

**Political Science 252**  
**Political Parties and Interest Groups in the United States**  
Spring 2017

Tuesday & Friday 12-1:15  
Biophysics 220  
Professor Robert Boatright  
JEF 313; (508) 793-7632  
Office Hours: Tuesday 10:30-11:30; Friday 11-12  
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*Course Description:*

Why do Americans (or at least, American politicians) claim to hate political parties and interest groups so much? We frequently hear complaints about role of these organizations in American politics, and American laws are frequently criticized for alleged “special interest” provisions. Yet it would certainly seem a distinctly American, if not distinctly human, impulse for citizens to join groups and associations. Where did we go wrong? What is the proper role for group and party influence on politics?

This is somewhat of a hybrid course, although some basic principles regarding political organizations can be used to understand parties and groups. In the first half of the semester, we shall focus on political parties. Although political parties are not an “official” part of government – that is, unlike other democracies, the United States does not provide a constitutional role for political parties, and our governmental structure throws up many obstacles to the development and successful function of parties – parties have always been an integral part of American politics. We will look at the ideas politicians and political scientists have had about the function and responsibilities of democratic political parties and then we will study the political circumstances in which they found themselves in order to compare their theories and expectations of parties with actual political practices of their era. We will use past and current developments in party politics, including this year’s presidential nomination campaigns, to help answer questions about the goals, structure, organization, and internal dynamics of political parties. We will begin with what are conventionally held to be the three components of parties: the party organization, the party in the electorate, and the party in government. We will explore the tensions between these three components, and we will study the ways in which they interact. Second, we will explore the history of American parties and of the study of political parties. We close the first half of the semester with an exploration of normative conceptions of political parties: what should parties do? Should they seek to win elections, no matter what they need to do to win, or should they seek to stand for something even if taking such “responsible” positions costs them electoral victories? We will not necessarily explore these themes sequentially, but we will keep these issues and questions in mind throughout the course.

In the second half of this this course we will turn our attention to nonparty groups. We will survey interest group formation, maintenance, lobbying, and campaign strategies in the

United States. We will explore the history of organized interests in the United States; the changing perspectives that the general public, journalists, politicians, and political scientists have had about the proper role of organized interests; and the changes in interest group politics wrought by legislation and technological change. We will contrast the imperatives and incentives of organized interests with those of political parties, elected and unelected government officials, individual citizens, and unorganized public interest constituencies. In doing so, we will seek to gain an understanding of how these goals interact and how the presence of organized interests in policy debates can be beneficial or detrimental to other political actors and to the political system as a whole. We will look at general works on interest groups, and we will also read several case studies of individual groups.

The goal of this entire course is not only to help you better understand what interest groups and parties are and what they do, but to help you form your own opinion on the relationship between political organizations and democracy.

### *Required Texts:*

The following books are required for the class and are available through the on line bookstore. All other readings for class are available on the class moodle page.

Rozell, Mark J., Clyde Wilcox, and Michael M. Franz. 2012. *Interest Groups in American Campaigns: The New Face of Electioneering*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. New York: Oxford University Press.

Hershey, Marjorie Randon. 2015. *Party Politics in America*, 16<sup>th</sup> edition. New York: Routledge.

Grossman, Matt, ed. 2014. *New Directions in Interest Group Politics*. New York: Routledge.

Stonecash, Jeffrey, ed. 2010. *New Directions in American Political Parties*. New York: Routledge.

White, John Kenneth. 2016. *What Happened to the Republican Party?* New York: Routledge.

Grossmann, Matt, and David A. Hopkins. 2016. *Asymmetric Politics: Ideological Republicans and Group Interest Democrats*. New York: Oxford University Press.

### *Requirements and Grading*

*Participation and Attendance:* The most important requirement for this class is your attendance and participation. You must show up for class, and you must come prepared to discuss the readings. As evidence of your preparation, and to help me determine what to cover in class, you will also be asked each week to send me some brief comments or questions on the readings. I hope to lecture less than half of the time; I will present the main arguments of the readings and seek to provide context for them, but the goal of this class is for you to develop your own ideas about the proper role of organized interest within our political system. You should feel free to ask questions about aspects of the readings you do not understand. The level of the readings varies quite a bit; most require little background knowledge, but a few presume knowledge of statistics or of particular aspects of American political history. You do not need to have a

thorough understanding of everything in the readings, and I do not expect you to understand the more complex statistical work we will encounter, but I will expect you to understand the main points in the readings and to ask about aspects you do not understand. Class participation will comprise ten percent of your grade.

*Term Project, Presentation, and Exercises:* Early in the semester you will choose an issue area and study the role of political parties and interest groups active on both sides of this issue. Ideally these will also be issues that will be of major concern to congress and the president over the coming 2-4 years. Once you have chosen a subject for your project, you will complete a series of four exercises on different aspects of the subject. You should plan to post your exercises on the class Moodle site the evening before they are due, to bring a printed copy with you to class to turn in, and to discuss your exercise in class. Cumulatively, your work on this project will comprise sixty percent of your grade. I will give you letter grades on each of your individual exercises to help you figure out how you are doing on the project, but I reserve the right to adjust the grade for this entire project according to how you put all of the pieces together. Once the semester has ended, we'll see if there's anything collaboratively we want to do with this material.

*Reaction Papers:* Twice during the semester you will prepare a 3-5 page reaction paper outlining your thoughts on the advisability of changing laws that regulate political parties or interest groups. These papers will relate to the broader theoretical issues to historical or contemporary events. These reaction papers are meant to serve as a evaluative statement of the material covered in each half of the semester. Each reaction paper is worth fifteen percent of your grade.

