

**Political Science 3031**  
**Political Parties and Interest Groups**  
**Fall 2009**

**Tues/Thurs 12:30 – 1:45 pm**  
**HUMN 250**

**Professor Nancy Billica, PhD**

Office: Ketchum 34

Office Hours: Tues/Thurs 11:00 – 12:00; and by appointment

Phone: 303-492-3998

E-mail: [billica@colorado.edu](mailto:billica@colorado.edu)

A democratic system requires that citizens keep at least a certain amount of control over what government does. Yet, we know that most of us, and most other Americans, are not much interested in government, much less in making the effort to keep it under control. How can we be sure that democracy will survive when most of the population would rather not bother to control its government?

One possible answer: In American politics, *intermediaries* such as political parties and organized interests can keep our government responsive. They can give voice to the concerns and ideas of large numbers of people who might otherwise remain unheard. Parties can simplify our choices in elections by providing us with a slate of candidates. A party can bring together elected officials who have similar policy preferences and help them get those preferences passed into law. By supporting and endorsing candidates, organized interests can tell their sympathizers which candidates are most likely to do what the group wants. And groups can put pressure on office-holders to get certain proposals passed.

This course examines how political parties and organized interests describe American political life. What are these political intermediaries capable of doing in a democracy, what do they actually do in American politics, and what would a variety of reformers have them do differently?

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

While this is a lecture course, students are expected to actively engage with the readings and lecture materials and participate in class discussion and related activities. To facilitate active learning, a variety of assignments will be required, including (a) take-home assignments that require evaluation of examples, cases and data (see p. 4 for more specific information on these assignments); (b) four in-class quizzes based on the assigned readings; (c) one in-class midterm exam; and (d) one take-home final exam. Each of the take-home assignments and quizzes is worth 5 points and is due in class on the assigned date. Points will be deducted for late submissions. The lowest score from the entire set of assignments and quizzes will be dropped. The midterm exam is worth 25 points, and the take-home final exam 30 points.

Reading Quiz #1 (rdgs to date)	Tues, Sept. 8 <sup>th</sup>
Gerrymandering	Thurs, Sept. 17 <sup>th</sup>
Reading Quiz #2 (rdgs since last quiz)	Thurs, Sept. 24 <sup>th</sup>
Alternative Voting Systems	Tues, Oct 6 <sup>th</sup>
World's Smallest Political Quiz	Tues, Oct 13 <sup>th</sup>
In-class Midterm Exam	Tues, Oct 20 <sup>th</sup>
AARP Versus Generation X	Thurs, Oct 29 <sup>th</sup>
Reading Quiz #3 (Berry & Wilcox, Chaps 2-5)	Thurs, Nov 5 <sup>th</sup>
Political Action Committee (PAC) Funding	Thurs, Nov 12 <sup>th</sup>
Reading Quiz #4 (Berry & Wilcox, Chaps 6-9)	Thurs, Nov 19 <sup>th</sup>
Campaign Finance Reform and the Newest Loophole	Thurs, Dec 3 <sup>rd</sup>
Take-Home Final Exam Due	Wed, Dec 16 <sup>th</sup> , 4:00 pm

## READING MATERIALS

The following books are required and should be available in the campus bookstore:

- Marc Hetherington and William Keefe, *Parties, Politics, and Public Policy in America*, 10<sup>th</sup> ed. (CQ Press, 2007)
- Jeffrey M. Berry and Clyde Wilcox, *The Interest Group Society*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (Pearson Longman, 2009)
- Bertram J. Levine, *The Art of Lobbying: Building Trust and Selling Policy* (CQ Press, 2009)

## EXPECTATIONS

- Attend class and be prepared. This means reading each assignment prior to that class.
- Contact me early and often. Individual meetings are valuable to both of us. If you cannot meet during my office hours, I am easily reached via e-mail. You should especially talk with me as soon as possible when particular questions or concerns arise, or when guidance is needed in carrying through a particular assignment.
- Academic honesty. Any cheating is grounds for an automatic F, expulsion from the class, and referral to the College Committee on Academic Dishonesty. Cheating specifically includes use of unauthorized materials or others' work during exams, plagiarism (which also covers the use of materials made available on the internet), and misrepresentation of someone else's work or work from another course as your own. If you have questions about what is or is not permissible, ask first.

## STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Any student eligible for and needing academic adjustments or accommodations because of a disability should let me know early in the semester so that your learning needs may be appropriately met. You may be required to provide documentation of your special needs to the Disability Services Office. Contact: 303-492-8671, Willard 322, and [www.Colorado.EDU/disabilityservices](http://www.Colorado.EDU/disabilityservices)

## RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to reasonably and fairly deal with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. Let me know as soon as possible any schedule conflicts due to religious observances. See full details at [http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac\\_religh.html](http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_religh.html)

## BEHAVIORAL STANDARDS

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Students who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Faculty have the professional responsibility to treat all students with understanding, dignity and respect, to guide classroom discussion and to set reasonable limits on the manner in which they and their students express opinions. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender variance, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. See policies at <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html> and at [http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student\\_code](http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student_code)

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council ([honor@colorado.edu](mailto:honor@colorado.edu); 303-725-2273). Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). Other information on the Honor Code can be found at <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html> and at <http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/>

## DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT

The University of Colorado at Boulder policies on Discrimination and Harassment, Sexual Harassment, and Amorous Relationships (found at <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/discrimination.html>) apply to all students, staff and faculty. Any student, staff or faculty member who believes s/he has been the subject of discrimination or harassment based upon race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status should contact the Office of Discrimination and Harassment (ODH) at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Judicial Affairs at 303-492-5550. Information about the ODH and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding discrimination or harassment can be obtained at <http://www.colorado.edu/odh>.

