

**American Political Parties and Polarization**  
Department of Political Science  
University of California, Santa Barbara

Instructor: Dr. Joshua Meyer-Gutbrod  
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Teaching Assistants:

**Course Description**

A course on the nature, characteristics, and history of American political parties; party organization; political campaigns and finance; nominations, elections, and electoral problems.

While this course will provide you with a broad overview of the role of parties as institutions in the American system, it will specifically focus on the recent problem of partisan polarization, examining its sources and engaging student in conversations about solutions.

**Course Policies**

Requirements & Evaluation

Grades will be based on a midterm paper (25%), a final paper (35%), writing preparation (25%), and section participation (15%).

Writing Preparation (Outline – 5%, Annotated Bibliography 10%, Proposal 10%)

There will be three writing preparation assignments to help prepare you for your midterm and final papers. They are outlined as follows:

*Outline – 5%:* For your first paper you are to construct an outline, to be submitted to TA's. The outline will include a thesis statement, listed at the top, subsection headings and paragraph headings. You do not need to provide evidence in the outline. Due on...

*Annotated Bibliography – 10%:* An annotated bibliography covering the readings from the course in addition to a number of other readings that will be cited and used for your final paper. Guidelines will be circulated for constructing this. Bibliographies are due on...

*Proposal – 10%:* A 1-2 page proposal establishing your argument for the term paper. Term paper proposals are due on...

Midterm Paper (25% for final paper):

The midterm paper (5-6 pages + footnotes) will be a response to a question to be circulated. Papers must be typed and double-spaced with reasonable fonts (10-12) and margins (1-1.25").

Final Paper (35% for final paper):

Final papers will be 8-10 pages and respond to a prompt circulated during class. Final papers are due on .... Late papers will be accepted, but they will be penalized at one/half of a letter grade per day (roughly 5%).

Section Participation (15%):

Students are assigned to one of 6 sections. You must attend these, and you must attend the section to which you are assigned. Sections may be used to encourage conversation and application of course concepts to current politics. *Attendance will be taken and counts towards your grade.* Given the TAs have a lot to cover in every session, please arrive on time: *late arrivals will negatively affect your grade.*

*i-Clicker use:*

This class will require each student to purchase, register, and bring an i-clicker to class. The clicker will be used to engage in both class polls concerning current politics and polarization as well as asking questions regarding the readings. Students are not permitted to carry other students i-Clickers to class. Further, lecture attendance is highly encouraged for this course but does not affect your grade directly. Consequentially, i-clicker use will not affect your grade.

*Readings*

Readings can be found at Gauchospace and full books can be found on reserve at the library. Students should come to lecture prepared, having read the assigned readings for that section of the course. This approach will greatly help with understanding the material in class, and with completing weekly problem sets.

**Class Schedule**

**Why Parties? – Jan. 6 - Jan. 10**

- Aldrich, John H. *Why parties?: The origin and transformation of political parties in America.* University of Chicago Press, 1995. – **Chapters 1 and 2**
- Mann, Thomas E., and Norman J. Ornstein. *It's even worse than it looks: How the American constitutional system collided with the new politics of extremism.* Basic Books, 2016. – **Introduction and Chapter 1**
- *The Federalist's Papers No. 9-10*

***The Party as ....a Theory***

**Parties as Organizations and Institutions – Jan. 13 - Jan. 17**

- Cohen, M., Karol, D., Noel, H., & Zaller, J. (2009). *The party decides: Presidential nominations before and after reform.* University of Chicago Press. – **Chapter 2, 6 (7 is optional)**
- Bawn, K., Cohen, M., Karol, D., Masket, S., Noel, H., & Zaller, J. (2012). A theory of political parties: Groups, policy demands and nominations in American politics. *Perspectives on Politics*, 10(3), 571-597.

