

Y301: Political Parties and Interest Groups
Spring, 2002

TR 9:30-10:45, Woodburn 003
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NOTE THESE DATES!

Tuesdays, January 29 and February 12: Short papers (1 to 2 pages) due
Tuesday, February 26: Midterm Exam
Thursday, March 28 and Tuesday, April 16: Short papers due
Tuesday, April 30, 8-10 a.m.: Final Exam, Woodburn 003

1. **Why We're Here**

It's become commonplace to say that our lives changed on September 11. Politicians stopped talking about how to spend the budget surplus and began talking about counter-terrorism. Television and newspapers showed us sights we had never seen before. And Americans remembered why they need a big government.

A big and powerful government, however, can be a major challenge for a democracy – just as the people who wrote the Constitution feared. A democratic system requires that the public keep at least a certain amount of control over what the government does. Yet we know that most of us, and most other Americans, are not much interested in government at all, much less in making the effort to keep it under control. So how can we be sure that our democracy will survive when most of the population would rather not bother to control its government?

Here's one answer: In American politics, *intermediaries* such as political parties and organized interests can keep our government democratic even in the face of massive public apathy. They can give voice to the concerns and ideas of large numbers of people who might otherwise remain unheard. Parties can simplify our choices in elections by providing us with a slate of candidates. A party can bring together elected officials who have similar policy preferences and help them get those preferences passed into law. By supporting and endorsing candidates, organized interests can tell their sympathizers which candidates are most likely to do what the group wants. And groups can put pressure on office-holders to get certain proposals passed.

So parties and interest groups play a vital and fascinating role in a democratic government. But since the beginning, U.S. parties and lobbying groups have faced intense suspicion and criticism.

The result has been wave after wave of party reform, with the latest wave still in progress.

In this course you'll learn what political parties and organized interests are capable of doing in a democracy, what they actually do in American politics, and what a variety of reformers and others would have them do differently. We will begin by examining the nature of intermediaries and the environment in which parties and groups developed. Then we'll explore several aspects of the parties: party identification and voting; activists, organization, and party activities within government; party reform; what the parties stand for; and how they've changed dramatically since the 1960s. In the second half of the semester we'll look at the nature, incentives, and organization of organized interests; the campaign finance reforms that caused a big increase in political action committees (PACs); single-issue politics and social movements; and alternative futures for parties and interest groups.

II. Requirements

You'll take a midterm and a final exam and write four short (1-2 page) papers on the basis of research on Internet sites. You'll need to attend lectures and do a substantial amount of reading.

The following books are required. They are on sale at the IU Bookstore and on reserve at the Main Library and the Political Science Research Collection (in Woodburn 200).

Paul Allen Beck and Marjorie Randon Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, 9th edition (Longman, 2001)

Jeffrey M. Berry, *The Interest Group Society*, 3rd edition (New York: Longman, 1997)

And two chapters in Steven Rosenstone, Roy L. Behr, and Edward H. Lazarus, *Third Parties in America* 2nd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), on reserve in both libraries.

Exams

The exams, taken in class, will both be primarily essay with some short-answer questions as well.

Written Assignments

You'll be asked to complete four short (two-page) written assignments. They are meant to help you become expert in some specific areas of party and interest group politics, and to be able to try out the general principles you're learning in relation to these cases.

For your **first paper**, choose one issue that matters to you. It can be any issue that government deals with: tax cuts, welfare, abortion, the death penalty, or anything else. Then, using the list at the end of the syllabus, choose one major party (Democrats or Republicans) and one minor party. Using the parties' Web sites (and any other information you find), answer these questions: (1) What is each party's position on this issue? What does it want done? (2) Is this issue of high importance to each party? What evidence do you find that tells you so? (3) Do you see evidence of specific action the party has taken on this issue (supporting bills, etc.)?

In your **second paper**, return to the parties' Web sites to try to determine what kinds of

groups each party is trying to target. (1) Does it aim its efforts at certain ethnic, racial, socio-economic, occupational, or other types of groups? What leads you to think so? (2) Does it make an effort to involve you in the group's activities? How does it do so? Are there opportunities for you to meet other party identifiers in person or by e-mail? (3) How extensive is each party's organization? Is it organized at the national, state, and local levels?

In your **third paper**, choose two interest groups that you think might be involved in the issue you've discussed in the first two papers. There is a list of several interest groups at the end of the syllabus; you can find others by using an Internet search engine. (1) What positions do these two groups take on this issue? How do their stands differ from those of the parties: are they more broad or more narrow? (2) Do they seem to be targeting particular groups of voters? (3) Look for information as to what types of lobbying these groups engage in on this issue: campaign contributions? Grassroots lobbying? What do they tell you to do, and what do they say *they* do, to try to get their definition of the issue accepted?

