

POLI 100C: American Political Parties
Todd Levinson
Summer II 2019
Monday & Wednesday 2:00-4:50pm
Center Hall, Room 217A

Course Description and Goals

This course will explore the role of political parties as intermediaries of choice in modern democratic societies. It will concentrate, in particular, on political parties in the United States, though we will also cover some cross-national comparisons to deepen our understanding of party politics. Classes will be interactive and assignments will ask you to apply your understanding of the material in practical ways, with the intention of helping you to build skills that will be useful to you later in your career. Questions that we will attempt to answer include:

- What leads to changes, over time, in the types of voters who support different parties?
- What is the nature of partisanship, and how does it affect individuals' political behavior?
- What is the role of gerrymandering and political geography in election outcomes?
- How do third parties and party factions affect the party system?

As we learn what research has to say about these topics, we will also evaluate how the research was conducted, how the research strategy might affect the validity of its conclusions, and how the research could be improved or built upon. You will not be expected to read or understand the statistical methods that are used in the articles, but you will be asked to think critically about how the authors designed their research and how they measured the concepts that they are studying so that you can evaluate the validity of their findings.

Assignments

Your grade will be based on two memos (20% each), a final paper (40%), and participation in iClicker questions and other class activities (20%).

- **Memos (40%)**: You will write two two-page memos during the course. The memos will be focused on the topic of the week and will be due one week after being assigned. You will be rewarded for improvement – if your second memo is better than your first memo, the second memo will count for 30% of your course grade instead of 20%. The goal of the memos is for you to gain practical experience in applying and thinking critically about the knowledge that you are gaining and to do so in a way that will build your professional skills. I will provide instructions for writing the memos during the first week.
- **Final Project (40%)**: Your final project paper will be due through Turnitin by Friday, September 6 at 6pm. I will provide the prompts and instructions 1-2 weeks in advance to give you time to prepare. The goal of the project is, once again, for you to apply your new knowledge in a practical way that develops your professional skills.
- **iClicker and Class Participation (20%)**: My goal is for us to make class time an engaging, learning experience. To help us achieve that, I will use iClicker questions, small group discussions, and full class discussions to ensure that you are actively learning. These activities will also have the goal of helping you develop ideas for your memos and final project so that class time supports your success on the assignments. Your participation

grade will be based on attending and being actively involved during class, answering iClicker questions, completing an occasional short outside-of-class assignment, and attending one required office hour (or Skype call) meeting.

Course Materials

We will be reading one full text, and it can be purchased online: Alan Abramowitz (2018), *The Great Alignment: Race, Party Transformation, and the Rise of Donald Trump*. Other readings can be found through TritonEd or Course Reserves (those on reserves have the symbol * below).

Course Policies

- The use of laptops, cell phones, tablets, or any other type of electronic device is not allowed during class time. Research shows that you learn more and distract others less if you stick to pen and paper: <https://www.brookings.edu/research/for-better-learning-in-college-lectures-lay-down-the-laptop-and-pick-up-a-pen/>. If you would like an exception because you take class notes on your device, please see me to request an exception.
- **Students will be required to use Turnitin to submit all written assignments.** Turnitin is an Internet-based plagiarism prevention service, which will be used to ensure academic integrity. The portal can be accessed directly through the course website. Hard copies of assignments will not be accepted.
- If you have a disability that requires special accommodations, please see me **as soon as possible** and present your certification to me and Natalie Ikker (nbikker@ucsd.edu).
- Assignment extensions will be given only under justifiable circumstances, and not without **proper written documentation** justifying your absence (i.e., a doctor's note) and **submitted to the instructor in advance**.
- Please consult <http://senate.ucsd.edu/Operating-Procedures/Senate-Manual/Appendices/2> for UCSD's Academic Integrity Policy. Students in this course are expected to comply with this policy. Any student in violation of the policy will automatically fail this class.
- If you seek a **re-grade**, you must email me **within 72 hours** of the assignment being returned and explain why you deserve reconsideration. I will then review the entire exam and can either increase your grade, decrease your grade, or keep the grade unchanged.
- Sexual Misconduct/Title IX Statement: UC San Diego prohibits sexual violence and sexual harassment and will respond promptly to reports of misconduct. If you wish to speak confidentially about an incident of sexual misconduct, please contact CARE at the Sexual Assault Resources Center at (858) 534-HELP. Students should be aware that faculty members are considered responsible employees and are not a confidential resource; as such, if you disclose an incident of sexual misconduct to a faculty member, they have an obligation to report it to UC San Diego's Title IX office, the Office for the Prevention of Harassment & Discrimination (OPHD). To learn more about sexual misconduct, visit: <https://students.ucsd.edu/sponsor/sarc/>. To report an incident to the University, please contact OPHD at ophd@ucsd.edu

