

Spring, 2012

Political Science 575  
AMERICAN POLITICAL PARTIES

Professor Paul A. Beck ([beck.9@osu.edu](mailto:beck.9@osu.edu))

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Office Hours: 1-3 MW, other times by appointment

GTA: Jess Goode, 2031 Derby Hall ([goode.49@osu.edu](mailto:goode.49@osu.edu))

Class Meetings: 3:30-5:18 pm, MW

Classroom: 1046 MacPherson

GTA Office Hours: 10-12 MF

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Political parties are at the center of the political process in modern democracies. They appear in three different, yet interrelated, forms as:

- party organizations – legally recognized and regulated associations with officers and members
- parties in the electorate – coalitions of voters united in loyalty to the same party
- parties in government – team of politicians who organize under the same label to contest and hold public office and to engage in policy-making when in office

This course will study the role and behavior of each of these forms of the American parties, the interrelationships among them, and the competition among parties that defines the party system. It will pay particular attention to the American parties in the 2008, 2010, and 2012 elections, how they have changed in recent years, and what these changes imply for American politics in the future.

For all of their recognized importance for democratic politics, there is considerable normative disagreement about the roles political parties **should** play. On the one hand, some claim that parties are indispensable to the development and operation of democracy, especially in organizing the electorate and the government and in clarifying policy and candidate choices so that ordinary citizens can participate effectively in the governmental process. These observers cannot imagine how democratic politics could operate without political parties and the competition among them.

On the other hand, political parties have been the objects of considerable criticism since they first emerged in the late 1700s. What their proponents see as parties' critical functions in organizing for political action and framing choices, critics see as tiresome partisan bickering, the manufacturing of unneeded political conflict, and (in the U.S.) two-party hegemony that undermines democratic principles. American reformers have championed the secret ballot, voter registration, initiatives, referenda, nonpartisan elections, civil service merit systems for public employment, direct primaries, and even public funding of candidates and term limits to reduce the influence of parties – and, in some cases, as more desirable alternatives to functions that political parties perform. These reforms have shaped the American party system to this day, differentiating it from party systems in other democracies. In this course, we will wrestle with these normative questions as well as empirical questions about current and past states of American parties.

### Required Readings

The required readings for the course are contained in two books -- Marjorie Randon Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, 15<sup>th</sup> edition (New York: Pearson/Longman, 2013); John C. Green and Daniel J. Coffey, editors, *The State of the Parties* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2011).

Both books are available for purchase in the campus bookstores or from various on-line sources, including Amazon.com. The Hershey book also is available as an eBook for about 40% of the retail price; if interested, link to <http://www.coursesmart.com>. In addition, students will be required to do some reading of materials posted on the Carmen website and on the state they select for their term paper, as described below.

### Grading Policy

Course grades will be based on midterm and final examinations; class participation; and, **to earn a grade higher than a C+**, a research paper. To exercise the research paper option, students must identify the state they want to study by Wednesday, April 11, and submit a research paper by the end of class on Wednesday, May 30. For students doing the research paper, the final grade will be based on the mid-term exam (30%), final exam (30%), the paper (30%), and class attendance/participation (10%). Submission of the research paper is required to receive a course grade higher than a C+, but it does not guarantee a grade in the A or B range. For students who do not submit a research paper, the midterm and the final will comprise 45% of the grade each, with 10% allocated to class attendance/participation.

The mid-term will cover readings and lectures from the first half of the course; the final will cover readings/lectures from the second half. Lectures and class discussions are designed to complement and occasionally to review the readings, so careful reading of the texts and regular class attendance are both important for a satisfactory grade in the course. Failure to take examinations at the scheduled times, unless excused in advance by the instructor, will result in a 0 for that exam. To count in the final grade, research papers must be turned in by the May 30 (5:18 pm) deadline directly to the instructor or the GTA; electronic copies will not be accepted.

### Extra Credit

Students may be offered an opportunity to earn extra credit in the course (1% added to their final total percentage) by participating in a survey or experiment through the Political Research Laboratory in the Department of Political Science. The details of this opportunity, if it is available in the Spring Quarter, will be announced in class.

### Guide to the Research Paper

The research paper is to be an original paper of approximately 6 pages in length (double spaced) that analyzes a completed Republican presidential nomination contest in one of the American states other than Ohio and assesses how well that nominee could compete in the state's general election contest. Party nominations are won by the candidate who receives a majority of the delegate votes at the national party conventions. Almost all delegates are selected through state primaries and caucuses. Because the only competition for nomination is taking place in the Republican party in 2012, your analysis should focus on the Republican contest in your state – its rules, its outcome, and the voting patterns that produced that outcome. Presidential elections are won by gaining a majority of the electoral votes from the fifty states and District of Columbia, which have been accumulated state by state by winning pluralities of the popular vote. You should analyze the prospects of your state's Republican winner (or winners) in running against President

Obama in the state's general election – taking into account the candidates' standing, the state's recent voting history, the characteristics of its voters, the strength of the major party organizations, and the potential for third party or independent candidates.