Finally, for your **fourth paper**: Re-read your first three papers. If you wanted to promote your views on these issues, would you choose to do so through one of the parties you researched or through one of the interest groups? Why? What are the advantages and disadvantages of working through a political party as opposed to an interest group to achieve your political goals? What would you conclude about the relative strengths and weaknesses of parties and interest groups in the U.S.?

How the Course Grade Will Be Determined

The course grade is based on a total of 440 points, to be assigned as follows:

Papers (Each of 4)	Midterm	Final Exam	Attendance**	Course
A+	40	97-100	136-140	427-440
A	38	93-96	130-135	409-426
A-	36	90-92	126-129	396-408
B+	35	87-89	122-125	383-395
B	34	83-86	116-121	365-382
B-	32	80-82	112-115	352-364
C+	31	77-79	108-111	339-351
C	30	73-76	102-107	321-338
C-	29	70-72	98-101	308-320
D+	27	67-69	94-97	295-307
D	26	63-66	88-93	277-294
D-	25	60-62	84-87	264-276
F	0-24	0-59	0-83	0-263
Total points	40 (=160)	100	140	440
%	9 (=36)	23	32	100%

**** As you know, you're expected to attend class.** We will check attendance on at least ten randomly-selected dates. You'll lose points for any date on which you're found to be absent.

III. Some Ground Rules

1. **Withdrawals**. You can withdraw from a course with an automatic grade of W until **4 p.m. Thursday, March 7**. After that, withdrawals will be granted only for very good reasons. Fear of getting a bad grade isn't one of those reasons.
2. **Missing exams and papers** will receive a grade of 0.
3. **Late papers**. If you must turn in any written work after the due date, you'll need to make arrangements with Professor Hershey at least a week in advance. If you haven't made such arrangements, your paper will be penalized by one full letter grade for each day late. *The same rule applies to any new due date set with the instructor's permission.*
4. **Cheating**. Please note carefully! People who copy or paraphrase one another's answers on an exam or paper, or copy material directly from a source without citing that source, or who hand in a paper written by someone else, *or written for another course*, will receive a grade of 0 for that exam or paper. There will be no exceptions. Be sure you know how and when to use footnotes!
5. **Taking notes for profit**. Taking notes for profit (i.e., selling your notes for this class) is considered a form of academic dishonesty. Anyone found to be doing so will be given an F for the course.
6. **Incompletes** will be given only to people with serious personal problems. Keep in mind that at least 90% of incompletes are not made up, and thus turn into Fs in a year.

IV. Lectures and Reading Assignments

January 8: Introduction

Read: the syllabus

January 10: What are parties and organized interests are capable of doing?

Read: Beck & Hershey, chapter 1

January 15: Why do we have only two parties? What made them develop the way they did?

Read: Rosenstone et al., chapter 2

January 17: Party change: the ideas of realignment and issue evolution

Read: Beck & Hershey, Chapters 2 and 6

January 22: What is a party identification? How do people develop one? How much influence do parties have on people's votes?

Read: Beck & Hershey, chapter 7

January 24: How parties are organized at the local, state, and national levels

Read: Beck & Hershey, chapters 3 and 4

January 29: What brings people into party activism, and what activists do

Read: Beck & Hershey, chapter 5

Short paper #1 due: See the assignment above!

January 31: The influence of parties on state legislatures, the U.S. Congress, the executive branch, and judges

Read: Beck & Hershey, chapters 13 and 14

February 5: How candidates are nominated, and how the process has changed

Read: Beck & Hershey, chapters 9 and 10

February 7: What's changed in American political campaigns?

Read: Beck & Hershey, chapter 11

February 12: The effects of the party reforms since the 1970s

Short paper #2 due: See the assignment above!

February 14: How different are the Democrats and Republicans on issues? What are "responsible parties"?

Read: Beck & Hershey, chapter 15

February 19: Could we develop a long-lasting third party in the U.S.? What kind of party is it likely to be?

Read: Rosenstone, et al., chapter 9

February 21: Exam review: how have the parties changed and what have been the effects on American democracy?

Read: Beck & Hershey, chapter 16

February 26: **Midterm Exam**

February 28: What are organized interests (interest groups)? What benefits and problems come along with them?

Read: Berry, chapters 1 and 2

March 5: Cooperation and competition between parties and organized interests

Read: Berry, chapter 3

March 7: How interest groups are organized and led
Read: Berry, chapters 4 and 9

March 9-18: **SPRING BREAK**

March 19: What lobbyists do
Read: Berry, chapter 5

March 21: Grassroots lobbying
Read: Berry, pp. 116-17, 121-128, 131-138

March 26: Lobbying, continued
Read: Berry, ch. 8

March 28: Money in politics
Read: Beck & Hershey, chapter 12
Short paper #3 due: See the assignment above!