***Summary: Class Requirements and Percent Contribution to Final Grade***

<b>Requirement</b>	<b>Contribution to Grade</b>	<b>Objective</b>
Class participation and attendance	10%	Understanding course material
Term Project and related components	60%	Ability to apply interest group theories to the activities of particular groups
Reaction Papers	30% (15% each)	Conveying your ideas to classmates; developing an understanding of contemporary issues in national interest group politics

*Other Class Information:*

Because this is a small class, it is my hope that you will find your own participation in this class useful, stimulating, and interesting. I am available for questions, concerns, and comments any time by email. I will have regular office hours and am happy to meet with students at other times as well. Please do not hesitate to offer suggestions on how to make this class a good experience for you or on issues you would like to see covered.

Like most Clark courses, this class is worth four credit hours. That means that I expect you to commit approximately twelve hours of your time to the class each week, or 180 hours for the full semester. In addition to the three hours of class time per week, you should expect that the reading will take you four to five hours per week, the writing assignments or exam preparation will take two hours per week, and the collaborative projects will take an average of two hours per week. The amount of time you spend on each of these activities will, of course, vary from one week to the next.

Finally, as you should be aware by now, the work you do in this course must be entirely your own. To be sure we all have the same understanding of academic integrity as it pertains to this course, here is what the Academic Advising *Blue Book* (p. 22) has to say on the subject:

Academic integrity is highly valued at Clark. Research, scholarship and teaching are possible only in an environment characterized by honesty and mutual trust. Academic integrity requires that your work be your own. Because of the damage that violations of academic integrity do to the intellectual climate of the University, they must be treated with the utmost seriousness and appropriate sanctions must be imposed. The maintenance of high standards of academic integrity is the concern of every member of the University community.

**Plagiarism** refers to the presentation of someone else's work as one's own, without proper citation of references and sources, whether or not the work has been previously published. Submitting work obtained from a professional term paper writer or company is plagiarism. Claims of ignorance about the rules of attribution, or of unintentional error are not a defense against a finding of plagiarism.

## *Schedule*

January 17: Introduction to the Course

January 20: Thinking about Political Organizations

James Q. Wilson, *Political Organizations*, ch. 2-3

Bruce Cain, *Democracy More or Less*, excerpts

January 24 and 27: Changes in the American Party System

White, *What Happened to the Republican Party?*

Stonecash, ch. 6-9 (Haynie, Stonecash, Abramowitz, and Olson chapters)

January 31 and February 3: The Party as Organization

Hershey, ch. 3-5

February 7 and 10: The Party in the Electorate

Hershey, ch. 6, 8

Burnham, Walter Dean. 1965. "The Changing Shape of the American Political Universe." *American Political Science Review* 59: 7-28. At [www.jstor.org](http://www.jstor.org)

Converse, Philip. 1972. "Change in the American Electorate." In *The Human Meaning of Social Change*, Angus Campbell and Philip Converse, eds. New York: Russell Sage. pp. 268-301.

February 14 and 17: The Party in Government

Hershey, ch. 13-16

Stonecash, ch. 12-14 (Milkis, Rohde, and Liscio chapters)

February 21 and 24: Party Networks

Grossmann and Hopkins, *Asymmetric Polarization*

February 28: Comparative Perspectives

Smith, Raymond A. 2011. *The American Anomaly*. New York: Routledge. Ch. 10, "Political Parties."

Eagles, Munroe, and Sharon Manna. 2008. "Politics and Government." In *Canadian Studies in the New Millennium*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

March 3: Third Parties

Rosentone, Behr and Lazarus, *Third Parties in America*, ch. 2

***Reaction Paper #1 Due***

March 14: Interest Groups and Political Science

David Truman, "The Alleged Mischiefs of Faction."

Robert Dahl, "The Nature of the Problem."

E. E. Schattschneider, "The Contagiousness of Conflict."

March 17: Political Science Department Annual Patron Lecture: Nancy Rosenblum, Department of Political Science, Harvard University, speaking on "Good Neighbor Democracy." 12:00 Noon, Dana Commons. Attendance is required.

March 21: Group Organization and Maintenance (Session 1)

Berry, Wilcox, and Franz, Ch. 3

Grossmann, *New Directions in Interest Group Politics*, ch. 2, 5 (Schlozman and Noel chapters)

March 24: No Class

March 28: Group Organization and Maintenance (Session 2)

Mancur Olson, excerpts from *The Logic of Collective Action*.

Robert Salisbury, "An Exchange Theory of Interest Groups"

Jack Walker, "The Origins and Maintenance of Interest Groups in America"

March 31: Thinking About Group Types and Niches

Grossmann, ch. 1

Browne, "Organized Interests and their Issue Niches."

Heaney, "Outside the Issue Niche"

Boatright, "Situating the New 527 Groups in Interest Group Theory"

April 5: Interest Groups and Elections (Session 1)

Berry, Wilcox, and Franz, ch. 4-5

April 8: No Class

April 12: Interest Groups and Elections (Session 2)

Grossmann, ch. 7-9 (Karpf, Franz, and Witko chapters)

April 15: Inside Lobbying

Berry, Wilcox, and Franz, ch. 6, 8

Grossmann, ch. 10-12 (Brasher, Brown, and Collins chapters)

April 19: Outside Lobbying

Berry, Wilcox, and Franz, ch. 7

Grossmann, ch. 3, 4, & 6 (Walker, Strolovitch, and Holyoke chapters)

April 22: No Class

April 26 and 29: Normative Issues  
Berry, Wilcox, and Franz, ch. 9 & 10  
Grossmann, ch. 13 (Drutman chapter)  
***Reaction Paper #2 due***

May x: ***Term Papers Due, 3:00 at my office***