The paper should contain information on the following topics, which can be drawn from class discussions and the sources listed below:

- background and recent history of the state's electoral and party politics (**key sources:** Barone's *The Almanac of American Politics 2012*, newspapers, and websites)
- procedures used in the state to nominate candidates (**key sources:** frontloading.blogspot.com, Secretary of State's website for your state, current news sources and websites)
- campaign spending by the candidates and PACs supporting them (**key sources:** national and state newspapers, opensecrets.org and other campaign finance websites)
- characteristics of the state's party caucus/primary and general election voters – their party identifications, who voted for whom in the Republican contests (**key sources:** party registration figures from *The Almanac of American Politics 2012*; 2012 nomination contest exit polls from ; recent public opinion polls)

There are many sources of information on these topics and only a few of them are cited above. All papers should be sure to use the state chapter from Michael Barone's *The Almanac of American Politics 2012* and exit poll results (if available) from the 2012 nomination contest from the election websites of the major TV networks, newspapers, and politics websites. The most useful websites for nomination contest coverage and exit polls are:

[www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2012/](http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2012/)  
[www.nytimes.com/pages/politics/index.html](http://www.nytimes.com/pages/politics/index.html)  
[www.washingtonpost.com/politics/campaigns](http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/campaigns)  
[www.realclearpolitics.com/](http://www.realclearpolitics.com/)  
[www.cbsnews.com/](http://www.cbsnews.com/) (under politics in menu)

More information will be provided in class about potential sources, and the web contains additional resources for tracking down information on each state. In using website material, though, be careful to determine who is responsible for the website and what partisan bias they may bring to their work.

The best research papers will demonstrate:

- understanding of key concepts and election and party characteristics from the course's readings and lectures;
- knowledge of the state's party/electoral politics, especially in 2012; and
- ability to address these topics thoughtfully and cogently in an essay.

The essays are expected to be free of spelling and grammatical errors (use your spell- and grammar-checks!!) and well written; the quality of the writing can affect the paper's grade. Students who have selected the same state are welcome to work together in doing the basic research on their state, but the final draft must be entirely their own work (see the section on Academic Honesty below). Papers on the same state will be compared to ensure that they were written independently of one another.

### Postings on Carmen

Materials for the course – including Power Point slides for lectures and handouts – will be posted on the course website on Carmen ([carmen.osu.edu](http://carmen.osu.edu)). Class messages also will appear there. Messages to the instructor and/or GTA should be sent directly to their email address. Messages to be shared with the entire class can be posted via Carmen.

### GEC Requirements

Political Science 575 satisfies the University's General Education Curriculum (GEC) requirement for either the individual and groups or the organizations and politics sections in the social sciences. It teaches students to understand the theories and methods of scientific inquiry as applied to individuals, groups, and organizations operating in political systems; to comprehend human differences and similarities in political contexts; and to develop abilities to comprehend and assess individual and social values and recognize their importance in social problem solving and political decision making.

### Academic Misconduct

All work that students submit for grades in the course is expected to be their own. Cheating or plagiarism (using someone else's words or ideas, including material from web sites, without proper citation) will not be tolerated. Any case of suspected academic misconduct in the form of cheating or plagiarism will be handled according to University policy, which requires that it be reported automatically to the University Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM). This policy states: "It is the responsibility of the University Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term 'academic misconduct' includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct: [http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/resource\\_csc.asp](http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/resource_csc.asp)." A COAM finding of academic misconduct can be penalized by a failing grade on the paper/exam and/or in the course and possible academic probation or suspension, among other options.

### Disability Services

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated, and they should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office for Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone 292-3307, TDD 292-0901; <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/>.

### Course Syllabus

The following pages contain a class-by-class topical outline, the reading assignments for each topic, and the schedule of exam dates and paper deadlines. All readings should be completed before the class for which they are assigned.

## PARTIES AND THE AMERICAN PARTY SYSTEM

Mar 26      Course Introduction

Hershey, *Party Politics in America* (New York: Pearson/Longman, 2013), Foreword, pp. xiv-xviii.  
Coffey and Green, "Introduction: The State of the Parties, Change and Continuity in 2008," in Green and Coffey (eds.), *The State of the Parties* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2011), Chapter 1, pp. 1-14.

Mar 28      What Kind of Parties Do We Have?

Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, Part 1, "Parties and Party Systems," pp. 1-3; Chapter 1, "What Are Political Parties?" pp. 4-26; and parts of Chapter 7, "The American Party Systems," pp. 127-31 and "The Development of the Sixth Party System," pp. 141-48.

Apr 2        Why a Two-Party System?

Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, Chapter 2, "The American Two-Party System," pp. 27-46.  
Williamson, Skocpol, and Coggin, "The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism," *Perspectives on Politics*, 9 (March, 2011), pp. 25-43. [On Carmen website]

## POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE ELECTORAL PROCESS

Apr 4        Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, Part 4, "Parties, Nominations, and Elections," pp. 171-72.

Primary, Caucus, and Convention: How Have American Parties Nominated?

Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, Chapter 9, "How Parties Choose Candidates," pp. 173-88.