Contact & Office Hours: Please email in advance to schedule appointment times

Instructor: Todd Levinson, tslevins@ucsd.edu, OH: Mon, 11:45 AM-1:45 PM, SSB 320

TA: Lucas de Abreu Maia, ldeabreu@ucsd.edu, OH: by Skype, Username: luccaslux

WEEKLY READINGS

Session 1 (August 5): Why Parties

*Aldrich, J. 2012. *Why Parties? A Second Look*. Chapters 1-2.

Session 2 (August 7): Parties and Party Systems

*Ware, A. 1996. Why Party Systems Differ. (For Part B, you are only required to read the section about the United States)

*Hernnson, P. 2002. Two-Party Dominance and Minor Party Forays in American Politics.

*Rodden, J. 2019. *Why Cities Lose*. Chapter 1.

Session 3 (August 12): Partisanship

Iyengar, S. & Krupenkin, M. 2018. Partisanship as Social Identity: Implications for the Study of Party Polarization.

Cohen, G. et al. 2003. Party over Policy: The Dominating Impact of Group Influence on Political Beliefs.

Ahler, D. 2018. The Group Theory of Parties: Identity Politics, Party Stereotypes, and Polarization in the 21st Century.

Grossman, M. & Hopkins, D. 2015. Ideological Republicans and Group Interest Democrats: The Asymmetry of American Party Politics.

Sessions 4 & 5 (August 14 & 19): Party Alignment & Realignment

Carmines, E. & Stimson, J. 1981. Issue Evolution, Population Replacement, and Normal Partisan Change.

Abramowitz, A. 2018. *The Great Alignment*. Preface & Chapters 1-4. (just read chapter 4 lightly, making sure to grasp the key points)

*Rodden, J. 2019. *Why Cities Lose*. Chapter 3.

Kaufman, K. 2002. Culture Wars, Secular Realignment, and the Gender Gap in Party Identification.

Session 6 (August 21): Swing Voters, Third Parties & Populism

Mayer, W. 2012. The Disappearing – But Still Important – Swing Voter.

*Rosenstone, S. et al. 1996. A Theory of Third Party Voting.

*Harmel, R. 1997. The Impact of New Parties on Party Systems: Lessons for American from European Multiparty Systems. (only required to read through p. 53)

Formisano, R. 2016. The Populist Tsunami of the Second Gilded Age.

Sessions 7 & 8 (August 26 & 28):

Changes in the Party System

*Silbey, J. 1990. The Rise and Fall of American Political Parties.

*Orren, G. & Mayer, W. 1990. The Press, Political Parties, and the Public-Private Balance in Elections.

The Polarization of Party Politics

Abramowitz, A. 2018. *The Great Alignment*. Chapters 5-7 (stop at p. 164)

Lowande, K. & Milkis, S. 2014. “We Can’t Wait”: Barack Obama, Partisan Polarization, and the Administrative Presidency.

Nomination Politics

Burden, B. 2001. The Polarizing Effects of Congressional Primaries.

Bradberry, L. & Jacobson, G. 2014. The Tea Party and the 2012 Presidential Election.

Session 9 (No Class): Gerrymandering (we will cover during Session 10)

*Bullock, C. 2010. Partisan Gerrymandering: All’s Fair in Love, War, and Redistricting.

Chen, J. & Rodden, J. 2013. Unintentional Gerrymandering: Political Geography and Electoral Bias in Legislatures.

Chen, J. 2017. The Impact of Political Geography on Wisconsin Redistricting: An Analysis of Wisconsin’s Act 43 Assembly Districting Plan.

*Rodden, J. 2019. *Why Cities Lose*. Chapter 6.

Session 10 (September 4): Campaign Finance Reform

Boatright, R. 2012. The End of the Reform Era: Campaign Finance Retrenchment in the U.S. and Canada.

La Raja, R. 2013. Richer Parties, Better Politics? Party-Centered Campaign Finance Laws and American Democracy.

FINAL PAPERS DUE: FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 6PM
