi-book reviews from various high-end publications, and we'll spend some time in class discussing the ways that the authors approach their respective tasks.

The assignment requires close reading and greater attention to prose style than is typical in political science. This assignment also demands careful comparison, identifying similarities and dissimilarities in the sagas of the elections that the books examine. Hence, you should choose your books carefully. The books are an eclectic and maybe idiosyncratic list. They differ substantially among themselves in approach, style, and emphasis. You should try to pick books that speak to each other, whether because the elections offer opportunities for comparison or because the books themselves can be compared or contrasted with regard to style and approach. (N.b.: picking two short books that do not make a logical pair is a bad strategy.)

You should get started early, as you have a lot of reading to do. A section of the midterm will ask you to list the books you have chosen, and explain why they form a good pair.

Suggested length: 10-12 pages (double spaced; standard font and margins).

### 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, but you must acknowledge any assistance you receive. On the midterm (except for the section about the two books for your paper) and the final, you may not communicate with anyone whatsoever.

For more information, see the guide on “Academic Ethics for Undergraduates” and the Ethics Board web site ([www.jhu.edu/ethics](http://www.jhu.edu/ethics)).

### Anxiety, Stress & Mental Health

Students who are struggling with anxiety, stress, depression or other mental health related concerns, please consider connecting with resources through the JHU Counseling Center. The Counseling Center will be providing services remotely to protect the health of students, staff, and communities. Please reach out to get connected and learn about service options based on where you are living this fall at 410-516-8278 and online at <http://studentaffairs.jhu.edu/counselingcenter/>. Student Outreach & Support will be fully operational (virtually) to help support faculty and students during the fall semester. To connect with SOS, please email [deanofstudents@jhu.edu](mailto:deanofstudents@jhu.edu), call 410-516-7857, or students can schedule to meet with a Case Manager by visiting the Student Outreach & Support website and follow “Schedule an Appointment.”

## Course Schedule

### **Part I: Introduction**

PARTIES AND DEMOCRACY (September 1 and 3)

Federalist 10 and 51

E.E. Schattschneider, *Party Government* (New York: Rinehart, 1942), 1-16.

V.O. Key, Jr., *Southern Politics in State and Nation* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949), 298-311.

PARTIES FORMAL AND INFORMAL (September 8)

Paul S. Herrnson, "National Parties in the Twenty-First Century," in *The Parties Respond: Changes in American Parties and Campaigns*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed., eds. Mark D. Brewer and L. Sandy Maisel (Boulder: Westview Press, 2013), 133-160.

Kathleen Bawn, Martin Cohen, David Karol, Seth Maskett, Hans Noel and John Zaller, "A Theory of Political Parties: Groups, Policy Demands and Nominations in American Politics," *Perspectives on Politics* 10 (2012): 571-97.

### **Part II: Voters and Campaigns**

POLARIZATION (September 10 and 15)

Alan I. Abramowitz and Steven Webster, "The rise of negative partisanship and the nationalization of U.S. elections in the 21st century," *Electoral Studies* 41 (2016): 12-22.

Morris P. Fiorina, *Unstable Majorities: Polarization, Party Sorting & Political Stalemate* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 2017), 17-42.

Liliana Mason, *Uncivil Agreement: How Politics Became Our Identity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018), 1-23, 45-60.

Ismail K. White and Chryl N. Laird, *Steadfast Democrats: How Social Forces Shape Black Political Behavior* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020), 69-85.

PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION (September 17 and 22)

Marty Cohen, David Karol, Hans Noel, and John Zaller, *The Party Decides: Presidential Nominations before and after Reform* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 1-7, 107-112, 118-146, 157-179, 277-311, 333-363.

Marty Cohen, David Karol, Hans Noel, and John Zaller, "Party Versus Faction in the Reformed Presidential Nominating System," *PS: Political Science and Politics* 49 (2016): 701-708.

CAMPAIGNS (September 24 and 29)

Larry M. Bartels, *Unequal Democracy: The Political Economy of the New Gilded Age*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Russell Sage Foundation and Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 74-104.

Larry M. Bartels, "The Irrational Electorate," *Wilson Quarterly* 32 (2008), 44-50.

Diana C. Mutz, "The Great Divide: Campaign Media in the American Mind," *Daedalus*, Fall 2012, 83-97.

John Sides, Michael Tesler and Lynn Vavreck, *Identity Crisis: The 2016 Presidential Campaign and the Battle for the Meaning of America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018), 154-200.

### **Part III: Fights about Rules**

#### VOTING WARS (October 1)

Richard L. Hasen, *Election Meltdown: Dirty Tricks, Distrust, and the Threat to American Democracy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2020), 1-46, 121-138.

#### CAMPAIGN FINANCE (October 6)

John Sides, Daron Shaw, Matt Grossmann, and Keena Lipsitz, *Campaigns and Elections: Rules, Reality, Strategy, Choice*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 2018 Election Update (New York: W.W. Norton, 2019), 84-123.

Raymond J. La Raja, "Why Super PACs: How the American Party System Outgrew the Campaign Finance System," *The Forum* 10 (2012): 91-104.