- Cox, Gary W., and Mathew D. McCubbins. *Setting the agenda: Responsible party government in the US House of Representatives*. Cambridge University Press, 2005. – **Intro, Chapters 1,2 (4 is Optional)**

### **NO CLASS MON – JAN 20.**

#### **Parties in the Electorate – Jan. 22**

- Campbell, A. Converse, P.E. Miller, W.E. And Stokes, D.E. (1960). The American Voter. *University of Chicago Press*. - **Chapter 6-7**
- Bartels, Larry M. "Partisanship and voting behavior, 1952-1996." *American Journal of Political Science* (2000): 35-50.
- Fiorina, Morris P. "Parties and partisanship: A 40-year retrospective." *Political Behavior* 24.2 (2002): 93-115.

### ***The Party as .... a Problem***

#### **Understanding and Measuring Polarization – Jan. 27 - Jan. 31**

- Poole, K. T., & Rosenthal, H. L. (2011). *Ideology and congress* (Vol. 1). Transaction Publishers. – **Chapter 1, 2, 4**
- Bonica, Adam. "Mapping the ideological marketplace." *American Journal of Political Science* 58.2 (2014): 367-386.
- **Explore [www.voteview.com](http://www.voteview.com). Come Prepared to discuss**

#### **Bottom Up Theory – The Electorate – Feb. 3 - Feb. 7**

- Layman, G. C., Carsey, T. M., Green, J. C., Herrera, R., & Cooperman, R. (2010). Activists and conflict extension in American party politics. *American Political Science Review*, 104(2), 324-346.
- Abramowitz, Alan I., and Steven Webster. "The rise of negative partisanship and the nationalization of US elections in the 21st century." *Electoral Studies* 41 (2016): 12-22.
- Fiorina, Morris P., and Samuel J. Abrams. "Political polarization in the American public." *Annu. Rev. Polit. Sci.* 11 (2008): 563-588.

#### **Top Down Theory - Institutions – Feb 10. - Feb. 13**

- Hare, C., & Poole, K. T. (2014). The polarization of contemporary American politics. *Polity*, 46(3), 411-429.
- McCarty, Nolan, Keith T. Poole, and Howard Rosenthal. "Does gerrymandering cause polarization?." *American Journal of Political Science* 53.3 (2009): 666-680.
- McGhee, E., Masket, S., Shor, B., Rogers, S., & McCarty, N. (2014). A primary cause of partisanship? Nomination systems and legislator ideology. *American Journal of Political Science*, 58(2), 337-351.
- Sinclair, Barbara. "Spoiling the sausages? How a polarized Congress deliberates and legislates." *Red and blue nation* 2 (2008): 55-87.

### **NO CLASS MON – Feb 17.**

## **Guest Lecture – Parties in Local Politics – Feb. 19**

### **Electoral Theory - Competition – Feb 24. - Feb. 28**

- Lee, F. E. (2016). *Insecure majorities: Congress and the perpetual campaign*. University of Chicago Press.- *Chapters 1-3*

### **The Media and Polarization – Mar. 2 - Mar. 6**

- Lenz, G. S. (2009). Learning and opinion change, not priming: Reconsidering the priming hypothesis. *American Journal of Political Science*, 53(4), 821-837.
- Benkler, Y., Faris, R., & Roberts, H. (2018). *Network propaganda: Manipulation, disinformation, and radicalization in American politics*. Oxford University Press. – *Chapter 1*
- Hopkins, D. J. (2018). *The increasingly United States: How and why American political behavior nationalized*. University of Chicago Press. – *Chapter 1, 3*

### **Putting it all together – Mar. 9 - Mar. 12**

- Ranney, Austin. "Toward a more responsible two-party system: A commentary." *American Political Science Review* 45.2 (1951): 488-499.
- Pew Research Center. "Political polarization in the American public." (2014). <https://www.people-press.org/2014/06/12/political-polarization-in-the-american-public/>

### **Final Notes**

Class Participation - Class participants are asked to help create a constructive learning environment in the following ways:

- Please show respect for other students; this includes not interrupting or attacking them personally in class.
- Discussions should take place within a context of academic inquiry and the spirit of understanding diverse perspectives and experiences.
- Any personal information shared by students in class should be considered confidential.

