AMERICAN POLITICAL PARTIES & ELECTIONS

(Topics In American Politics)

Winter 2019

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Office Hours: T, 12:00 – 1:20pm

Lecture: M, TH: 12:30 – 1:20; TU: 1:30 – 2:20
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Contents

Course Description

America is an exceptional nation. American exceptionalism manifests itself in many ways, but for this course we will be examining exceptionalism in the context of the American electoral process. Among industrialized democracies in the Global North, America stands virtually alone with a two-party system, and holds elections more frequently, and for more offices, than does almost any other comparable nation. This course will look at the American electoral process, including American political parties, in-depth. It covers the entire cycle of American elections: the nomination process, the campaign, and the development and roll of political parties. Presidential, congressional, and state-level elections and parties will be covered.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course students should be able to understand and explain:

- The electoral cycle in the United States, including primary and general elections
- The dynamics of presidential, congressional, and state-level elections
- The development and role of political parties in the United States
- The basics of voter choice and voter behaviour

Required Materials and Texts

- John Sides, Daron Shaw, Matt Grossmann, & Keena Lipsitz, *Campaigns & Elections, 3rd Edition*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2018.
- All other required readings will be posted on the course website.

Course Evaluation – Overview

1. Short Analysis #1 – 15%, due February 7th, in lecture
2. Short Analysis #2 – 15%, due March 7th, in lecture
3. Term Paper – 30%, due April 1st, in lecture
4. Final Exam – 40%, Scheduled during the April exam period

Course Evaluation – Details

Short Analysis #1 (15%), due February 7th

For both of the short assignments, students are required to perform an analysis on one of the readings listed below. You must choose a different reading to analyze for each of the two assignments. The readings are all selections from classic texts in American political science.

This is a critical analysis, but note that Critical, in this sense, does not mean "find fault with." Your first task, at a minimum, should be to *evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the analysis presented within the reading*. You should identify the

central claim of these readings, and ask yourself if the evidence and logic provided supports this claim.

Some other things you may want to consider (but you do not need to consider *all* of these): many of these readings are old – does the analysis still hold up? Does the conclusion flow naturally from the evidence? Are there any questions raised by the text that aren't answered? Is the argument in the text relevant to the study of American politics? What, if anything, does the analysis offer to the study of American politics. When answering these questions, you should remember the time period in which the text was originally published – attempt, if possible, to keep that in mind when analyzing the text in 2019.

Please note that the bulk of the marks for this assignment will come from a critical engagement with the text - students who simply summarize the text should not expect a passing grade on the short paper assignment. You are not required to consult outside sources for these papers, but you are more than welcome to. Remember, if you make a claim yourself, you should support it with evidence from an academic source. The short analyses should be **between 4 – 6 pages long**.

The list of text for selection are as follows:

- Angus Campbell, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller, & Donald E Stokes, *The American Voter*. John Wiley & Sons: 1960. "Perceptions of the Parties and Candidates," and "Partisan Choice."
- G. William Domhoff, *Who Rules America? The Triumph of the Corporate Rich, 7th Edition*. McGraw Hill: 2014 [1967]. "Power and Class in America," and "Parties & Elections."
- Thomas Frank, *What's The Matter With Kansas?* New York: Holt, 2004. "What's The Matter with America?," "The Two Nations," and "Deep in the Heart of Redness."
- Richard Hofstadter, *The Paranoid Style in American Politics*. New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1965. "The Paranoid Style in American Politics."
- Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000. "Political Participation," and "Democracy."
- Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr, *The Imperial Presidency*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1973. "Foreword," "What the Founding Fathers Intended," and "Where the Founding Fathers Disagreed."

Short Analysis #2 (15%), due March 7th

Term Paper (30%), due April 1st

Students are expected to write an essay on one of the topics below. Students should write a **10 to 12 page paper** on one of the topics of their choosing, in the style of an

argumentative research essay. The essay should have a clearly presented thesis, from which the argument flows naturally. You are expected to consult no less than **eight peer-reviewed academic sources** (journal articles, books) not including the assigned readings for this course. The essay mark will be based on the logic of your argument, the clarity of your writing, and the evidence you present to support your thesis.

