

PSCI 3031: Political Parties and Interest Groups

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Spring 2023

HLMS 141, T/TH 11:00am-12:15pm

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Office Hours: 2:30-4:30pm Tuesdays, and by appointment

Course Overview

Political parties and interest groups are central to a functioning democracy because they act as the intermediaries that link citizens to government. They organize and mobilize citizens, represent interests and voice concerns, influence policy, and, in the case of political parties, directly compete for political office. Yet Americans are also skeptical of organized groups, from the Founding Fathers' concerns about the undue influence of "factions" to modern concerns of rising party polarization and the ever-increasing expenditures by independent organizations in political campaigns. In this class we will examine the role of parties and interest groups in American politics. We will begin with political parties and discuss why parties exist, the causes and effects of the two-party system, and the role of political parties in government and society. We will then move to interest groups and discuss how interest groups differ from political parties, how interest groups solve collective action problems to encourage citizen participation, and how interest groups can indirectly influence policymaking.

Required Materials

You must set up an iClicker Cloud account by the second week of class. See <https://oit.colorado.edu/tutorial/cuclickers-access-your-cuclickers-account> for information. Note: iClicker Cloud is free, please DO NOT purchase an iClicker remote!

Otherwise, there are no materials that you must purchase for this class. All readings and materials will be posted to the course page on Canvas.

Assignments and Grading

Attendance and Participation (10%): Active participation in this course is critical! Coming to class well prepared and offering comments and questions in discussions will result in a superior participation grade. I count all kinds of engagement with the course as participation including coming to office hours, sending emails with questions, forwarding and commenting on a news article, etc. Attendance is mandatory. **Three "freebie" absences are allowed, and each subsequent absence will result in a 10 point decrease in the participation and attendance grade. Note: all absences are equal – there are no "excused" absences for illness, so use your freebie days wisely!** Students with ten or more absences will either have to drop the course or receive an "F." Note that attendance alone is not sufficient to receive full credit for this grade

item. Students with perfect attendance but little or no participation should expect to receive a 70% on the participation and attendance grade.

Class Points (25%): There will be a variety of iClicker questions/polls, quizzes, short homework assignments, and in class assignments throughout the semester. Collectively, these assignments will be worth 25% of your final grade. iClicker questions will be used to test assigned readings, recent class materials, and for class polls. Quizzes will cover the readings assigned for that day and recent class material and will take place in the first 10-15 minutes of class. **I will drop the three lowest iClicker scores, quizzes, or in class assignments when calculating final grades (homework assignments will not be dropped).** Important note: this grade item will be calculated as a running tally of total points, NOT as an average of the individual quizzes/assignments. In other words, some iClicker days, quizzes, or assignments will be worth more points than others and your final score will be your total points earned out of the total possible points. For example, if you scored a 3/3 on one quiz and a 4/5 on another, your final score would be a 7/8 or 87.5%, NOT the average of 100% on the first quiz and an 80% on the second.

Final Paper (25%): There will be one 2000-2500 word paper worth 25% of the final grade. The paper is due by 11:59pm Thursday April 27th to Canvas as a Word or PDF document (no hard copy is required). More details will be provided in a separate assignment sheet.

Exams (40%): There will be two exams, each worth 20% of your final grade. The exams will be 90-minute timed “take-home” exams administered through Canvas. All exams will be open note. The exams will be composed of “long answer” style questions in which students will answer four of the possible questions/prompts. Exam answers do not need to be written in an essay form (e.g. no introduction or conclusion), but should be written as complete paragraphs (not just bullet points or short-hand). More information on the exams will be provided in class.

Grading Scale

Grades will be assigned as follows:

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	F
94-100	90-93	87-89	83-86	80-82	77-79	73-76	70-72	67-69	63-66	60-62	<60

Class Policies

I will use email as the primary means of communication. Be sure to check your “@colorado.edu” mailbox regularly. If you send me an email please allow 24 hours for me to respond. If I fail to respond, please resend your message. Open communication is critical! If you have a legitimate excuse and need an accommodation for class assignments or exams, you must inform me in advance. Unless an alternative arrangement has been made in advance **late assignments will result in a penalty of 10 percentage points per day.**

Both students and faculty are responsible for maintaining an appropriate learning environment in all instructional settings, whether in person, remote or online. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation or political philosophy. For more information, see the [classroom behavior](#) policy, the [Student Code of Conduct](#), and the [Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance](#).

Finally, I reserve the right to make changes to this document. Any changes will be reflected on Canvas.

University Policies

Covid-19: As a matter of public health and safety, all members of the CU Boulder community and all visitors to campus must follow university, department and building requirements and all public health orders in place to reduce the risk of spreading infectious disease. CU Boulder currently requires COVID-19 vaccination and boosters for all faculty, staff and students. Students, faculty and staff must upload proof of vaccination and boosters or file for an exemption based on medical, ethical or moral grounds through the MyCUHealth portal.

The CU Boulder campus is currently mask-optional. However, if public health conditions change and masks are again required in classrooms, students who fail to adhere to masking requirements will be asked to leave class, and students who do not leave class when asked or who refuse to comply with these requirements will be referred to Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution. For more information, see the policy on classroom behavior and the Student Code of Conduct. If you require accommodation because a disability prevents you from fulfilling these safety measures, please follow the steps in the “Accommodation for Disabilities” statement on this syllabus.