Academic integrity – Students attending the University of California are expected to understand and subscribe to the ideals of academic integrity and to bear individual responsibility for their work. Any work (written or otherwise) submitted to fulfill an academic requirement must represent a student’s original work. Any act of academic dishonesty, such as cheating or plagiarism, will subject a person to University disciplinary action. Using or attempting to use materials, information, study aids, or commercial “research” services not authorized by the instructor of the course constitutes cheating. The Campus Regulations have the following to say about plagiarism: "Representing the words, ideas, or concepts of another person without appropriate attribution is plagiarism. Whenever another person's written work is utilized, whether it be a single phrase or longer, quotation marks must be used and sources cited.

Paraphrasing another's work, i.e., borrowing the ideas or concepts and putting them into one's 'own' words, must also be acknowledged." In addition, submitting the same paper to two classes is also considered cheating because the work is not original for both classes. Any act of plagiarism or other form of cheating will be rewarded with an automatic "F" and referral to the administration for further punishment (typically a two-quarter suspension for plagiarism).

Citations - I realize that few of you (and hopefully none) would cheat. However, quite a few students do not know acceptable reference styles. You don't want to be in the position of having the TA wonder if you are plagiarizing or just don't know how to use quotation marks. So in practical terms, this means that you must learn to use quotation marks, footnotes, and citations for your term papers and other writing assignments. You can find details about citation styles in Diana Hacker's A Pocket Style Manual. Another source is the Chicago Manual of Style, which you can find here: <https://www.library.ucsb.edu/node/2379>.

Laptops - In order to reduce the distraction that people taking notes on laptops cause, I ask students using laptops to sit in the back of the lecture hall so that students who are taking notes by hand can sit in front. In addition, no recordings (via any medium, from audio to video) of lectures, class discussions, or sections may be made without my prior written permission.

Campus Resources for Students - If you experience difficulty in this course for any reason, please don't hesitate to consult with me or your teaching assistant. If you have a disability that may prevent you from fully demonstrating your abilities, you should contact me as soon as possible so we can discuss accommodations necessary to ensure your full participation and facilitate your educational process. A wide range of services is available to support you in your efforts to meet the course requirements:

- Campus Learning Assistance Service: 893-3269. CLAS helps students increase their mastery of course material through course-specific tutoring and academic skills development. Check out our tutorial groups and drop-in tutoring schedules posted on our web site: [www.clas.ucsb.edu](http://www.clas.ucsb.edu). Sign up for services at the CLAS main office, Building 477 9-5 daily.
- Counseling and Psychological Services: (893-4411, [www.counseling.ucsb.edu](http://www.counseling.ucsb.edu)) offers counseling for personal concerns, self-help information, and connections to off-campus mental health resources.
- Disabled Students Program: 893-2668; [www.sa.ucsb.edu/dsp](http://www.sa.ucsb.edu/dsp). DSP provides academic support services to eligible students with temporary and permanent disabilities. Students with disabilities may request academic accommodations online through the UCSB Disabled Students Program at <http://dsp.sa.ucsb.edu/>. Please make your requests for accommodations through the online system as early in the quarter as possible to ensure proper arrangements.
- If you are facing any challenges securing food or housing, and believe this may affect your performance in the class, you are urged to meet with a Food Security Peer Advisor, who is aware of the broad variety of resources that UCSB has to offer (see their drop-in hours at [food.ucsb.edu](http://food.ucsb.edu)). You are also urged to contact the

professor if you are comfortable doing so. Please visit [food.ucsb.edu](http://food.ucsb.edu) for additional resources including Calfresh, the AS Food Bank, and more.