Course Description

This course is designed to introduce students to the major theoretical approaches to the study of political parties from a comparative perspective. Since no single course could hope to cover either all the significant theoretical or empirical work on the subject or all regions of the world, this one will draw mainly on ideas and literature from Western Europe and the United States. This focus rests on this literature being central to efforts to understand party politics in all their diverse complexity in the newer democracies of the world. Students will have the chance to develop their own interests in, perhaps, for example, the newer democracies, in their course assessment work.


Below are some of the most important theoretical works on political parties and you need to be familiar with them for your general examinations.


All the required readings for the course are book chapters or journal articles. Those that are not available electronically are can be accessed through this course’s Carmen website.

**Seminar Requirements**

**First,** it is expected that you will read and think about all of the materials before each class. To encourage class discussion, you are required to pose **two** questions suggested to you by that week’s reading. These questions are intended to stimulate class discussion and should be e-mailed to your classmates and me by noon on each Wednesday before our Friday meeting. They should address **important** substantive or methodological issues that emerge from that week’s reading. I shall identify two or three themes that emerge from these questions to focus our discussion each week, ensuring over the course of the quarter that questions posed by every student will be discussed.

**Second,** you will write over the course of the quarter a total of **two** short (4-5) page essays selected from a set of questions I shall distribute early in the course. One essay should be submitted by the end of the fifth week of the quarter and the second by the end of the ninth week. The questions will be similar to those typically found on written M.A. or Ph.D. candidacy examinations.

**Third,** you are required to write a 20-25 page research paper (including tables, references, and so on) that is due no later than Wednesday, 5 December at noon. This paper may be (a) an in-depth assessment of an important debate in the parties literature with proposals to refine that debate theoretically or empirically; or (b) a research design paper in which you articulate an important hypothesis, situate it in the relevant theoretical and empirical literature and discuss how you would propose to test this hypothesis; or (c) a preliminary empirical analysis of an important puzzle having to do with some aspect of party politics.

While most papers will likely build on the class readings, students are most welcome to focus on debates and cases (countries) not covered in the class readings. Whatever the subject of your paper, however, it should go well beyond description and demonstrate synthetic and analytical skills that suggest an ability to build on the existing literature. I strongly encourage you to come to discuss your paper topic with me as soon as you think you may have something on which you want to write.

**Grade distribution**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quality of discussion questions</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short Essays (15% each)</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Paper</td>
<td>40%</td>
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Disability

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disabilities services will be appropriately accommodated, and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs.

COURSE OUTLINE AND READINGS

Week 1: What Are Political Parties?


Week 2: What Do Political Parties Do?


Week 3: Institutional Origins

Week 4: Sociological Origins


Week 5: Party Organization


Week 6: Party Ideologies

A. Ware, “Parties and Ideology” Ch. 1 from A. Ware, *Political Parties and Party Systems*.
G. Sartori, *Parties and Party Systems*, ch. 10

Week 7: Party Types


**Week 8: Authoritarian Political Parties**


**Week 9: Do Parties Matter?**


**Week 10: Parties in Crisis?**

S. Bartolini & P. Mair, “Challenges to Contemporary Political Parties” in Gunther & Diamond, eds., *Political Parties and Democracy*. 