

POL230-010 – **AMERICAN POLITICAL PARTIES** – 3.0 credit hours
Kutztown University of Pennsylvania
Spring 2010 – TH 9:30-10:50 a.m. – Graduate Center 101

COURSE SYLLABUS

Professor: Glenn W. Richardson Jr.
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Office Hours: 11:00-11:30, MWF; 2:15-2:45, MW; 4:30-5:45
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Course URL: <http://faculty.kutztown.edu/richards/230/230.html>

OVERVIEW:

Today, according to political scientist John Aldrich, “virtually everything important in American politics is rooted in *party* politics.” Parties lie at the epicenter of American democracy, as they have since the early days of the republic. For political scientist E.E. Schattschneider, democracy itself was “unthinkable, save in terms of party.”

Scholars have found it useful to divide political parties into three component parts: the party organization, the party in the electorate (its voters, volunteers and contributors), and the party in government. From this point of departure, researchers have learned a great deal about how parties work, how voters relate to parties, and how the governing process reflects the partisan affiliation of citizens and elected officials. Questions such as why and how people become involved in party politics, how people choose among parties, and how broad shifts in partisan alignment among voters have shaped the nation’s political agenda have attracted considerable scholarly attention, and they provide the foundation for inquiry in this course.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is designed to provide students with an introduction to American political parties. It will focus on who becomes involved in parties, why, and to what effect. It will address contemporary political issues including the role of money in politics, the “gender gap,” and the effect of parties in each of the three branches of government. The course will consider how parties change, and how partisan change changes America.

The assignments for this course are two in-class midterm examinations, various in-class assignments, an extended take-home written assignment and a final exam. All assignments are explained in detail below.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- * Expose students to students to the key concepts and findings of scholarly approaches to political parties, as demonstrated by proficiency in examination, in-class activities and participation in class discussions and debates.
- * Develop students’ skills in critical reading, thinking, writing and debate, as demonstrated by proficiency in written examination and class participation.
- * Encourage students to apply the theories and concepts of the study of American political parties to the current political environment, as demonstrated by proficiency in examination, other written assignments, and class participation.

GRADING:

Points will be awarded on the following basis:

Assignment	Due Date	Points
In-class assignments	January 19-April 29	15
Exam I	Thursday, February 18	20
Exam II	Thursday, April 1	20
Campaign 2010 Memo	Thursday, April 29	25
Final Exam	Tuesday, May 4	20
Optional Journal/Portfolio	Thursday, April 29	10
TOTAL	January 19-May 4	110

Grades will be awarded on the following basis:

Grade	Points
A	90 +
B	80 +
C	70 +
D	60 +
F	< 60

- **ALL ASSIGNMENTS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE AS ANNOUNCED IN CLASS.**
- **PLEASE BE SURE TO BACK-UP ALL OF YOUR COMPUTER FILES. DO NOT TURN IN YOUR ONLY COPY OF ANY ASSIGNMENT.**

ASSIGNMENTS:Examinations

There are three in-class examinations scheduled during the course of the semester (two midterms and a final). Exams will emphasize multiple-choice questions, but may also include short answer and essay questions. Multiple choice items will be graded by optical scan. *You must bring your own scantron forms to class. Failure to do so will result in a 10-point penalty and your exam may not be returned before the end of the semester.* The instructor reserves the right to correct any erroneously scored items or improperly recorded scores with correct values; *under no circumstances will any misscored items be counted as correct if **any** erasure marks appear on the item in question.* Exam material will be drawn directly from the class readings, discussions, lectures and news reports relating to political parties appearing during the semester in the *New York Times*.