The first task in your term paper is to lay out a clear thesis and central argument. Your paper will be evaluated based on the strength of evidence you lay forth to support your thesis. A good paper will have a logical flow to it, and an argument that follows clearly from the central thesis statement. An excellent paper will also link your particular topic / case study to a larger body of theoretical work. You should also read the guidelines for grammar and style in the course outline - part of your grade will be based on your writing style.

The topics are as follows:

- In *Prisoners of the American Dream*, Mike Davis argues "in no other capitalist country is mass political abstentionism as fully developed as in the United States, where a majority of the working class has sat out more than half the elections of the last century." Why is this - why do working class voters abstain from electoral participation en masse?

- Politicos, political scientists, party insiders, and members of the media have offered up a number of different explanations for the election of Donald Trump, but the analysis seems to boil down to two competing theories: economic anxiety or appeals to racism. Analyze the 2016 presidential election - which of these two theories better explains the election of Trump?

- The Electoral College, as an intuition, enjoys lackluster - at best - support among the American public. Evaluate arguments in favour of keeping and scrapping the Electoral College. Given the overall lack of enthusiasm for the College, why are changes to it not forthcoming?

- The primary justification given for instituting rules that suppress voting is a need to combat voter fraud. What does the available evidence tell us about how much of a problem in-person voter fraud is? Why have we seen a sharp up-tick in these new rules over the past decade?

- What effect did the *Citizens United* decision have on the cost of campaigns and on the way donors can use their money during elections? Is "money out of politics" a noble goal - or even an achievable one?

Final Exam (40%), April Exam Period

The final exam will cover material presented in both the lecture and the course readings. Please note that the readings are designed as a starting point for the week's material, and that lecture will invariably cover topics not in the readings. Thus, it is critical that students attend lecture if they hope to pass the final exam. Do not book vacation until the exam schedule has been posted. No accommodation will be given to students who have booked vacation during the exam period.

Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings

January 7, 8, & 10: Course Introduction & Civics Review

Readings: "Introduction", textbook

January 14, 15, & 17: Primaries & Nominations

Readings: Mark D. Brewer & L. Sandy Maisel, *Parties and Elections in America: The Electoral Process, 8th Edition*, (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2019). Chapter 8, "Presidential Nominations"

January 21, 22, & 24: The Electoral Process

Readings: "The American Electoral Process"

January 28, 29, & 31: Campaigns

Readings: "The Transformation of American Campaigns," "Modern Campaign Strategies"

February 4, 5, & 7: The Media & Campaigns

Readings: "Media"

February 11, 12, & 14: American Political Parties

Readings: "Political Parties"

Week of February 18th: Reading week

No classes

February 25, 26, & 28: Third Parties In American Politics

Readings: J. David Gillespie, *Challengers to Duopoly: Why Third Parties Matter in American Two-Party Politics* (University of South Carolina Press, 2012). Chapter 1, "Duopoly and Its Challengers"

March 4, 5, & 7: Presidential Campaigns & The Electoral College

Readings: "Presidential Campaigns"

March 11, 12, & 14: Congressional Campaigns

Readings: "Congressional Campaigns"

March 18, 19, & 21: State & Local Elections

Readings: "State and Local Campaigns"

March 25, 26, & 28: Voter Participation, Choice, and Behaviour

Readings: "Voter Participation," "Voter Choice"

April 1, 2, & 4: The Rise (?) of the New (?) Populist Right

Readings: "The Man Who Broke Politics" *The Atlantic*

April 8, 9: Catch-up & Review, if required

Course Policies

Contact Protocol

I have set aside weekly office hours to meet with students to discuss course material. These office hours are some of your best resources for consulting with me. If you cannot meet during the office hours, feel free to send an email, but please keep the following simple rules for email etiquette in mind:

- At a minimum, include an appropriate salutation in your email
- Emails must be written in proper English. Students will be asked to revise, edit and re-send emails that do not meet minimum standards of grammatically correct English.
- Please allow for a minimum of 48 hours for turnaround on emails

Submission of Assignments

Students must submit assignments both via Turnitin submissions on Avenue and as a physical copy. An assignment will *not* be counted as submitted (ie, late penalties will continue to accrue) until both copies have been submitted.