If you feel ill and think you might have COVID-19, if you have tested positive for COVID-19, or if you are unvaccinated or partially vaccinated and have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19, you should stay home and follow the further guidance of the Public Health Office (contacttracing@colorado.edu). If you are fully vaccinated and have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19, you do not need to stay home; rather, you should self-monitor for symptoms and follow the further guidance of the Public Health Office (contacttracing@colorado.edu). {Faculty: insert your procedure here for students to alert you about absence due to illness or quarantine. Because of FERPA student privacy laws, do not require students to state the nature of their illness when alerting you. Do not require "doctor's notes" for classes missed due to illness; campus health services no longer provide "doctor's notes" or appointment verifications.}

Accommodation for Disabilities: If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit your accommodation letter from Disability Services to your faculty member in a timely manner so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities in the academic environment. Information on requesting accommodations is located on the [Disability Services website](#). Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or dsinfo@colorado.edu for further assistance. If you have a

temporary medical condition, see [Temporary Medical Conditions](#) on the Disability Services website.

Preferred Student Names and Pronouns: CU Boulder recognizes that students' legal information doesn't always align with how they identify. Students may update their preferred names and pronouns via the student portal; those preferred names and pronouns are listed on instructors' class rosters. In the absence of such updates, the name that appears on the class roster is the student's legal name.

Honor Code: All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to the [Honor Code](#). Violations of the Honor Code may include, but are not limited to: plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access to academic materials, clicker fraud, submitting the same or similar work in more than one course without permission from all course instructors involved, and aiding academic dishonesty. All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution (honor@colorado.edu; 303-492-5550). Students found responsible for violating the [Honor Code](#) will be assigned resolution outcomes from the Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution as well as be subject to academic sanctions from the faculty member. Additional information regarding the Honor Code academic integrity policy can be found on the [Honor Code website](#).

Discrimination and Harassment: CU Boulder is committed to fostering an inclusive and welcoming learning, working, and living environment. University policy prohibits sexual misconduct (harassment, exploitation, and assault), intimate partner violence (dating or domestic violence), stalking, protected-class discrimination and harassment, and related retaliation by or against members of our community on- and off-campus. These behaviors harm individuals and our community. The Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) addresses these policies, and individuals who believe they have been subjected to misconduct can contact OIEC at 303-492-2127 or email cureport@colorado.edu. Information about university policies, [reporting options](#), and support resources can be found on the [OIEC website](#). Please know that faculty and graduate instructors have a responsibility to inform OIEC when they are made aware of any issues related to these policies regardless of when or where they occurred to ensure that individuals impacted receive information about their rights, support resources, and resolution options. To learn more about reporting and support options for a variety of concerns, visit [Don't Ignore It](#).

Religious Holidays: Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. In this class, **let me know by the end of the third week** of the semester if you expect to miss any class for religious observance. See the [campus policy regarding religious observances](#) for full details.

PSCI 3031: Parties and Interest Groups Class Schedule

Updated: January 19, 2023

Assignments are to be completed before class

Class Date(s)	Topic	Assignment
17-Jan	Course Introduction	N/A
19-Jan	Factions and American Government	Federalist #10 and #51
24+26-Jan	What are Parties? Why do they exist?	Hershey Ch.1 Friedersdorf "Kyrsten Sinema..." Aldrich Ch.2 (Hard reading! Do your best)
31-Jan+2-Feb	Why Two Parties? And the Fate of Third Parties	Sartori 3-12 Vox "The Hidden Politics of New York City's..." Jolly et. al. "Most Third Parties..." Bouie "Why Andrew Yang's New..."
7+9-Feb	Internal Party Divisions	Drutman 2017
14+16-Feb	The Party in Government	Hershey Ch.13 Cox and McCubbins Ch.4+10
21+23-Feb	The Party in the Electorate and Party Identification	Hershey Ch.6 Achen and Bartels Ch.10
28-Feb	The Party Organization	Hershey Ch.3+4
2-Mar	Review and Catch-Up	N/A
7-Mar	Exam 1	Study and Complete Exam 1
9-Mar	Polarization	Thurber and Yoshinaka Ch.1
14+16-Mar	Polarization	Thurber and Yoshinaka Ch.6 Listen: The Revolution with Steve Kornacki eps 5+6
21+23-Mar	Interest Groups Basics and Civil Society	Berry and Wilcox Ch.1 Wilson 1992
28+30-Mar	SPRING BREAK	Relax (mandatory!)
4+6-Apr	Collective Action and Group Support	Berry and Wilcox Ch.3 Olson Intro+Ch.1
11+13-Apr	Buying Influence?	Berry and Wilcox Ch.5 Kalla and Brockman 2016 Listen: This American Life "Take the Money and Run for Office"
18+20-Apr	TBD	TBD
25+27-Apr	TBD	TBD
2-May	TBD	TBD
4-May	Course Closing and Review	N/A
6-10-May	Exam 2 on Canvas	Complete Exam 2

