

# The Politics of Parties and Organized Interests In The United States

Meetings: ENVD 120 – MWF 1:00-1:50  
Professor: Ian Shapiro  
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## Course Description

Despite the vitriolic language that follows discussion of parties and organized interests in the United States, these linkages between citizens and government are of paramount importance, making democracy work when it may otherwise fall to populist whims or corrupt institutional players. In this course we will investigate the nature and origins of groups and uncover what it takes for these informal players of American politics to survive, thrive, and develop a compelling voice in the collective national dialogue. To this end, the course is structured to delve deeply into the study of two substantive topics: parties and organized interests. Most of the course will be spent reading and discussing questions regarding groups in America. How are groups organized? What interests are organized? What do groups actually do, why, and to what effect? Ultimately, as a class, we hope to come to some conclusion about how parties and groups do and perhaps should involve themselves in American politics and society.

## Course Requirements

Attendance and Participation (15%)  
Literature Reviews (20%)  
Main Assignments (40%)  
Presentation of Findings (5%)  
Final Paper (20%)

## Course Requirement Details

### Attendance and Participation (15%)

My basic rule is that you forfeit your attendance points if you miss more than 4 unexcused classes. However, mere attendance is not enough. If you attend religiously and never speak you will earn about two-thirds of your attendance points. I expect you will come to class with a set of notes that will enable a discussion to take place. Make an effort to be an active participant in class and you will benefit, not just by earning your attendance points, but also by practicing good democratic citizenship for your peers.

### Literature Reviews (20%)

You will be required to write FIVE lit review throughout the course. Start with the core question of the week and offer a brief justification – why is this important? Smart introductory paragraphs will also map out the review by highlighting the themes or tensions to be discussed.

The goal of the literature review is to map the major questions, theories, and findings of the literature, highlighting its significance – what big theories does it confirm, what aspects of democracy does the literature help us understand, etc. Essentially, what has led to disparate findings and what do we know? Comment on any significant gaps left in the literature, as far as you can tell, or methodological problems you can discern.

Especially good reviews will close by (briefly!) posing directions for the literature to travel next – the next set of questions, methods to employ, etc.

Each review is to be 1 single-spaced page in length with 1-inch margins and either Times New Roman or Garamond font. As in any paper, include appropriate citations using the approved in-text citation style (see the Political Science Paper Style Guide).

In each review, you will not be able to use names in the text (outside of parenthetical citations, which are obviously a must), no references to article or book titles, no quotations, and no use of “some/one/another/this/that/(etc.) authors/articles/research.” You therefore must write about the conversation of ideas between the authors. You will also incorporate all readings from within the scope of the review as listed in the covered dates.

These reviews encourage you to read since you cannot complete them without having a good understanding of the pieces and how they relate to each other. Do not underestimate of the time these will take you.

### **Main Assignments (40%)**

Each student will be required to complete the first assignment as written. Students will then complete one of four optional assignments.

#### **Assignment 1: Why do people express interest in/join/remain in associations?**

Design and execute a study using CU students as examples given the vibrant organizational bazaar in which you are situated. That is, I want you to find and study a student group on campus. Write a paper under 10 pages using your interview/survey data of your chosen group to comment on the relevant interest group literature. Be sure also to comment on the integrity of your study – what are the limitations of your study? How might the results of your study be qualified? And think about the broader ramifications for the interest system (regarding representativeness and representation) of what you find at the individual level. We’ll talk about the content of this paper more in class, but the basic structure will resemble a full research paper: it will start with a research question, review the literature and develop a theory (of course you can draw on your short LRs!), discuss how the theory will be tested (how are data gathered, what questions are to be asked?), present results, and draw conclusions. The study should be firmly grounded in the debates the literature highlight and the ones suggested in class discussion.

#### **Assignment 2.**

Assignment 2 will have you move beyond the course literature by interacting with a real world scenario of party and interest group pressures. The components of the paper include a research question, theory development, presentation of evidence, recognition of alternative solutions, and conclusion. The substance of the assignment will follow a “choose your own adventure format”. I would like each student to choose (1) the failed repeal of the Affordable Care Act or (2) the

successful passage of GOP tax reform. Then I would like students to study the events leading up to the failure/passage of these legislative endeavors through the lens of either political parties or the interest group system. You will sign up for these options in class in order to make sure not every student has the same adventure. We will discuss this assignment in more detail as we get further in the semester.

**Option 1: Parties/ACA**

**Option 2: Parties/ Tax**

**Option 3: Groups/ACA**

**Option 4: Groups/ TAX**

### **Final Assignment**

The Final will not be taken in class. Instead you will be asked to use the content and skills acquired in this class to review an academic paper dealing in parties and organized interests (the linkage institutions of democratic theory). More details as we get closer to the final. For now, know that I will assign multiple papers you may comment on and they will not be directly from the syllabus.

### **Grading Expectations**

☺ An 'A' paper presents a clear question and justifies it, articulates clear, appropriate, and creative hypotheses (or arguments), presents a clear design and offers reasons for gathering appropriate evidence to test the hypotheses (or arguments), analyzes the evidence in a clear, organized, and systematic fashion, and thinks broadly about the implications of the findings. If appropriate, it uses relevant and sufficient sources, appropriately cited and referenced.

