

Political Science 3035
American Political Parties and Politics
Tuesday 6:30 p.m.
Spring Semester 2010
Thomas F. Eamon

Many Americans have long boasted of the country's freedoms and its democracy. Over a period of time the country has broadened the scope of its democracy to include a lot of people who were not included earlier. People and interest groups are imaginative and innovative. They try to twist the political process in ways that will benefit themselves. This course stresses the role of the political parties and the entire political process. We look at the history of American politics and current politics. This course will contribute to an understanding of the subfield of American politics found in the Social Science field of Political Science. You will learn about the nature of various political organizations and their activities in U.S politics, the ways in which political scientists study those groups and the contribution of that study to general knowledge.

Course Requirements

- a. **Test I**— Tuesday February 9 – In class essay. Questions will be provided in advanced.
- b. **Test II**— Tuesday March 2 –Identification and essay questions on class and reading material up to this point.
- c. **Test III**—Tuesday April 20 –Identification and essay questions on classes and readings after spring break.
- d. **Final Examination-Take Home**—Tuesday May 4—These are to be submitted in class between 6:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.

Grade Scale

- A – 93 – 100
B – 85 – 92
C – 70 – 84
D – 60 – 69
F – Below 60

All class members are to participate in a special project. Your project may take the following form:

1. Participation in an oral group project to be followed by a short individual paper.—The group project should be informative, thought-provoking and entertaining. Possible topics are listed below. The individual paper should be around seven or eight pages in length. The presentations will be during the last month of classes.
2. You may write an individual term paper--around 20 to 25 pages.
3. You may write a personal essay on your political evolution—20 to 25 pages.

All requirements must be completed for a passing grade in the class.

Text books and newspaper (required)

1. Marjorie Hershey- Party Politics in America, 2009
 2. Richard Brookhiser- What Would the Founders Do?
 3. Dan Balz and Haynes Johnson- The Battle for America, 2009
 4. All class members are asked to subscribe to the Wall Street Journal. We get a special reduced rate for students. (If you already have a subscription to the New York Times, that can be substituted) I will pass out the journal sign-up forms in the first class.
- Though not required, you might find the “Politico and Real Clear Politics” website useful.

Attendance

Anyone missing over one class is normally ineligible for a passing grade. Let me know in cases of illness or emergencies.

Office Hours

Tuesday: 3:15 – 4:30

Wednesday: 10:00 – 1:15

Thursday: 11:50 – 12:20

Office: Brewster A-130

If I am in my office you are always welcome whether or not it is an official office hour time. **Phone:** home- (919) 682-6486 or (252)-752-7543; cell phone – (919) 402-7810; office-(252)-328-1061

Course Outline

Introduction on January 12

- I. The Evolution of a Nation (January 19)**
 - A. America: 1776, 1860, 2010
 - B. The Founding Principles
 - C. The American Experiment
 - D. The Origin of Political Parties
 - E. Theories of Political Parties
- II. The American Profile (January 19)**
 - A. Population Distribution
 - B. National Diversity
- III. Theories of Voting Behavior and Elections (January 19)**
- IV. The Party Battle to 1930 (January 26)**
 - A. The Concepts of Realignment and Dealignment
 - B. The Federalists and Rivals
 - C. The Origins of the Democrats and Whigs
 - D. The Sectional Conflicts
 - E. The Cataclysm : The Civil War and Reconstruction
 - F. 1877-1928

1. Party Rivalry
 2. The "Realignment" of 1896
 3. Populism
 4. Bryan and Teddy Roosevelt
 5. The "Accidental" Wilson
 6. The Wilsonian Legacy
 7. The Twenties; Prosperity, Prejudice and Economic Collapse
- V. The Modern Political Era (February 2-23)**
- A. Roosevelt and the New Deal
 - B. World War II
 - C. Truman and Eisenhower
 - D. The Kennedy Phenomenon
 - E. The Johnson Paradox and the Goldwater Movement
 - F. The Political Impact of Nixon
 - G. Carter and Ford
 - H. The Reagan Triumph
 - I. Bush-Clinton-Bush
 - J. The 1994 Congressional Sweepstakes
- VI. The Current Party Battle: History in the Making**
- A. Party Strengths and Weaknesses in the 2000's
 - B. The Legacies of 2000 and 2004
 - C. 2008
 1. The Party Contests: Primaries
 2. The Obama Phenomenon
 3. A Different Kind of Country?
 - D. 2010
- VII. The Internal Dynamics of National Parties (March 16)**
- A. Party Rules and Organizations and Officials
 - B. The Caucus and Convention
 - C. National Conventions
 1. Rules
 2. Resolutions
 3. Platforms
 4. The Nomination Process
 5. Famous and Infamous Conventions in American History
- VIII. The State Parties (March 16)**
- A. Relation to National Parties
 - B. Organization
 - C. The North Carolina Parties
- IX. The Role of Third Parties in American National and State Politics**
- A. Roles in Elections
 - B. Impact on Politics and Policy
- X. Interest Groups in American Politics (March 16)**
- A. Kinds of Interest Groups
 - B. Interest Group Techniques and Influence
 - C. The Media as Interest Group
- XI. Modern Campaigns (March 23)**
- A. The Air War
 - B. The Ground War
 - C. The Money Chest
 - D. Hard Money and Soft Money

E. The Impact of Laws

XII. The Future

XIII. Projects (March 30 to end of course)

1. Debate: Resolved That The Electoral College Should Be Abolished.
2. Great Leaders and Great Failures in American History.
3. Change in the Democratic and Republican Parties- 1900-2010
4. What is the Proper Role for America in the World?
5. Changes in American Campaigns in the Last Fifty Years.