

American Political Parties and Elections
PLSC 324
Fall 2016
Andrews University
Department of History/Political Science

Instructor: Dr. Marcella Myers

Office: Buller Hall 129
marcellm@andrews.edu
(269) 471-3293

Buller Hall 149
TR 2:00 – 3:15 p.m.
Office Hours:
M & W 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
and by appointment

Course Description:

Political parties and interest groups play an important role in American politics. Parties and interest groups aggregate citizen demands, and then communicates those demands to lawmakers. This course will examine the relationship between parties and the citizens they represent and the lawmakers they seek to influence. We will be concerned with the formation of parties, their organization and structure, and their function in elections.

Course Objectives:

The objective for this course is for students to learn how political parties have developed, their multiple functions in government, in office and in the electorate. Students will understand the structure and function of political parties and their interaction with the electoral process and elections. Students will obtain skills critical to the assessment and evaluation of political party activities, elections and the interaction of citizens with their political environment. On completion of this course, students will be able to explain how political parties developed, the role political parties play in the American political process and how citizens interact with political parties.

Textbooks:

Brewer, Mark D., L. Sandy Maisel. *Parties and Elections in America* 7th ed. New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016. ISBN 978-1-4422-4973-8

Flanigan, William H., Nancy H. Zingale, Elizabeth A. Theiss-Morse, Michael W. Wagner. *Political Behavior of the American Electorate* 13th ed. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2015. ISBN 978-1-4522-4044-2

Bell, Lauren Cohen, David Elliot Meyer, and Ronald Keith Gaddie. *Slingshot: The Defeat of Eric Cantor*. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2016. ISBN 978-1-5063-1196-8

Course Requirements:

Students are expected to attend class and participate in class discussions. It is important for students to complete the assigned reading prior to class.

No electronic devices including cell phones, MP3 players, or laptops are allowed in lecture. Use of electronic devices in class may result in an absence for the day and/or dismissal from class.

Special needs or students with disabilities should contact me as soon as possible to provide appropriate accommodations. If you are experiencing difficulties with the class please see me during office hours, make an appointment with me, or visit the Student Success Center in Nethery rm. 204.

Attendance:

Attendance is important as writing assignments will be primarily completed and turned in during the class meeting. Late and make-up assignments are not accepted without prior arrangement with the professor. In-class writing assignments are used record attendance. It is important that students attend class, and arrive on time.

Assignments:

Writing assignments will be assigned and completed in class during the semester. These assignments will be in the form of minute papers or think sheets. In addition, students will complete a project.

Student will write a project in which they monitor one contested national Congressional election. Students will profile the Congressional district or state in which the election is contested. Students will then profile both candidates and campaigns, identifying to the best of their ability campaign strategies. In addition, students will identify major issues for each campaign, keep track of polling, and evaluate the effectiveness of each campaign. Throughout the semester students will monitor the activities of both campaigns leading up to the election, and provide post-election evaluations of both campaigns. Students will present their analysis to the class at the end of the semester.

Late assignments and/or emailed assignments are not accepted.

Think Sheets: write one page discuss what the reading made you think about in your own life.

Grading:

Your grade will be based on your class attendance, assignments, and project.

Class Attendance 10%
Exams 45%

Project 45%

Letter grades will be assigned as follows:

A 95 – 100%
A- 90 – 94%
B+ 85 – 89%
B 80 – 84%
B- 75 – 79%

C+ 70 – 75%
C 65 – 69%
C- 60 – 64%
D 50 – 59%
F 0 – 49%

Academic Honesty:

Academic honesty is an important part of every academic institution and student learning. Plagiarism and all other forms of academic dishonesty will be dealt with according to the policy of Andrews University. It is your responsibility to be familiar with University policy. The University's Code of Academic Integrity is found at http://www.andrews.edu/academics/academic_integrity.html.

Emergency Protocol

Andrews University takes the safety of its student seriously. Signs identifying emergency protocol are posted throughout buildings. Instructors will provide guidance and direction to students in the classroom in the event of an emergency affecting that specific location. It is important that you follow these instructions and stay with your instructor during any evacuation or sheltering emergency.

Course Schedule:

August 23:

Introduction

Aug. 25: Elections and Parties

Reading: Brewer and Maisel pp. 2 - 17

Aug. 31: Political Parties and Party Organization

Reading: Brewer and Maisel pp. 20 – 57

September 1: Voting and Political Participation

Reading: Brewer and Maisel pp. 61 - 101

Assignment Due: turn in chosen Congressional election

Sept. 6: Organized Groups in the Political Process

Reading: Brewer and Maisel pp. 104 – 125;

Sept. 8: Campaign Finance

Reading: Brewer and Maisel pp. 128 - 165

Sept. 13: State and Local Nominations

Reading: Brewer and Maisel pp. 169 - 188

Assignment due: Congressional district profile

Sept. 15: State and Local Elections

Reading: Brewer and Maisel pp. 192 - 229

Sept. 20: Presidential Nominations/Nominations

Reading: Brewer and Maisel pp. 233 – 267; pp. 271 - 304

Assignment due: Congressional candidate profile

Sept. 22: The Media and the Electoral Process

Reading: Brewer and Maisel pp. 307 - 333

Sept. 27: Party in Government/Role of Political Parties

Reading: Brewer and Maisel pp. 336 – 366; 369 - 384

Assignment due: Congressional campaign profile

Sept. 29: Democratic Beliefs and American Democracy

Reading: Flanigan et al. pp. 11 – 42

October 4: Electoral Context and Strategy

Reading: Flanigan et al. pp. 48 – 66

Assignment due: Identify and explain campaign issues

Oct. 6: Turnout and Elections

Reading: Flanigan et al. pp. 69 - 92

Oct. 8: Partisanship and Party Change

Reading: Flanigan et al. pp. 98 - 135

Oct. 13: Public Opinion and Ideology

Reading: Flanigan et al. pp. 139 – 178

Oct. 18: Group Characteristics and Social Networks

Reading: Flanigan et al. pp. 182 – 207

Oct. 20: Political Communication and the Mass Media

Reading: Flanigan et al. pp. 212 – 247

Oct. 25: Vote Choice and Electoral Decisions

Reading: Flanigan et al. pp. 252 - 290

Oct. 27: The Cantor Case in Context

Reading: Bell et al. pp. 1 - 30

November 1: Eric Cantor and the Giant Slayer; David and Goliath

Reading: Bell et al. pp. 31 - 70

Nov. 3: Lost Between DC and Richmond

Reading: Bell et al. pp. 71 - 104

Nov. 8: The Primary Contest

Reading: Bell et al. pp. 105 - 123

Nov. 10: The Aftermath

Reading: Bell et al. pp. 125 - 138

Nov. 15: Conclusion

Reading: Bell et al. pp. 139 - 155

Nov. 17: Epilogue

Reading: Bell et al. pp. 157 - 169

Nov.29:

Assignment due: post-election campaign analysis

December 1: Project presentations

December 8: 1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. Final Project due