Technology In Class

Electronic devices are *strongly* discouraged. Laptops are distracting to other students and result in lower grades for the user. I reserve the right to ask you to turn off and put away your laptop if you are not using it to take notes. Cell phones are prohibited during lecture. Please turn them OFF (not to silent) during lecture. Students who use their phones while on silent mode will be asked to leave the class. If a cell phone rings during class, I reserve the right to answer your phone and embarrass you to the best of my ability.

Technical Requirements for Written Assignments

The following technical requirements exist for all written components of this course: 12 point font, one inch margins, and double spaced text. All written assignments must use a recognized academic citation style for their assignments - Chicago, APA, or MLA. If you use an 'in text' citation system, you must reference specific page numbers in your

citations - an author / date citation is not sufficient. Students should also consult the appended “term paper guidelines” for some simple rules, that will be enforced come marking time, on how to write a proper term paper.

No Extra Credit

You will find that I have very limited enthusiasm (read: none) for grade negotiation. I am always willing to talk with you about your grades or tips for doing well on any assignment in the course. However, assigning grades is not a process of bargaining and negotiating. The grade I report to the registrar is the grade you earn based on the items listed in the course syllabus. There will be no opportunity to make up extra credit in this course, there will be no alterative assignments offered for this course (except, of course, in the case of those assignments arranged through the SAS centre), nor will there be ‘make-up’ assignments for missed seminars, missed papers, etc. Please keep in mind that “I need a higher grade to keep my scholarship,” “I need a higher grade to maintain my eligibility,” “I need a higher grade to graduate,” or “I need a higher grade to get into my major” are not valid reasons for extra credit or make up assignments. Requests of this nature will simply be ignored. Please keep this in mind during the course. You will have ample opportunities to receive a very high grade in this course, assuming you avail yourself of all the resources present: attend lecture, do your readings, visit the office hours of the teaching team or send emails to us when you need help.

Grades

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

MARK	GRADE
90-100	A+
85-90	A
80-84	A-
77-79	B+
73-76	B
70-72	B-
67-69	C+
63-66	C
60-62	C-
57-59	D+
53-56	D
50-52	D-
0-49	F

Late Assignments

Papers will be penalized 10% per day that they are late. No paper will be accepted seven days past the due date.

Absences, Missed Work, Illness

Students are expected to attend class and to complete all class readings. University policies around absences due to illness will be respected. Students should speak with an advisor in their faculty office (e.g. the Faculty of Social Sciences office for students enrolled in Political Science) if they are dealing with complicated health, mental health or life situations that might affect their ability to meet the normal course deadlines.

If you require academic accommodation on religious grounds, you should make a formal, written request to your instructor(s) for alternative dates and/or means of satisfying requirements. Such requests should be made during the first two weeks of any given academic term.

Avenue to Learn

In this course we will be using Avenue to Learn. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

Turnitin.com

In this course we will be using a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal plagiarism. Students will be expected to submit their work electronically to Turnitin.com and in hard copy so that it can be checked for academic dishonesty. Students who do not wish to submit their work to Turnitin.com must still submit a copy to the instructor. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to Turnitin.com. All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, etc.). For more information please refer to the Turnitin.com Policy.

University Policies

Academic Integrity Statement

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behavior in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behavior can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy.

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

Intellectual Property Notice

All slides, presentations, handouts, tests, exams, and other course materials created by the instructor in this course are the intellectual property of the instructor. A student who publicly posts or sells an instructor's work, without the instructor's express consent, may be charged with misconduct under McMaster's Academic Integrity Policy and may also face adverse legal consequences for infringement of intellectual property rights.

Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

Students who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. Academic accommodations must be arranged for each term of study. Student Accessibility Services can be contacted by phone 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or e-mail sas@mcmaster.ca. For further information, consult McMaster University's Policy for Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities.

Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

Course Modification

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

Appendix A: Guidelines for Written Work

Rules for essay structure and writing

1. You need to have a title page and a works cited page. These pages are separate. They do not count towards the page minimum of your paper.

2. Number your pages with numerals centred at the top of the page.

3. Follow these steps. Establish your topic. Research the major debates and think through the strongest arguments and counter-arguments. Establish your thesis statement. Develop a skeletal structure of the essay based on the arguments and your counter-arguments. Write the essay. Then write your introduction. Edit. Edit again. Edit again.

4. When choosing an essay topic, take time to think about what will interest you, what will help you confront the pressing issues in your life, and what will give you a chance to be creative. An essay written like it's a chore will likely be a chore to read.

5. You should, at almost all costs, avoid the personal pronoun - "I." It makes your writing seem sloppy and un-academic. Instead of writing "I will argue," use "this essay will demonstrate," or something similar. If you are using "I," it really makes your essay seem weak.

6. Similarly, to be blunt, I care not for your opinion. If you are writing "in my opinion" frequently, or at all, you probably will not do well. I care about what you can show to me with the support of academic evidence from academic sources. Leave your opinion out, and include only what you can support with citations from academic sources.

7. Craft a clear thesis statement. The following example is so broad it is basically meaningless: "This essay will explore Karl Marx's theory of alienation in terms of its political, economic, and cultural implications." Why would anyone invest the time to figure out what the heck the author will argue in this essay? Conversely, this is a clear thesis statement: "This essay argues that Marx's theory of alienation is as important in his later work as his early work, contrary to the assertions of Louis Althusser." A clear thesis statement not only sets the boundaries of your research question, it should also entice readers. <u>If the reader does not know what the thesis of your paper is by the end of the first page, you are unlikely to pass</u>

8. The most important part of any writing is critical analysis. Don't only summarize - also explain and analyze. You should typically summarize and explain only as much as is necessary to get to the good part of your writing: your critical analysis. Don't tack critical analysis on to the end of the essay. It is integral to the entire essay. It begins with your thesis statement.

9. Don't write long, incoherent sentences. Keep them short and succinct, with one main point.

10. Make sure that every sentence includes a subject (noun or pronoun) and a verb.

11. Remove unnecessary words and use concise sentences. Say the most with the least. Remember, you are expected to write at the level of this course - not above it, not below it. If you are using "big" words for the sake of making your essay look more academic or smarter, you run the *very good* chance you're using words wrong, and this has the opposite effect - it makes you look not at all smart.

12. Your writing should be organized in paragraphs. Each paragraph should have one central theme, idea, or argument you're trying to convince the reader of. Long, sprawling paragraphs that span multiple pages are improper. Break them down into clear and concise paragraphs.

13. Your audience is an intelligent layperson. Don't speak down to them, but don't assume their familiarity with the topic. Provide the necessary context. If you begin explaining what a character did before you explain who the character is, you haven't provided enough context.

14. Academic writing shouldn't have an informal, or colloquial, tone: "So, it seems to me that Robert Nozick has a pretty limited idea of free choice and democracy, right?" Nevertheless, don't hide behind academic-speak either: "It is evident that, when considered in their totality, Nozick's disquisitions on the freedom of choice, and concomitantly, on the democracy bequeathed by liberal institutions, are quite, albeit not wholly, limited." Remember, your audience is the intelligent layperson with a nose for academic bullshit. Write clearly and directly: "Nozick's ideas of free choice and democracy are quite limited."

15. Unless you are writing directly about something that occurred in the past (e.g. "Simone de Beauvoir died in 1986."), don't write in the past tense. Rather, write in the present tense. Consider this sentence: "De Beauvoir asserted that ethics is ambiguous." This makes her ideas sound dead and gone. Consider this: "De Beauvoir asserts that ethics is ambiguous." With this, her ideas are living and vibrant. Ethics might be ambiguous, but your writing should not be.

