

**Bowie State University**  
**Department of History and Government**  
**GOVT 351 US Political Parties**  
**Fall 2008**  
**T 4:55-7:25**

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Office Hours: Office Hours: T: 1:30-4:50, W: 1:30-4:50, Th: 12:30-3:00, or by appointment  
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### **Course Description**

\_\_\_\_\_ This course is a study of the growth, structure, and function of political organizations in the US. In addition to the historical and theoretical aspects of political parties, this course teaches students how to conduct political analyses of political candidates, parties, and elections.

### **Requirements**

**1. Class Readings:** Students will be responsible for weekly readings taken from textbooks and supplemental articles. The required texts are:

**Samuel Eldersveld and Hanes Walton, *Political Parties in American Society* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000). ISBN: 031224164X**

**Jeffrey Stonecash, Mark Brewer, and Mack Mariani, *Diverging Parties: Social Change, Realignment, and Party Polarization* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2003).**

Additional readings and country data will be provided to students on a DATA CD or Blackboard. The student's grade for participation will be partially derived from class discussions of the readings. While quizzes are not formally part of the course requirements, if students fail to keep up with the weekly reading assignments the instructor reserves the right to conduct pop quizzes.

**2.) Tests:** Students will take one test as a part of the evaluation process. The test will be composed of multiple choice questions, short answers, and essays covering material reviewed in the prior weeks.

**3) Group Project:** All students are responsible for a group project examining the upcoming Presidential and Congressional elections which will be presented before a general university audience prior to the election. Students will be divided into three groups to complete the project. One group will be focus on local Congressional elections in Maryland & Virginia, the second group will focus on the Presidential election, and the third group will focus on select national Senate and House races.

**4)Papers:** Students will be responsible for two types of papers in this course. First, there will be several weekly summaries due on a revolving basis throughout the semester. The summaries should be 1-2 pages long outlining the major points of the reading. Secondly, students will have to complete an annotated bibliography of contemporary literature on political parties. The annotated bibliography must be based on three scholarly books and four journal articles, and should be approximately 8 pages long.

### **Pedagogical Articulations**

#### *I: General Education Competencies*

- 1) Written and Oral Communication
  - Write weekly summaries of readings
  - Participate in group project analyzing the upcoming 2008 Presidential and Congressional Elections
- 2) Critical Thinking and Reasoning
  - Carefully interpret, analyze, and evaluate evidence statements, graphics, and questions
  - Construct well-supported (evidence based), clearly articulated, and sustained arguments
- 3) Scientific Analysis Using Quantitative and Qualitative Sources
  - Apply descriptive statistics (such as public opinion data) to analyze the 2008 elections
  - Use decision-maker and policy documents to assess the accuracy of claims made by politicians
- 4) Technology Competence
  - Use word processor to create a text document
  - Use Graphics program (such as Excel) to create tables and graphs for data analysis
- 5) Information Literacy
  - Use a Library Database (such as EBSCO Academic) or the internet to conduct research for class

#### *II: Student Learning Objectives*

- 1) Define the basic concepts and themes of political parties, such as: the Two-Party System, Third Parties, realignment, and historical constituencies.
- 2) Identify and analyze key actors in within political parties, including: whips, caucuses, majority leader, the speaker of the house, committee system, and the national chair.
- 3) Use the requisite skills for research in political science;
- 4) Demonstrate this knowledge in the use of technology and library resources.

#### *III: Expected Outcomes:* Students will be required to complete the following:

- 1) 1 Test to evaluate mastery of key concepts, themes, institutions, and actors (learning objectives 1-4); Tests will be composed of multiple choice, short answers, and essays.
- 2) Write weekly summaries of readings (learning objectives 1-2).
- 3) Participate in one group project/presentation examining Congressional & Presidential elections. (learning objectives 1,3,4).
- 4) Write 1 annotated bibliography (learning objectives 1-4).