Campaign 2010 Memo

Students are required to submit a draft memorandum simulating what might actually be written by participants in the 2010 campaign, such as campaign advisors, consultants, or members of the media. Examples of memo topics would include opposition research on a particular candidate, a strategy memo for a particular party or candidate, a strategy memo on a particular candidate's image, a memo to reporters on campaign coverage, or campaign strategy memos for particular candidates in particular states. You are encouraged to come up with your own memo topics, though you must obtain approval from the instructor if your memo topic is substantially different from those listed above. Your memo should allow you to **demonstrate your detailed mastery of course readings and discussions**. All memos must be typewritten, double-spaced and should **not exceed six pages**. Memos should be concise,

yet as detailed as possible. **Present direct quotations** from the readings where appropriate and **back up your points with evidence, reasoning and examples**. Your memos will be much stronger if you **anticipate and respond to opposing views**.

Final Exam

The final exam in this course is scheduled for Tuesday, May 4. It will essentially represent the third in-class exam and will be based on the roughly the last third of the course's material.

In-class assignments

During the course of the semester, 15 points will be awarded for various assignments to be announced in class.

Optional Journal/Portfolio

Students can complete a journal/portfolio of entries pertaining to American political parties based on events and experiences that occur during this semester. Journal/portfolios should consist of copies of articles from the reputable national news sources published during this semester relevant to concepts in the readings, lectures and other course activities; and typewritten responses of approximately one to two double-spaced pages to each article. Journals will be evaluated in terms of their ability to *integrate and extend class concepts in depth and detail*. Each portfolio must include at least seven entries. Up to two entries may relate to conversations or experiences students have had relevant to the course materials. Portfolios should be neat and well organized; unprofessional work will be marked lower. Up to 10 points toward the final grade may be earned from this assignment. Optional journal/portfolios are due in class on Thursday, April 29.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

*Special Spring 2010 Flu Protocols – In compliance with Pennsylvania Department of Health and Centers for Disease Control recommendations, students should **NOT** attend class or any public gatherings while ill with influenza. Students with flu symptoms will be asked to leave campus if possible and to return home during recovery. The illness and self-isolation period will usually be about a week. It is very important that individuals avoid spreading the flu to others.*

Students are responsible for class attendance, and for all materials discussed and assigned during class.

Make-up Assignments

There will be **no** make-up assignments for unexcused absences. Excused absences include but are not limited to illness, scheduled university-related activities, a death in the family, jury duty, and impassable roads. Acceptable excuses must be provided to the instructor **before** the assignment is due and **in writing** to be considered. Students who are unable to complete an assignment for legitimate reasons that do not qualify as excused under college guidelines, and who notify the instructor **before** the assignment is due, may, at the discretion of the instructor, turn in late assignments for partial credit.

NOTE: *Make-up tests and assignments will not be returned before the end of the semester. Make-up tests and assignments may differ from those given in class in terms of both content and form.*

Penalties for Late Assignments

Assignments turned in late on the day they are due will face a five-percent penalty. Each subsequent late day will accrue an additional ten percent deduction.

NOTE: *Late assignment penalties also apply where students fail to notify the instructor of an absence before an exam or assignment is due.*

In addition, at the instructor's discretion, students may be given the opportunity to complete a supplemental assignment to help offset late penalties. Typically, the amount of work involved in supplemental assignments would be disproportionate to the credit that can be earned (these policies are designed to discourage late assignments). If you have any doubt at all about your ability to complete an assignment you should notify the instructor in advance "just in case." Failure to do this will assure that you will not receive credit for missed assignments.

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION:

This course will on occasion use Blackboard to post important information; students may also receive e-mail announcements sent to their KU e-mail address.

If you wish to send a message to me personally, you must address it to my e-mail address (richards@kutztown.edu). *Please include a recognizable subject line.* Doing so allows me to instantly recognize your message as important and distinguishes it from the many messages from strange e-mail addresses that arrive on a daily basis, and facilitates a prompt response from me. If you send me an e-mail message and do not receive a prompt response, please do not hesitate to send a follow-up. While I try to answer each e-mail, it can be easy to accidentally overlook any particular message.

