

## **POLS 211**

Prof. Daniel Klinghard  
303 Fenwick Hall

## **Political Parties and Interest Groups**

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### **OFFICE HOURS:**

Tuesdays and Thursdays 3:20-5:00  
Wednesdays 11-2  
and by appointment

### **About the Course**

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This course examines the role of political parties, interest associations, and civic engagement in a liberal democratic regime. Neither interest associations nor parties are mentioned in the US Constitution, and they have been reviled by Americans from the beginning as a disease of the body politic. Yet most Americans follow their cues; many devote their time and resources to them. We will question their value in the American regime: why have parties and interest groups proven so significant under a “constitution against parties,” as the US Constitution has been described? how might parties and interest groups either strengthen or weaken government? what is the future of the parties, both as coalitions and as organizations?

Similarly, no passage of the Constitution gives us guidance as to how citizens are expected to involve themselves in the political process, but nearly all political scientists agree that the measure of a nation’s civic engagement is closely related to the health of the regime. To understand why, we will go beyond the explicitly political organizations that draw citizens immediately into politics, and investigate the role of civic organizations generally. Because the line between private citizen action and public involvement is usually a thin one (civic organizations often branch quickly into politics, and civic organizations give citizens tools with which to participate in politics later even if they do not), their connection to political parties will become more and more apparent as the semester progresses.

The course is broken into three parts. The first is an attempt to set forth a working schema of what it is that parties do. We’ll draw a theoretical picture of some of the fundamental functions that parties perform in political society. Second, we’ll examine the process by which this theoretical picture has been brought to life throughout American political history. Finally, we’ll investigate the quality of party politics in the US today, with a special emphasis on concerns about declining civic participation and the rise of elite-heavy interest organizations.

### **Course Requirements**

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#### **Essay I**      **20% 5-6 pages**

*Paper topics* will be distributed in class, and will be due at the beginning of class on the assigned date. Unexcused late papers will be counted off a letter grade per day (including weekends), and will not be accepted after 4 days. Students must keep a copy of all work submitted until final grades have been posted. Your grade will be evaluated according to the following:

1. Effective analysis of a range of conflicting and diverse material
  - Have you addressed all material relevant both to the question and to your argument?
  - Have you evidenced thorough reading of the assignment?
  - Could you have enriched your analysis by considering a wide range of assigned sources?
  - Have you used the assigned material in such a way as to make the strongest argument possible?
  
2. Accurate explanation of course concepts
  - Have you explained major concepts accurately and thoroughly?
  - Are the facts presented accurately?
  - Are arguments made in class and in the readings recounted accurately?
  - Where you disagree with prominent interpretations, have you explained your position persuasively?
  - Are your arguments appropriately documented; that is, have you attributed credit to all sources from which you have taken ideas?
  
3. Original thought that addresses substantive questions raised in class, but that also pushes beyond the boundaries, showing that you have thought about the subject on your own
  - Did you present a thesis, rather than simply restating what others have said, both in class and in the readings?
  - Did you synthesize material, showing connections and contradictions between the different sources?
  - Does your work display thoughtful and intelligent reflection, or is it evidently the product of a quick and hasty approach?

Midterm 20%

The Midterm Examination will be administered during class time. It will be comprehensive and “closed-book.” Should you anticipate that you will not be able to be present on the day of an exam, you should inform me as soon as possible. The only way you can be guaranteed a make-up exam is if you schedule one ahead of time.

Essay II 25%    5-6 pages

See description of Essay I.

Final 25%

The final examination will be administered at the officially scheduled exam time (you should check the Registrar’s website for specific date and time). It will be comprehensive and “closed-book.” Should you anticipate that you will not be able to be present on the day of an exam, you should inform me as soon as possible. The only way you can be guaranteed a make-up exam is if you schedule one ahead of time.

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**Participation** **10%**

Participation will be evaluated on your attendance *and* your contribution to discussion. You are strongly advised to attend every class meeting, and you should provide me with an college-approved excuse when you are forced to miss. Students who are unable to attend class because of religious beliefs will be excused upon notifying me. Students who anticipate absences because of their participation in a sport or extracurricular activity should inform me of this at the beginning of the semester, or as soon as absences are anticipated. I will generally be understanding about a reasonable number of excused absences, but **each unexcused absence, and an accumulation of excessive excused absences, will result in a deduction from your participation grade.** Finally, please be aware that “negative contributions” to the classroom, such as disrespect for the classroom environment and poor preparation, will be counted against you.

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**Academic Honesty**

Every assignment that you turn in will be subject to the most rigorous standards of academic honesty. Plagiarism is deceptively tempting these days, with many sources available online. Do not be deceived. All work produced in this course must be the student’s own original work that has been prepared for this course alone. Any violation of this expectation will be taken seriously. If you have any questions about plagiarism, whether use of a particular source is appropriate, or how to appropriately document a source, you should confer with me or another faculty member. You are responsible for familiarizing yourself with the official policy on academic honesty, which you can find in the Holy Cross catalog and on the college website; you might also go to [www.plagiarism.org](http://www.plagiarism.org), and click on “Research Resources.”