**5): Class Attendance and Participation:** Attendance is a mandatory component of this course. Moreover, the participation element of the course will be partially derived from class discussions of the readings. While quizzes are not formally part of the course requirements, if students fail to keep up with the weekly reading assignments the instructor reserves the right to conduct pop quizzes. If any student misses more than four classes, the instructor reserves the right to automatically fail the student. *University professors are not obligated to honor any excuse or explanation for an absence, regardless if the absence is due to illness, family issues, or athletic events. If any student misses class, she or he must bring the appropriate documentation (outlining specific details) for the professor to determine if the absence can or will be excused. Students are solely responsible for any materials that are covered or assigned (for example, if a test or paper date is altered) during their absence.*

**Grading Scale**

First Test: . . . . .	20%
Group Project: . . . . .	20%
Weekly Summaries . . . . .	25%
Annotated Bibliography: . . . .	25%
Attendance and Participation:	10%

**Course Schedule**

Week 1: Aug 29-Sept. 2

*Historical Background and Theoretical Overview*

Required Reading: Chambers, "The Genesis of Modern Parties;" Eldersveld and Walton, Ch. 1

Week 2: Sept. 5-9

*Key Characteristics of the US Party System*

Required Readings: Keefe, Ch.1, Eldersveld and Walton, Ch. 3

Suggested Reading:

Week 3: Sept. 12-16

*Key Characteristics Cont.*

Required Readings: Keefe, Ch. 2 , Eldersveld and Walton, Ch. 2

Suggested Reading:

Week 4: Sept. 19-23

*Public Support for Parties*

Required Readings: Eldersveld and Walton, Ch. 5 and Keefe, Ch. 5

Suggested Reading:

Week 5: Sept. 26-30

*Review and Test*

*1<sup>st</sup> Test Sept. 29 (20% of Student's Grade) &*

Required Reading:

Week 6: Oct. 3-7

*Parties at the State and National Level*

Required Readings: Eldersveld and Walton, Ch. 6 and Ch.7

Suggested Readings:

Week 7: Oct. 10-14

*Presidential Politics and the Party System*

Required Reading: Keefe, Ch. 3 and Eldersveld and Walton, Ch. 10

Suggested Readings:

Week 8: Oct.17-21

*Party Organization and the Campaign Process*

Required Readings: Keefe, Ch. 4 and Eldersveld and Walton, Ch. 9

Week 9: Oct. 24-28

*The Campaign Process Cont.*

Required Readings: Eldersveld and Walton, Ch. 11 and Ch. 12

Suggested Readings:

Week 10: Oct. 31-Nov.4

*Party Politics and Congressional Elections*

Group Project Presentation (20% of Student's Grade)

Required Readings: Keefe, Ch. 6 and Eldersveld and Walton Ch. 15

Suggested Reading:

Week 11: Nov. 7-11

*Political Parties and the Issue of Race*

Required Reading: Eldersfield and Walton Ch. 16, and Barker and Jones, "Change Through Political Parties"

Suggested Reading:

Week 12: Nov. 14-18

*Review and Test*

Required Reading:

Suggested Readings:

Week 13: Nov. 21-25 [Thanksgiving Holiday Nov. 23-27]

*Third Political Parties*

Required Reading: Eldersveld and Walton Ch. 4

Week 14: Nov. 28- Dec. 2

*The US Party System in Comparative Perspective*

Required Reading: Dalton Ch.7, Duverger, "The Number of Parties," and Allen, "The Case for a Multi-Party US Parliament"

Week 15: Dec. 5-9 [Last Week of Class]

*The Challenges of the Future*

Required Readings: Keefe Ch.7 and Eldersveld and Walton Ch. 17

Suggested Reading:

Week 16: Dec.12-16 [Exam Week]

Final Papers Due (See Instructor for Due Date)

**Supplemental Readings:**

J. P. Monroe, *The Political Party Matrix: The Persistence of Organization* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2001).

John Aldrich, *Why Parties: The Origin and Transformation of Political Parties in America* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1995).

Marc Hetherington and William Keefe, *Parties, Politics, and Public Policy in America*, 10<sup>th</sup> edit. (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2007).

Marjorie Hershey, *Parties in America*, 10<sup>th</sup> edit. (New York: Longman Pub., 2007).

James Stimson, *Tides of Consent: How Public Opinion Shapes American Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2004).