## CLASS SCHEDULE, READINGS and ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES

### I. Introduction: Groups in American Politics

August 25 & 27

Readings: Berry & Wilcox, Chap. 1

Federalist 10, available at <http://www.constitution.org/fed/federal10.htm>

### II. The Role of Political Parties in American Politics

September 1, 3 & 8

Readings: Hetherington & Keefe, Chapters 1, 2 & 3

\*\*\* Reading Quiz #1 (all readings to date)

Tues, Sept. 8<sup>th</sup>

### III. Causes and Consequences of the American Political Party System

#### A. History

September 10 & 15

#### B. Institutions

September 17, 22 & 24

Readings: Hetherington & Keefe, Chapters 4, 5 & 7

\*\*\* Assignment 1: Gerrymandering

Thurs, Sept. 17<sup>th</sup>

\*\*\* Reading Quiz #2 (readings since last quiz)

Thurs, Sept. 24<sup>th</sup>

#### C. Rules

September 29, October 1 & 6

Reading: Douglas Amy, "How Proportional Representation Elections Work," Proportional Representation Library, 2005, available at

<http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/polit/damy/BeginnningReading/howprwor.htm>

\*\*\* Assignment 2: Alternative Voting Systems

Tues, Oct 6<sup>th</sup>

#### D. Political Parties and the Public

October 8, 13 & 15

\*\*\* Assignment 3: World's Smallest Political Quiz

Tues, Oct 13<sup>th</sup>

\*\*\* In-class Midterm Exam

Tues, Oct 20<sup>th</sup>

### IV. Interest Groups and American Politics

October 22, 27, 29, November 3 & 5

Readings: Berry & Wilcox, Chapters 2, 3, 4 & 5

\*\*\* Assignment 4: AARP Versus Generation X

Thurs, Oct 29<sup>th</sup>

\*\*\* Reading Quiz #3 (Berry & Wilcox, Chaps 2-5)

Thurs, Nov 5<sup>th</sup>

### V. Interest Groups and Public Policy

November 10, 12, 17 & 19

Readings: Berry & Wilcox, Chapters 6, 7, 8 & 9

\*\*\* Assignment 5: Political Action Committee (PAC) Funding

Thurs, Nov 12<sup>th</sup>

\*\*\* Reading Quiz #4 (Berry & Wilcox, Chaps 6-9)

Thurs, Nov 19<sup>th</sup>



## **VI. The Art of Lobbying**

December 1, 3, 8 & 10

Readings: Levine, Chaps 1-8 (all)

\*\*\* Assignment 6: Campaign Finance and the Newest Loophole      Thurs, Dec 3<sup>rd</sup>

**Take-Home Final Exam Due**

Wed, Dec 16<sup>th</sup>, 4:00 pm

## **PSCI 3031 CLASS ASSIGNMENTS**

### **Assignment 1, Gerrymandering**      (Thurs, Sept. 17<sup>th</sup>)

Class handout

### **Assignment 2, Alternative Voting Systems**      (Tues, Oct 6<sup>th</sup>)

Class handout

### **Assignment 3, World's Smallest Political Quiz**      (Tues, Oct 13<sup>th</sup>)

Complete the "World's Smallest Political Quiz," available at

<http://www.theadvocates.org/quizp/index.html>. Print out your results page and bring to class.

Discuss the following (2-3 paragraphs): This quiz places the quiz-taker in a political philosophy (or ideological) framework. Many argue that the political views of Americans are often influenced by factors other than philosophy. How well does this quiz seem to define your own political views? To what extent are the categories meaningful in terms of describing contemporary political debate?

### **Assignment 4, AARP Versus Generation X**      (Thurs, Oct 29<sup>th</sup>)

Class handout

### **Assignment 5, Political Action Committee (PAC) Funding**      (Thurs, Nov 12<sup>th</sup>)

Search records of contributions by PACs for the most recently completed election cycle (2008).

Specifically, select three PACs of interest to you from three different economic sectors. To find a listing of PACs, go to the "Political Action Committees" page on OpenSecrets.org at

<http://www.opensecrets.org/pacs/>

Locate PACs of interest through the economic sector search option. Select a subsector from the list, and then a specific PAC. Answer the following questions:

- Where did the committees get their money? Describe and summarize the contributors and the amounts contributed to each committee analyzed for the 2008 federal election cycle.
- Where did they spend their money? Describe and summarize the recipients of contributions from each committee analyzed for the 2008 federal election cycle.
- How did their spending and fund-raising activities change across election periods? Summarize the spending and fund-raising changes observed from the 2000 election cycle to the current (2010) cycle.

Discuss the following (one paragraph each): What do you expect these PACs hope to gain in return for their donations to candidates? How might these PACs affect public policy outcomes?

### **Assignment 6, Campaign Finance Reform and the Newest Loophole**      (Thurs, Dec 3<sup>rd</sup>)

Class handout