Students are responsible for monitoring and contributing to class electronic communication. Important announcements may also be posted on the class homepage <<http://faculty.kutztown.edu/richards/320/320.html>>

Please note: e-mail submissions of assignments are not accepted.

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE:

Students are expected to observe all rules of proper classroom conduct. In order to insure an appropriate environment conducive to learning there are two rules governing behavior in the classroom that you must be aware of:

- Use of electronic devices of any kind is ***not*** permitted in class. Students with special needs should discuss accommodations with the instructor.
- Please refrain from talking, texting, eating, leaving your cell phone ringers on, or other disruptive activity during class. Even one or two conversations quickly create distractions for other students and the instructor.
- Please do not leave class early. If you must do so, tell the instructor before hand and arrange to sit near the door so your exit will be less noticeable.

Serious violations of these rules may result in a request that the offending individual(s) leave the classroom. Grading penalties (up to a half-letter grade for first-time offenders and a full letter-grade for recidivists) may be imposed at the discretion of the instructor.

POLICY ON ACADEMIC ETHICS AND HONESTY:

If a student has plagiarized or cheated in a course, the instructor may (in consultation with the Department Chairperson and the Dean) impose sanctions upon the student up to and including dismissal from the course with a grade of "F". The student forfeits all privileges of withdrawal from the course.

Plagiarism is stealing and passing off (the ideas, words, work, themes, reports, drawings, laboratory notes, computer programs or other products of another) as one's own. In short, it is using a created production without crediting the source. The surest way to avoid plagiarism is to provide proper citation to all works quoted directly or otherwise indirectly borrowed from. Proper citations include the title, date, and author of the work. If you are not familiar with the formatting of bibliographic citations, please consult a writer's style guide or manual. An excellent online guide to citation can be found on the internet at:

<http://www.libs.uga.edu/ref/turabian.html>

Guides for citing online materials specifically can be found on the web at:

<http://webster.commnet.edu/apa/online.htm>

or

<http://www.bedfordstmartins.com/online/cite6.html>

Cheating includes (but is not limited to) an attempt by one or more students to use unauthorized information in the taking of an exam; or knowingly to assist another student in obtaining or using unauthorized materials. Further specific delineation of academically dishonest behavior can be in [The Key: Student Handbook 2009-2010](#) (pp. 50-51). If you have any doubts as to whether particular behavior would amount to cheating, please ask the instructor for clarification. Ignorance of the rules is not a valid defense.

COURSE STRUCTURE:

Class meetings will be comprised of introductory and concluding comments from the instructor, lectures, questions, discussions, debates and activities involving the whole class. For the class to be most successful, each student must come to each class prepared. That involves reading, studying, analyzing and often re-reading and re-analyzing materials *before* class. Much of what is said in the class, both by students and by the instructor, will make little sense to the unprepared student.

You must also try to resist the temptation to discount the comments of your fellow students. The course is *designed* to give students the opportunity to articulate key concepts and criticisms. Many, if not most, of the important statements made in the class will be made by students. It is essential that you give the utmost respect to your classmates.

Also, keep in mind that in no case should any of the comments in the class be taken or directed personally. A college classroom is perhaps the singular place in our society where people gather for the purpose of giving deliberate and reasoned consideration to a wide range of views, including many of great controversy. Indeed, I encourage you to present views you may not necessarily agree with in order to explore and develop relevant themes or issues.

TEXTBOOKS:

There are **two** (2) required textbooks for this course:

Hershey, Marjorie Randon. *Party Politics in America* (13th ed.). New York: Pearson Longman. 2009.

Nelson, Michael (Ed.). *The Elections of 2008*. Washington, D.C. CQ Press. 2009.

Books are available at the KU Bookstore in the David E. McFarland Student Union Building.