Mark C. Alexander, "Citizens United and Equality Forgotten," in *Money, Politics, and the Constitution*, ed. Monica Youn (New York: Century Foundation Press, 2011), 153-169.

#### DISCUSSION ON CAMPAIGNS AND ELECTIONS (October 8)

### **Part IV: Party Alignments in American Politics**

#### ALIGNMENT AND REALIGNMENT (October 13)

Richard Hofstadter, *The Idea of a Party System: The Rise of Legitimate Opposition in the United States* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 212-226, 239-252.

James L. Sundquist, *Dynamics of the Party System: Alignment and Realignment of Political Parties in the United States*, rev. ed. (Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 1983), 35-49.

#### CIVIL WAR AND THE SYSTEM OF 1896 (October 15)

James L. Sundquist, *Dynamics of the Party System*, 74-91, 101-105, 134-141, 152-169.

J. Morgan Kousser, *The Shaping of Southern Politics: Suffrage Restriction and the Establishment of the One-Party South, 1880-1910* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), 11-44.

#### NEW DEAL ORDER (October 20)

James L. Sundquist, *Dynamics of the Party System*, 198-239, 262-268, 444-449.

Eric Schickler, "Debunking the myth that 'identity politics' is bad for the Democratic Party, *Vox*, April 21, 2018, <https://www.vox.com/the-big-idea/2018/4/16/17242748/identity-politics-racial-justice-democratic-party-lilla-traub-trump>.

#### DISRUPTIONS AND NEW CLEAVAGES (October 27)

James L. Sundquist, *Dynamics of the Party System*, 352-364.

James Q. Wilson, "A Guide to Reagan Country: The Political Culture of Southern California," *Commentary*, May 1967, 37-45.

Jo Freeman, "Whom You Know versus Whom You Represent: Feminist Influence in the Democratic and Republican Parties," in *The Women's Movements of the United States and Western Europe*, ed. Mary Fainsod Katzenstein and Carol McClurg Miller (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987), 215-244.

## **Part V: Contemporary Party Politics**

INEQUALITY AND THE NEW CLASS POLITICS (October 29)

Larry M. Bartels, *Unequal Democracy*, 33-73.

Lily Geismer, "Democrats and neoliberalism," *Vox*, June 11, 2019,  
<https://www.vox.com/polyarchy/2019/6/11/18660240/democrats-neoliberalism>.

ELECTION DAY (November 3)

ELECTION RECAP (November 5)

Readings TBD.

ACTIVISM RIGHT AND LEFT (November 10)

Matt Grossmann and David A. Hopkins, "Ideological Republicans and Group Interest Democrats: The Asymmetry of American Party Politics," *Perspectives on Politics* 13 (2015): 119-139.

Katherine J. Cramer, *The Politics of Resentment: Rural Consciousness in Wisconsin and the Rise of Scott Walker* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), 45-89.

Lara Putnam, "Middle America Reboots Democracy: The Emergence and Rapid Electoral Turn of the New Grassroots," in *Upending American Politics: Polarizing Parties, Ideological Elites, and Citizen Activists from the Tea Party to the Anti-Trump Resistance*, eds. Theda Skocpol and Caroline Tervo (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 175-190.

## **Part VI: Parties in Government**

PARTIES AND CONGRESS (November 12 and 17)

Frances E. Lee, *Insecure Majorities: Congress and the Perpetual Campaign* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), 1-70, 112-141.

PARTIES AND PRESIDENTS (November 19)

Sidney M. Milkis, Jesse H. Rhodes, and Emily J. Charnock, "What Happened to Post-Partisanship? Barack Obama and the New American Party System," *Perspectives on Politics* 10 (2012): 57-76.

Nicholas F. Jacobs, Desmond King, and Sidney M. Milkis, "Building a Conservative State: Partisan Polarization and the Redeployment of Administrative Power," *Perspectives on Politics* 17 (2019): 453-469.

Daniel J. Galvin and Chloe N. Thurston, "The Democrats' Misplaced Faith in Policy Feedback," *The Forum* 15 (2017): 333-343.



## **Part VII: Where from Here?**

### COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES (December 1)

Richard S. Katz, "European and American Political Parties: Becoming More Similar?" *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion, and Parties* 29 (2019): 429-445.

Kenneth M. Roberts, "Parties, Populism, and Democratic Decay: A Comparative Perspective on Political Polarization in the United States," in *When Democracy Trumps Populism: European and Latin American Lessons for the United States*, eds. Kurt Weyland, Raúl L. Madrid (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 132-153.

### PROSPECTS FOR AMERICAN PARTIES (December 3)

Daniel Schlozman and Sam Rosenfeld, "The Hollow Parties," in *Can America Govern Itself?*, eds. Frances E. Lee and Nolan McCarty (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 120-150.

Nathaniel Persily, "Stronger Parties as a Solution to Polarization," in *Solutions to Political Polarization in America*, ed. Nathaniel Persily (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 123-135.

Lee Drutman, "Let a Thousand Parties Bloom," *Foreign Policy*, Fall 2019, 22-27.

### CONCLUDING DISCUSSION (December 8)