You should consult the course catalog for the official procedures surrounding plagiarism charges, which I will follow. In summary, should I find evidence of plagiarism, I will record a zero for the assignment, meet with you to discuss the charges, and report them to the department chair and to your class dean. You will be able to request a formal review of the charge. If the charge is upheld, the zero will remain. While this does not mean that you will automatically fail the class, given the significance of each assignment in the tallying of your final grade, a zero will make it exceedingly unlikely that you will receive a grade that is satisfactory to you.

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**Special Class**

On a date to be arranged, the class will attend a lecture by Prof. David Lowenthal on Abraham Lincoln’s political thought. As the class spends some time on Lincoln, the subject matter is particularly relevant; as class will be cancelled on March 2 due to a conference I must attend, this lecture will be required for all students enrolled in the course.

I reserve the right to schedule additional classes in the event that a regularly scheduled class must be cancelled. In lieu of a classroom lecture, such additional classes may be scheduled speakers appearing at Holy Cross.

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**Office Hours**

My office hours are not just the times that I happen to be on campus; I encourage you to view my office hours as an extended class time. If you have questions about the material that I have not clarified in class, if you have a particular insight that you would like to share, or if you are having a difficult time with the material and would like some assistance, feel free to come by during the times listed above.

I have scheduled formal office hours (listed above), but I will be widely available for discussion outside of these times. Should your schedule conflict with the formal office hours schedule, I can make an appointment with you for some other time.

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**Course Readings**

The following texts may be purchased at the college bookstore. In addition, there are a number of course readings on the course Blackboard site.

Richard Hofstadter, *The Idea of a Party System: The Rise of Legitimate Opposition in the United States, 1780-1840*

Sidney M. Milkis, *Political Parties and Constitutional Government*

William Riordin, *Plunkitt of Tammany Hall : A Series of Very Plain Talks on Very Practical Politics* (Signet Classics Version)

Jeffrey Berry, *The New Liberalism*

J.P. Monroe, *The Political Party Matrix: The Persistence of Organization*

Theda Skocpol and Morris Fiorina, *Civic Engagement in American Democracy*

**Schedule of Assignments**

(B) indicates that the reading is on Blackboard

<b>Schedule of Readings</b>	
January 19	<b>Parties in Twenty-first Century Society (to be read by 1<sup>st</sup> day of class)</b> Nicholas Lemann, "The Controller" (B)
<b>I. Parties Questioned</b>	
January 24	<b>Parties as Governing Institutions</b> Harvey Mansfield, "Political Parties and Constitutional Government," (B) James Madison, <i>The Federalist</i> 51 (B) Alan Ehrenhalt, "Mayor Daley and Modern Democracy: What We Should Have Learned from Chicago in the 1950s" (B) Nicholas Lemann, "Bush's Trillions" (B)
January 26	<b>One Party, Two Parties, and More</b> Alan Ware, <i>Citizens, Parties, and the State</i> , (B) James Madison, <i>The Federalist</i> 10 (B) Theodore Lowi, "Toward a Responsible Three-Party System," (B) E.E. Schattschneider, "The Special Character of the American Parties: The Two-Party System" (B)
January 31	<b>Party as Ideology and Party as Institution</b> Alan Ware, "Parties and Ideology" (B) Peter J. Boyer, "The Right to Choose: Why the Democrats are Moving Toward Compromise" (B) Alexis de Tocqueville, <i>Democracy in America</i> , selections on great and small parties(B) Edward Banfield, "In Defense of Political Parties" (B) Hume, "On Parties in General" (B)
February 2	<b>Parties as Civic Organizations</b> Wilson Carey McWilliams, "Parties as Civic Organizations" (B) Alexis de Tocqueville, <i>Democracy in America</i> , selections on self-interest, rightly understood (B) Milkis, ch. 1
February 7	<b>Civic Engagement and Its Requirements</b> Ray, "Technological Change and Associational Life," in S/F Skocpol and Fiorina, "Making Sense of the Civic Engagement Debate," in S/F Skocpol, "How Americans Became Civic," in S/F