Apr 9        Presidential Nominations 2012: How Will the Parties Choose?

Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, Chapter 10, "Choosing the Presidential Nominees," pp. 189-209.  
Southwell, "The Effect of Nomination Divisiveness on the 2008 Presidential Election," *PS: Political Science and Politics* 43 (April, 2010), pp. 255-58. [On Carmen website]

<b>Wednesday, April 11: STATE DUE FOR RESEARCH PAPER</b>
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Apr 11      How Much Do Campaigns Matter?

Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, Chapter 11, “The General Election,” pp. 210-28.  
Karpowitz, Monson, Patterson, and Pope, “Tea Time in America? The Impact of the  
Tea Party Movement on the 2010 Midterm Elections,” *PS, Political Science and  
Politics*, 44 (April, 2011), pp. 303-09. [On Carmen website]

Apr 16 & 18   Controlling Money in Politics: A Quixotic Quest?

Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, Chapter 12, “Financing the Campaigns,” pp. 229-  
56.  
La Raja, “Back to the Future? Campaign-Finance Reform and the Declining Im-  
portance of National Party Organization,” in Green and Coffey (eds.), *The State  
of the Parties*, Chapter 12, pp. 205-22.

## THE POLITICAL PARTY ORGANIZATIONS

Apr 23      Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, Part 2, “The Political Party as an Organization,”  
pp. 47-49.

Whither the Local and State Parties?

Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, Chapter 3, “The State and Local Party Organiza-  
tions,” pp. 50-68.  
Crowder-Meyer, “The Party’s Still Going: Local Party Strength and Activity in  
2008,” in Green and Coffey (eds.), *The State of the Parties*, Chapter 7, pp. 115-  
34.

Apr 25      A More Muscular Role for the National Party Organizations?

Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, Chapter 4, “The Parties’ National Organizations,”  
pp. 69-90.  
Magleby, “Electoral Politics As Team Sport: Advantage to the Democrats,” in Green  
and Coffey (eds.), *The State of the Parties*, Chapter 5, pp. 81-100.

<b>Monday, April 30: MID-TERM EXAMINATION, 3:30-5:18 pm, in classroom</b>
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May 2      Who Are the Party Activists?

Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, Chapter 5, “Party Activists,” pp. 91-106.  
Jackson and Green, “The State of the Party Elites: National Convention Delegates,  
1992-2008,” in Green and Coffey (eds.), *The State of the Parties*, Chapter 4, pp.  
55-77.

## POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE ELECTORATE

May 7 & 9 Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, Part 3, “The Political Party in the Electorate,” pp. 107-08.

### What Role Do Party Identifications Play?

Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, Chapter 6, “Party Identification,” pp. 109-25.

Monson, Patterson, and Pope, “The Campaign Context for Partisan Stability,” in Green and Coffey (eds.), *The State of the Parties*, Chapter 16, pp. 271-87.

Rosenblum, “A Political Theory of Partisanship and Independence,” in Green and Coffey (eds.), *The State of the Parties*, Chapter 17, pp. 289-306.

May 14 Who Are Democrats and Who Are Republicans, Now and Then?

Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, selections from Chapter 7, “Party Coalitions and Party Change,” pp. 126-27, 131-41.

Petrocik, “Was 2008 a Watershed Election? Observing the State of the Parties in the Election Results,” in Green and Coffey (eds.), *The State of the Parties*, Chapter 2, pp. 17-39.

Liscio, Stonecash, and Brewer, “Unintended Consequences: Republican Strategy and Winning and Losing Voters,” in Green and Coffey (eds.), *The State of the Parties*, Chapter 15, pp. 255-70.

May 16 Who Votes? American Turnout in Comparative Perspective

Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, Chapter 8, “Parties and Voter Turnout,” pp. 149-70.

## POLITICAL PARTIES IN GOVERNMENT

May 21 Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, Part Five, “The Party in Government,” pp. 257-59.

### Where Is the Party in the Legislature?

Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, Chapter 13, “Parties in Congress and State Legislatures,” pp. 260-82.

Stone and Pietryka, “Party, Constituency, and Representation in Congress,” in Green and Coffey (eds.), *The State of the Parties*, Chapter 20, pp. 333-47.

May 23      What Is the Influence of Party on the Executive and Judiciary?

Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, Chapter 14, “The Party in the Executive and the Courts,” pp. 283-95.

Skinner, “Barack Obama and the Partisan Presidency,” in Green and Coffey (eds.), *The State of the Parties*, Chapter 18, pp. 309-21.

May 28      MEMORIAL DAY HOLIDAY

<b>Wednesday, May 30: RESEARCH PAPERS DUE [by 5:18pm]</b>
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May 30      How Much Do **Parties** Govern?

Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, Chapter 15, “The Semi-Responsible Parties,” pp. 296-312.

CONCLUSION: PARTIES IN THE AMERICAN SYSTEM

Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, Chapter 16, “The Place of Parties in American Politics,” pp. 313-27.

<b>Thursday, June 7: FINAL EXAMINATION [3:30-5:18 pm, in classroom]</b>
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