16. You should almost never use block quotes from a source. It makes it look like you have nothing original to say for yourself, so you are just copy-and-pasting the words of another author, and filling up space to reach a page limit. If you *must* use block quotes (and you shouldn't), the proper style is to indent them, justify the edges, and single-space them.

Citation and Citation Style

17. When citing work, irrespective of the citation style,[1] the footnote and endnote numbers or symbols should follow the comma or period.[2] Or, if a direct quotation, as Gray notes, "The numbers or symbols go after the quotation marks."[3] With regard to in-text citations, as Gray (2017) notes, "With a direct quote, put the year of publication beside the author's surname and then put the page number after the quotation" (1). When you are citing an idea without directly quoting the author, as Gray (2017, 1) notes, put the year of publication and page number immediately after the author's name. If you are citing an idea, but not directly quoting and not mentioning the author in the sentence, put the name, year, and page at the end of the sentence (Gray 2017, 1).

18. Bibliographic information belongs in the bibliography, not in the text of the paper! Including it in the paper looks sloppy, and I think you're filling space because you have nothing to write. Never do this!: "in a paper, written by two political scientists, Doug Hagar and Tim Fowler, at Carleton University, entitled, 'Liking' Your Union: Unions and New Social Media During Election Campaigns," published in Labor Studies Journal, they argue....." Instead only ever use the last names of the authors, "Fowler and Hagar (2013) argue that unions have not harnessed the potential of new social media."

19. The three major citation style (APA, MLA, Chicago), all have easily found style sheets online. Pick one citation style, cite with it consistently, and follow a style guide online. Do not make up your own citation style. Citation errors can cause lost marks.

1. <u>Specific Punctuation, Spelling, Style, and Grammar Errors to Avoid</u>

20. Use proper Canadian English spelling. Most word processors will default to American English - change to, and use, Canadian or British English.

21. "Ideology" is not a synonym for "idea." It is not the fancy, academic way of saying "idea." An "ideology" is a system of idea and ideals, and is usually formed around a political, economic, social, or cultural theory. "I think I shall make a sandwich" is an idea. Liberalism is an ideology.

22. "Whom" is not a synonym for "who." It is not the fancy, academic way of saying "who." "Who" refers to the subject of a sentence, "whom" refers to the object of a verb or preposition. Generally, if you can replace the word with "he"' or "'she," use who. If you can replace it with "him" or "her," use whom.

23. Affect and Effect are two different words. In everyday speech, *affect* is a verb. It means to influence something, such as in the headline from the Springfield News, "Duff Shortage Affects Moe's Customers." The beer shortage had an impact on some of Moe's customers: they were without beer. *Effect* is mostly commonly used as a noun meaning the result or impact of something, an

outcome. Most of the time, you'll want *affect as a verb* meaning to influence something and *effect for the something that was influenced*.

24. "Novel" is not a synonym for "book." A novel is a work of fiction.

25. It is stylistically incorrect to use the phrase "on the other hand" without first using "on the one hand."

26. There are fourteen separate punctuation marks in standard English grammar. You should learn the difference between them, and how to properly use them. The semicolon is particularly abused in undergraduate writing - the only proper use of a semicolon is to connect two independent clauses - two things that could be a sentence on their own.

27. Don't use apostrophe s ('s) to form the plural of a noun or proper name. Plural nouns are formed by adding s to the noun with no punctuation. 's means a possessive relationship as in phrases like "Canada's future" or "women's rights".

28. Don't confuse "may have" with "might have". Use "may have" only if you aren't certain of the facts. Use "might have" for scenarios that you know did not happen. Correct usage: "Germany might have won the war if it had possessed nuclear weapons." Incorrect usage: "Germany may have won the war if it had possessed nuclear weapons."

29. Don't write "lead" when you mean "led". Lead is a metal. Led is the past tense of "to lead".

30. Don't use "amount" to designate a quantity that can be counted. Use "number."Correct usage: "The number of students has increased." Incorrect usage: "The amount of students has increased."

Appendix B: Map of the United States of America