

POLS W 4311 AMERICAN PARTIES AND ELECTIONS

Barnard College

Fall 2002

M W 11:00-12:15 p.m.

457 Grace Dodge Hall (on TC Campus)

Instructor: [Heather Foust-Cummings](#), Ph.D.

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 12:30-1:30 p.m.

Wednesdays 1:30-5:30 p.m. by appointment

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Course Description

Political science, like other academic disciplines, attempts to make sense of the world it studies through critical and rigorous analyses. One important objective of this course is to provide the theoretical frameworks necessary to analyze American political parties and electoral politics. Because this is a midterm election year, we will attempt to stay abreast of new developments in campaigns throughout the semester. Some of the important research questions we will address include: What is the role of political parties in democratic government and in an age of candidate-centered campaigns? Is the campaign finance system undermining our republic? What role does the mass media play in presidential elections? Do negative political advertisements bring the desired results? Who votes, who does not, and why? What does the future hold for political parties? Elections are at the heart of democratic governance. This course provides an introduction to the study of this fundamental feature of our political system.

Course Work and Evaluations

Student evaluations will be based on the following*:

- 1) Midterm Exam – 25%
- 2) Final Exam – 40%
- 3) Paper (8-10 pages) on a midterm election race – 35% (Due 11/27/02)

Additional class assignments and/or quizzes may be required and incorporated into the above grading scheme (e.g., periodic paper deadlines for a portion of the final paper grade). Attendance is required and will be used in calculating borderline grades.

**Doctoral Students:* A research paper, 20-25 pages, is due the last day of class. Topic and outline must be approved by the instructor. Please see instructor to discuss.

The following books have been ordered for purchase at Labyrinth Books (536 W112th St.):

- 1) Aldrich, John. 1995. **Why Parties? The Origin and Transformation of Political Parties in America**. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- 2) Maisel, Sandy. 1999. **Parties and Elections in American Politics**. 3rd edition. Rowman and Littlefield.
- 3) Dershowitz, Alan. 2001. **Supreme Injustice: How the Supreme Court Hijacked Election 2000**. Cambridge: Oxford University Press.
- 4) Hollihan, Thomas. 2001. **Uncivil Wars: Political Campaigns in a Media Age**. Boston: St. Martin's Press.
- 5) Polsby, Nelson and Aaron Wildavsky. 2000. **Presidential Elections**. 10th edition. Chatham House.
- 6) Flanigan, William and Nancy Zingale. 2002. **Political Behavior of the American Electorate**. 10th edition. Washington, DC: CQ Press.
- 7) Sundquist, James. 1983. **Dynamics of the Party System**. Revised edition. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.

Additionally, each student is required to read *The New York Times*. A group student rate is available for home delivery for interested students. Please see the instructor for subscription information. Students are expected to read articles relating to parties, campaigns, elections, etc., and quizzes may be given periodically on relevant articles.

Course Schedule and Readings

9/4	Introductions and Syllabus Review
9/9, 9/11 9/16	Political Parties in American Politics: Origins and Purpose Aldrich, Why Parties , pp. 1-96 Maisel, Parties and Elections in America , pp. 29-62
9/18, 9/23	Elections, Political Parties, and Party Organization Maisel, Parties and Elections in America , pp. 1-26; 65-88 Flanigan and Zingale, Political Behavior , pp.1-30
9/25, 9/30	Presidential Nominations and Elections Polsby and Wildavsky, Presidential Elections , "The Nomination Process" pp.97-150; "Appraisals" pp 217-259 For further reading (not required): Maisel, Parties and Elections in America , pp. 265-368
10/2, 10/7	Election 2000 Dershowitz, How the High Court Hijacked Election 2000

10/9 MIDTERM EXAMINATION

10/14, 10/16 The Media, Political Consultants, and Campaigns
10/21, 10/23

Polsby and Wildavsky, **Presidential Elections**, “The Campaign” pp. 151-216
Flanigan and Zingale, **Political Behavior of the American Electorate**, pp.149-178
Hollihan, **Uncivil Wars**, pp.1-176
For further reading (not required): Maisel, **Parties and Elections in America**, pp. 417-441

10/28, 10/30 Campaign Finance

Polsby and Wildavsky, **Presidential Elections**, “Money” pp. 54-73
Hollihan, **Uncivil Wars**, pp. 195-219
Maisel, **Parties and Elections in America**, pp. 371-413

11/4 No Class – University Holiday

11/6, 11/11 Political Participation: Theories of Voting Behavior, Interest Articulation and
11/13, 11/18 Groups in the Electoral Process

Flanigan and Zingale, **Political Behavior of the American Electorate**, pp.31-116; 179-203
Polsby and Wildavsky, **Presidential Elections**, “Voters” pp. 3-27, “Groups” pp. 28-51
For further reading (not required): Maisel, **Parties and Elections in America**, pp. 91-184

11/20, 11/25 Party Realignment
11/27, 12/2

Sundquist, **The Dynamics of the Party System**, pp. 1-105; 198-331

12/4, 12/9 The Future of American Political Parties

Aldrich, **Why Parties**, pp. 277-296
Polsby and Wildavsky, **Presidential Elections**, “American Parties and Democracy” pp. 260-272
Maisel, **Parties and Elections in America**, pp. 483-499

Final Exam: Date and Time as Set by Registrar