<b>II. The American Developmental Response</b>	
February 9	<b>Parties in Early America</b> Hofstadter, <i>The Idea of Party</i> , chas. 1, 2 George Washington, “Farewell Address” <b>(B)</b>
February 14	<b>Parties Justified</b> Hofstadter, <i>The Idea of Party</i> , chas. 3, 4
February 16	<b>Martin Van Buren and the American Model</b> <i>Essay I Due</i> Hofstadter, <i>The Idea of Party</i> , chas. 5, 6 Milkis, <i>Political Parties and Constitutional Government</i> , ch. 2
February 21	<b>Lincoln and the Rise of the Republican Party</b> William Riker, “Manipulation and the National Selection of Issues: The Development of the Issue of Slavery as a Prelude to the American Civil War” <b>(B)</b> William Riker, “Lincoln at Freeport” <b>(B)</b> Stephen Douglas and Abraham Lincoln, “Debate at Freeport” <b>(B)</b>
February 23	<b>Machine Politics</b> Riordan, <i>Plunkitt of Tammany Hall</i>
February 28	<b>Machine Politics II</b> Riordan, <i>Plunkitt of Tammany Hall</i> Clemens, “Organizational Repertoires and Institutional Change: Women’s Groups and the Transformation of American Politics, 1890-1920,” in S/F Martin Shefter, “Trade Unions and Political Machines” <b>(B)</b>
March 2	<b>No Class</b>
March 14	<b>The Nationalization of American Parties</b> Donald Stokes, “Parties and the Nationalization of Electoral Forces” <b>(B)</b> Scott James, “Building a New American Party: Patronage Discipline and the Emergence of Strong Party Government” <b>(B)</b> Walter Dean Burnham, “The Changing Shape of the American Electoral Universe” <b>(B)</b> Rahn, Brehm, and Carlson, “National Elections as Institutions for Generating Social Capital,” in S/F

March 16	<b>MIDTERM</b>
March 21	<p><b>The Progressive Challenge</b>  Milkis, <i>Political Parties and Constitutional Government</i>, ch. 3  Ronald N. Johnson and Gary D. Libecap, “Replacing Political Patronage With Merit” (<b>B</b>)</p>
March 23	<p><b>The Progressive Challenge, part II</b>  James Caeser, “Woodrow Wilson and the Origin of the Modern Idea of Presidential Selection” (<b>B</b>)  Thomas Cronin, <i>Direct Democracy : The Politics of Initiative, Referendum, and Recall</i>, selections (<b>B</b>)  Howard Reiter, <i>Selecting the President: The Nominating Process in Transition</i> (<b>B</b>)</p>
March 28	<p><b>From Normalcy to the New Deal</b>  Milkis, <i>Political Parties and Constitutional Government</i>, chas. 4, 5  Franklin Delano Roosevelt, “Commonwealth Club Address,” (<b>B</b>)</p>
March 30	<p><b>The Legacy of the 1960s</b>  Milkis, <i>Political Parties and Constitutional Government</i>, chas. 6, 7  Jeffrey Berry, “The Rise of Citizen Groups,” in S/F  Students for a Democratic Society, “The Port Huron Statement” (<b>B</b>)</p>
<b>III. Party and Politics in the Twenty-First Century</b>	
April 4	<p><b>Postmaterialism and the New Political System</b>  Berry, <i>The New Liberalism</i>, ch. 3  Peter Skerry, “Racial Politics in the Administrative State” (<b>B</b>)  E.J. Dionne, <i>Why Americans Hate Politics</i>, selections (<b>B</b>)</p>
April 6	<p><b>Twenty-First Century Extremism</b>  Fiorina, “Extreme Voices: The Dark Side of Civic Engagement,” in S/F  Thomas Frank, <i>What’s the Matter With Kansas?</i> selections (<b>B</b>)  Byron Shafer, “We Are All Southern Democrats Now” (<b>B</b>)</p>
April 11	<p><b>The New Machine?</b>  Monroe, <i>The Political Party Matrix</i></p>
April 18	<p><b>Party Networks and Contemporary American Politics</b>  Monroe, <i>The Political Party Matrix</i>  Steven Teles, “Organizational Theory, Political Development, and the Evolution of the Conservative Legal Movement” (<b>B</b>)</p>

April 20	<b>The New Interest Groups?</b> <b>Essay II Due</b> Berry, <i>The New Liberalism</i> , chas. 1, 2, 4
April 25	<b>The New Interest Groups and the Parties</b> Berry, <i>The New Liberalism</i> , chas. 5, 6, 7 Peter Skerry, “Racial Politics in the Administrative State” <b>(B)</b>
April 27	<b>The New Advocacy Elite</b> Wilson Carey McWilliams, “Two-Tiered Politics” <b>(B)</b> Crawford and Levitt, “Social Change and Civic Engagement: The Case of the PTA,” in S/F Skocpol, “Advocates Without Members: The Recent Transformation of Civic Life,” in S/F
May 2	<b>The Debate Over Citizen Politics</b> Skocpol and Fiorina, “Making Sense of the Civic Engagement Debate,” in S/F Schlozman, Verba, Brady, “Civic Participation and the Equality Problem,” in S/F Wuthnow, “Mobilizing Civic Engagement: The Changing Impact of Religious Involvement,” in S/F

*The Final Exam will be administered at the officially-scheduled exam time for this class's time slot.*