READING AND ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

WEEK ONE: January 19-22

INTRODUCTION

POLS 230 Course Syllabus

Nelson, Michael. "The Setting: Diversifying the Presidential Talent Pool." (Ch. 1 in Nelson)

PARTIES AND PARTY SYSTEMS I

Hershey, "What Are Political Parties?" (Ch. 1)

WEEK TWO: January 25-29

PARTIES AND PARTY SYSTEMS II

Hershey, "The American Two-Party System." (Ch. 2)

WEEK THREE: February 1-5

THE POLITICAL PARTY AS AN ORGANIZATION I

Hershey, "The State and Local Party Organization." (Ch. 3)

WEEK FOUR: February 8-12

THE POLITICAL PARTY AS AN ORGANIZATION II

Hershey, "The Parties National Organizations." (Ch. 4)

WEEK FIVE: February 15-19

THE POLITICAL PARTY AS AN ORGANIZATION III

Hershey, "Party Activists." (Ch. 5)

***** EXAM I: THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 18 *****

WEEK SIX: February 22-26

THE POLITICAL PARTY IN THE ELECTORATE I

Hershey, "Party Identification." (Ch. 6)

Mellow, Nicole. "Voting Behavior: A Blue Nation?" (Ch. 7 in Nelson)

**WEEK SEVEN:
March 1-5**

THE POLITICAL PARTY AS AN ORGANIZATION II

Hershey, "Party Coalitions and Party Change." (Ch. 7)

Pomper, Gerald. "The Presidential Election: Change Comes to America." (Ch. 3 in Nelson)

SPRING BREAK:

Begins: **AT THE END OF CLASSES, FRIDAY, MARCH 5**

Ends: **8:00 A.M., MONDAY, MARCH 15**

**WEEK EIGHT:
March 15-19**

THE POLITICAL PARTY AS AN ORGANIZATION III

Hershey, "Who Votes and Why it Matters." (Ch. 8)

**WEEK NINE:
March 22-26**

PARTIES NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS I

Hershey, "How Parties Choose Candidates." (Ch. 9)

**WEEK TEN:
March 29-April 2**

PARTIES NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS II

Hershey, "Choosing the Presidential Nominees." (Ch. 10)

Burden, Barry C. "The Nominations: Rules, Strategies, and Uncertainty." (Ch. 2 in Nelson)

***** EXAM II: THURSDAY, APRIL 1 *****

**WEEK ELEVEN:
April 5-9**

PARTIES NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS III

Hershey, "The General Election." (Ch. 11)

Mayhew, David R. "The Meaning of the 2008 Election." (Ch. 9 in Nelson)

**WEEK TWELVE:
April 12-16**

PARTIES NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS IV

Hershey, Marjorie Randon. "The Media: Coloring the News." (Ch. 6 in Nelson)

**WEEK THIRTEEN:
April 19-23**

THE PARTY IN GOVERNMENT I

Hershey, "Parties in Congress and State Legislatures." (Ch. 13)
Jacobson, Gary C. "The Congress: The Second Democratic Wave." (Ch. 5 in Nelson)

**WEEK FOURTEEN
April 26-30**

THE PARTY IN GOVERNMENT II

Hershey, "The Party in the Executive and the Courts." (Ch. 14)
Quirk, Paul J. and Bruce Nesmith, "The Presidency: The Unexpected Competence of the Barack Obama Administration." (Ch. 4 in Nelson)

THE PARTY IN GOVERNMENT III

Hershey, "The Semi-Responsible Parties." (Ch. 15)
Hershey, "The Place of Parties in American Politics." (Ch. 16)

***** CAMPAIGN 2010 MEMO DUE: THURSDAY, APRIL 29 *****
***** OPTIONAL JOURNAL/PORTFOLIO DUE: THURSDAY, APRIL 29 *****

**WEEK FIFTEEN
May 3-7**

***** FINAL EXAM: 8:00 A.M. TUESDAY, MAY 4 *****

PLEASE NOTE: *If a class examination is scheduled or a class assignment is due on a day when classes are cancelled, the exam will be given or the assignment will be due on the next day*