April 2: What are Political Action Committees (PACs) and why did they form?
Read: Berry, pp. 139-50

April 4: Types of PACs: business, labor, non-connected (ideological), candidate
Read: Berry, pp. 218-36

April 9: Do PAC contributions to candidates influence public policy?
Read: Berry, pp. 150-61

April 11: Single-issue groups: how much power do they have?
Read: Berry, pp. 117-21

April 16: Social Movements: Civil rights and the Christian right
Read: Berry, pp. 128-30
Short paper #4 due: See the assignment above!

April 18: Can we limit lobbying and campaign contributions? What would be the benefits and the risks?
Read: Berry, pp. 236-240

April 23: What if we had a national primary? What if congressional campaigns were financed by public (tax) money? And other possible reforms!
Read: No readings

April 25: Summing up

Read: review!

April 30 (Tuesday), 8-10 a.m., Final Exam, Woodburn 003

Political Parties' Web Sites

<http://www.democrats.org> Democratic National Committee home page
http://www.democrats.org/college_democrats/old.html College Democrats
<http://www.rnc.org> Republican National Committee "Main Street" home page
<http://www.crnc.org> College Republican National Committee home page
<http://www.lcr.org> Log Cabin Republicans (national gay and lesbian Republican organization)
<http://www.greens.org> Green Parties of North America
<http://www.lp.org/lp.html> Libertarian Party
<http://www.reformparty.org> Reform Party USA
<http://www.americanreform.org> American Reform Party (an anti-Ross Perot offshoot of the Reform Party)
http://www.americanheritage_party.org American Heritage Party (a Christian conservative party)
<http://www.dsusa.org/dsa.html> Democratic Socialists of America
<http://www.usiap.org> Independent American Party (a conservative Western party)
<http://www.natural-law.org> Natural Law Party (believes in transcendental meditation)
<http://www.newparty.org> New Party (a progressive, grassroots party)
<http://www.prohibition.org> Prohibition Party (now a pro-life, conservative party)
<http://www.cpusa.org> Communist Party USA
<http://www.sp-usa.org> Socialist Party USA
<http://www.slp.org> Socialist Labor Party
<http://www.southernparty.org> Southern Party (wants the independence of the Southern states)
<http://www.southernindependentparty.org> Southern Independent Party (an offshoot of the Southern Party)
<http://www.USTaxpayers.org> Constitution Party (conservative)
<http://www.wethepeople-wtp.org> We the People Party (mainly concerned with campaign finance reform)
<http://www.workers.org> Workers World Party (an offshoot of the Socialist Workers)

Interest Groups' Web Sites

<http://www.crp.org> Center for Responsive Politics (monitors PAC and lobbyist spending)
<http://www.fb.com/> American Farm Bureau Federation
<http://www.edf.org> Environmental Defense Fund
<http://www.wilderness.org> Wilderness Society
<http://www.nea.org> National Education Association (teachers' union)
<http://www.aarp.org/> American Association of Retired Persons

<http://www.cc.org/> Christian Coalition
<http://www.childrendefense.org/> Children's Defense Fund
<http://www.aap.org/advocacy/> American Academy of Pediatrics (children's issues)
<http://www.nra.org> National Rifle Association
<http://www.rjrt.com/> R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. (smokers' rights, legislative activities)
<http://www.nam.org/> National Association of Manufacturers
<http://www.umwa.org/homepage.shtml> United Mine Workers union
<http://www.uaw.org/> United Auto Workers union
<http://www.commoncause.org/> A variety of interests: campaign funding, pollution
<http://www.cwfa.org/> Concerned Women for America (conservative, moral issues)
<http://www.govnotgod.org/> Conservative Christian group
<http://www.norml.org/home.shtml> National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws
<http://www.now.org/> National Organization for Women (women's rights)
<http://www.nrlc.org/> National Right to Life Committee (anti-abortion)
<http://www.eagleforum.org/> Eagle Forum (conservative, moral issues)
<http://pfaw.org> People for the American Way (liberal)
<http://www.igc.apc.org/pirg/> State Public Interest Research Groups (PIRGs)
<http://www.rosro.com> A PR firm representing foreign governments to the U.S.
federal, state, and local governments
<http://www.amnesty.org> Amnesty International
<http://www.naacp.org> National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

and there are lots more!

Here, jot down the names, Email addresses, and phone numbers of class members you can contact if you need study help, notes, and so on: