

**Political Science 4150**  
**AMERICAN POLITICAL PARTIES**

[W/F, 12:45-2:05 pm, 115 Mendenhall]

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Political parties are at the center of the political process in modern democracies. They are best viewed as a combination of three different, yet interrelated, parts:

- the party organization – a legally recognized, regulated association with officers and members
- the party in the electorate – a coalition of voters united in loyalty to the same party
- the party in government – a 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 parts 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 recent electoral cycles, especially 2012; how they have changed from before; and what these changes imply for American politics in the future.

For all of their obvious presence in 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 politics could be democratic 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 (especially in the U.S.) a 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 the 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 the 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 Sides and Lynn Vavreck, *The Gamble: Choice and Chance in the 2012 Presidential Election* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013). Both books are available for purchase in the campus bookstores. (They offer both hardback and eBook versions at several different pricing options). The Sides and Vavreck book is available at various prices and in a Kindle version from Amazon.com. Students also are expected to read some materials posted on the Carmen website and on the state they select for the research paper described below.

## Grading Policy

Course grades will be based on midterm and final examinations; the highest three grades on four short quizzes; and, **to earn a grade higher than a C+**, a research paper. To exercise the research paper option, students must identify the state contest they want to study by Friday, January 24, and submit an original research paper by 5 p.m. on Wednesday, April 16. For students doing the research paper, the final grade will be based on the mid-term exam (25%), final exam (25%), the paper (30%), and the quizzes (each worth 6.67%, for a total of 20%, with the lowest grade dropped). **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 36% of the grade each, with 28% allocated to the quizzes (9.33% each, with the lowest grade dropped). Attendance will be taken in the course, and extra credit will be awarded to those who attend regularly.

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. The quizzes will focus on the readings and class sessions on that particular topic. Lectures and class discussions are designed to complement and occasionally to review the readings, so careful attention to the readings and regular class attendance are both important for a satisfactory grade in the course. Failure to take quizzes or 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 April 16 deadline directly to the instructor or the GTA and electronic copies must be uploaded to the Dropbox on the Carmen website.

## Extra Credit

Students can earn extra credit of 2% added to their final total percentage for regular (i.e., no more than 3 unexcused absences) attendance. They also may be offered an opportunity to earn an additional 1% in extra course credit 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 Semester, will be announced in class.

## Guide to the Research Paper

The research paper is to be an original paper of about 6 pages (double spaced) that analyzes the background leading up to a 2014 contest, including party nominations and general election, for U.S. Senator or Governor in an American state other than Ohio. Party nominations for Senate and Governor are won almost exclusively through primary elections, which begin in March and will not have been all held before the end of the course, and the general elections will not be held until November 2014. The task of the paper in most states, therefore, is to set the stage for those contests – mainly who is running, what is their preliminary standing, what is the nature of party competition in the state – and to predict who is likely to emerge as the winner of the primaries and general election. **In selecting your state and contest, be sure to pick a competitive contest, at least in the general election, and one that will be well covered in the media.**

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

- recent history of the state's electoral and party politics (**key sources:** Barone, Ujifusa, and Matthews, *The Almanac of American Politics 2014*, state newspapers)
- standing of the various candidates in statewide public opinion polls (**key source:** [www.realclearpolitics.com](http://www.realclearpolitics.com))

- procedures used in the state to nominate candidates for the office you choose (**key sources:** Secretary of State website for your state, various blogs, state newspapers)
- whether nominations are contested, especially by Tea Party supported candidates (**key source:** Larry Sabato's Crystal Ball (<http://www.centerforpolitics.org/crystalball>))
- campaign spending by the candidates and the independent groups supporting or opposing them (**key sources:** national and state newspapers, [www.opensecrets.org](http://www.opensecrets.org))
- characteristics of the state's party caucus/primary and general election voters, especially their party identifications and who voted for whom in past elections (**key sources:** party registration figures from *The Almanac of American Politics 2014*; state exit polls from 2012; state public opinion polls)

There are many sources of information on these topics, many of them duplicative, and only a few of them are cited above. All papers will find useful (1) the state chapter from Barone et al., *The Almanac of American Politics 2014* (on line at the OSU libraries at <http://library.ohio-state.edu.proxy.lib.ohio-state.edu/record=b7397486~S8>); (2) exit poll results from 2012 contests, which were sponsored by the major TV networks and newspapers and are reported on their election 2012 websites; (3) past actual election results; and (4) state distributions of party identification, distributed in class. Results, exit polls, and other information are contained within the following websites:

[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.cbsnews.com/election-results-2012/](http://www.cbsnews.com/election-results-2012/)  
[www.foxnews.com/politics/elections/2012](http://www.foxnews.com/politics/elections/2012)

Larry Sabato's Crystal Ball (<http://www.centerforpolitics.org/crystalball/>) follows Senate and Governor races closely and is a good source for identifying what candidates have filed and how the races stand at any time. For useful up-to-date compilations of state polls on these races, the best among many sources is [www.realclearpolitics.com](http://www.realclearpolitics.com). More information will be provided in class about these contests and about potential sources, and the web contains additional resources for tracking down information on each state and contest. In using website material, though, be careful to determine whether the site has up-to-date information (especially in the case of election results), who is responsible for the website, and whether it might have a partisan bias – **and to properly cite it as a source.**

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, leading up to and in 2014;
- specifics of the contests chosen for analysis;
- 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 will be run through a plagiarism checker and 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 plus extra readings – will be posted on the course website on Carmen (<https://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, and they must be professional and civil.

## GEC Requirements

Political Science 4150 satisfies the University's General Education Curriculum (GEC) requirement for the organizations and politics category in the social sciences. The goals for this category are for students to understand the systematic study of human behavior and cognition; the structure of human societies, cultures, and institutions; and the processes by which individuals, groups, and societies interact, communicate, and use human, natural, and economic resources. The expected learning outcomes for this course are that students will (1) understand the theories and methods of scientific inquiry as they apply to the study of parties, party systems, and politics; (2) understand the formation and durability of political and social organizing principles and their differences and similarities across contexts; and (3) comprehend and assess the nature and values of parties and politics and 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://www.studentaffairs.osu.edu/resource\\_csc.asp](http://www.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 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 by the time of the class for which they are assigned.

## PARTIES AND THE AMERICAN PARTY SYSTEM

Jan 8      Course Introduction

Hershey, *Party Politics in America* (Foreword), pp. xiv-xxi

Jan 10 &15 Party Responses to a Changing Environment

Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, Part I (Parties and Party Systems), pp. 1-3; and Chapter 1 (What Are Political Parties?), pp. 4-26

Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, selection from Chapter 7 (The American Party Systems), pp. 127-31

Beck, "Parties in the American Political Environment," in Hershey, *CQ Guide to Political Parties*, Chapter 5, forthcoming [On Carmen website]

Jan 17      Foundations of the American Two-Party System

Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, Chapter 2 (The American Two-Party System), pp. 27-46

Beck, "Third Parties," in Coates, *The Oxford Companion to American Politics*, forthcoming [On Carmen website]

**Friday, January 17: QUIZ #1, Why does the U.S. have a two-party system?**

## THE POLITICAL PARTY ORGANIZATIONS

Jan 22      Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, Part II (The Political Party as an Organization), pp. 47-49

After the Machines, the Health of the Local and State Parties

Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, Chapter 3 (The State and Local Party Organizations), pp. 50-68

Jan 24      The Emergent National Party Organizations

Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, Chapter 4 (The Parties' National Organizations), pp. 69-90

**Friday, January 24: STATE CONTEST DUE FOR RESEARCH PAPER**

Jan 29      Party Activists and the Tea Party

Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, Chapter 5 (Party Activists), pp. 91-106

Francia and Morris, "Tea Party Supporters, Establishment Republicans, and the Role of Social Networking Media in the 2012 General Election Campaign," paper presented at the State of the Parties Conference, Akron, OH, November 7-8, 2013 [On Carmen website]

Rapoport, Dost, and Stone, "The Tea Party, Republican Factionalism and the 2012 Election," paper presented at the State of the Parties Conference, Akron, OH, November 7-8, 2013 [On Carmen website]

**Friday, January 31: QUIZ #2, What Is the Tea Party and Who Are Its Supporters?**

POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE ELECTORATE

Jan 31

& Feb 5 Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, Part III (The Political Party in the Electorate), pp. 107-08

The Importance of Party Identifications

Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, Chapter 6 (Party Identification), pp. 109-25

Feb 7

Partisan Polarization in America, and Beyond

Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, Chapter 7 (Party Coalitions and Party Change), pp. 126-48

POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE ELECTORAL PROCESS

Feb 12

Setting the Stage for 2012

Sides and Vavreck, Chapter 1 (Ante Up), pp. 1-10, and Chapter 2 (The Hand You're Dealt), pp. 11-31

Feb 14

Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, Part IV, pp. 171-72.

How Parties Select Candidates: General Considerations

Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, Chapter 9 (How Parties Choose Candidates), pp. 173-88, and Chapter 10 (Choosing the Presidential Nominees), pp. 189-209

Feb 19 & 21 How the Parties Chose Their Presidential Candidates in 2012

Sides and Vavreck, Chapter 3 (Random, or Romney), pp. 32-63, and Chapter 4 (All In), pp. 64-96

**Wednesday, February 26: MID-TERM EXAMINATION, 12:45-2:05 pm, in classroom**

Feb 28 &

Mar 5 What Mattered Most in the 2012 Presidential General Election

Sides and Vavreck, Chapter 5 (High Rollers), pp. 97-140, Chapter 6 (The Action), pp. 141-73, Chapter 7 (The Winning Hand), pp. 174-225, and Chapter 8 (Cashing In), pp. 226-42

Mar 7

Research Day: NO CLASS

**March 12 & 14: SPRING BREAK**

**Wednesday, March 19: QUIZ #3, What mattered most in the presidential general election campaigns of 2012?**

Mar 19      How Much Do Campaigns Matter?

Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, Chapter 11 (The General Election), pp. 210-28  
Beck and Heidemann, “The Ground Game from the Voter’s Perspective: 2012 and Before,” paper presented at the State of the Parties Conference, Akron, OH, November 7-8, 2013 [On Carmen website]

Mar 21      American Turnout in Comparative Perspective

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

Mar 26  
& 28      Controlling Money in Politics: A Quixotic Quest?

Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, Chapter 12 (Financing the Campaigns), pp. 229-56

Dwyre and Kolodny, “Political Party Activity in the 2012 Elections: Sophisticated Orchestration or Diminished Influence?” paper presented at the State of the Parties Conference, Akron, OH, November 7-8, 2013 [On Carmen website]

**Wednesday, April 2: QUIZ #4, Who funded congressional campaigns in 2012?**

**POLITICAL PARTIES IN GOVERNMENT**

Apr 2 & 4      Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, Part IV (The Party in Government), pp. 257-59

Parties in the Legislatures

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

Therriault, “The Gingrich Senators, the Tea Party Senators, and Their Effect on the U.S. Senate,” paper presented at the Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL, April 13, 2013. [On Carmen website]

Apr 9      The Role of Party in the Executive and Judiciary

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

Apr 11      Separation of Powers and the Challenge of Party Government

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

PARTIES AND THE FUTURE OF AMERICAN POLITICS

Apr 16      The Future of the American Parties

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

**Wednesday, April 16: RESEARCH PAPERS DUE [by 5 pm] in hard copy to the instructor and in electronic version to the Dropbox on the Carmen website**

Apr 18      Conclusion: What Kind of Parties **Should** We Want?

**Thursday, April 24, 12-1:45 pm: FINAL EXAMINATION [in classroom]**