☹ A 'B' paper misses at least one of A paper categories or presents a muddled version of A paper characteristics. It might be a solid piece except for doing some of the following: presents a hypothesis but may not be completely logical or organized in analyzing evidence regarding that hypothesis; has writing problems; is sloppy in presentation; has the bare minimum of sources; or fails to properly cite information. Or it may merely have a less clear question, weaker justification, etc.

☹ A 'C' paper misses several of the A paper categories. It might have no clear question, unclear hypotheses, may not investigate a question in much depth, might have logical or organizational flaws, might have significant writing problems, might have the bare minimum of sources, or no consistent citation of sources.

☹\* A 'D' paper combines serious logical flaws, superficiality, and writing problems.

☹ An 'F' paper fails to display much of any thought or effort on your part.

**NOTE:** Almost all articles on the Weekly Schedule are available in an online database. I use Jstor and Google Scholar. Both are free and available for use while on the University network. If they are not available here, I will suggest where they might be found or I will distribute them to you in a timely fashion (tbd=to be distributed).

**Overview:** There are three broad units of the course. The first considers the concept and inception of political linkages (read parties and groups). The second unit addresses their function as aggregators and mediators between the public and governing institutions. The third unit observes what actions parties and group take to be successful in converting preferences into policy.

## Weekly Schedule

Week and Topics	Readings	Due Dates
<p>1.15 What is the role of groups in Democracy?</p>	<p>M: MLK No Class</p> <p>W: Syllabus Day!</p> <p>F: Madison, James. 1787. "Federalist10: The Utility of the Union as a Safeguard Against Domestic Faction and Insurrection (continued)."</p> <p>F: Tocqueville, Alexis de. 1840. Democracy in America, Book 2. "Chapter 5: Of the Use Which the Americans Make of Public Associations in Civil Life." Pp. 129-134. "Chapter 7: Relation of Civil to Political Associations." Pp. 140-146.</p>	<p>F- LR</p>
<p>1.22 Why do parties exist in the American Political System? Do parties change over time?</p>	<p>M: Lecture</p> <p>W: Aldrich, John H. 1995. Why Parties? The Origin and Transformation of Political Parties in America. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapters 1-2.</p> <p>W: Fiorina, Morris P. 1980. "The Decline of Collective Responsibility in American Politics." Daedalus 109:25-45.</p> <p>F: Schlesinger, James. 1985. "The New American Political Party." American Political Science Review 79(4): 1152-1169.</p> <p>F: Miller, Gary, and Norman Schofield. 2003. "Activists and Partisan Realignment in the United States." American Political Science Review 97(2): 245-260.</p>	<p>F-LR</p>
<p>1.29 How do parties and groups form, grow, and maintain membership?</p>	<p>M: Salisbury, Robert H. 1969. "An exchange theory of interest groups." Midwest Journal of Political Science 13(1): 1-32.</p> <p>Moe, Terry M. 1981. "Toward a broader view of interest</p>	<p>F-LR</p>

	<p>groups.” <i>The Journal of Politics</i> 43(2): 531-43.</p> <p>W: Walker, J. 1983. “The Origins and Maintenance of Interest Groups in America.” <i>American Political Science Review</i>. 77:390-406.</p> <p>F: Nicholson, Stephen P. "Polarizing cues." <i>American Journal of Political Science</i> 56.1 (2012): 52-66.</p>	
2.5 What forces govern the composition of the American Party and Interest Representation system?	<p>M: Lecture</p> <p>M: Lowery, David and Virginia Gray. 1995. “The Population Ecology of Gucci Gulch, or the Natural Regulation of Interest Group Numbers in the American States.” <i>American Journal of Political Science</i> 39(1): 1-29.</p> <p>W: Schlozman, Kay Lehman. 1984. “What Accent the Heavenly Chorus? Political Equality and the American Pressure System.” <i>Journal of Politics</i> 46(4): 1006-32.</p> <p>F: Amanda Skuldt. Could a third-party candidate win the U.S. presidency? That’s very unlikely. Monkey Cage Blog. Washington Post</p>	F-LR
2.12 Does the interest system represent the American people?	<p>M: Gray, Virginia, and David Lowery. "A niche theory of interest representation." <i>The Journal of Politics</i> 58.1 (1996): 91-111.</p> <p>W: Heinz, John P., Edward O. Laumann, Robert H. Salisbury, and Robert L. Nelson. 1990. “Inner Circles or Hollow Cores? Elite Networks in National Policy Systems.” <i>The Journal of Politics</i> 52(2): 356-90.</p> <p>F: Selection of blog posts/podcasts. To be determined.</p>	F-LR
2.19	Assignment 1 Presentations	A1 Due Monday
2.26 Do parties succeed at representing the public’s interests?	<p>M: Stimson, James A., Michael B. MacKuen, and Robert S. Erikson. "Dynamic representation." <i>American Political Science Review</i> 89.3 (1995): 543-565.</p> <p>M: Canes-Wrone, Brandice, David Brady, and John Cogan. 2002. “Out of Step, Out of Office: Electoral Accountability and House Members' Voting.” <i>American Political Science Review</i> 96(01): 127-140.</p>	F-LR

	<p>W: Mayhew, David R. 2000. "Electoral Realignment." <i>Annual Review of Political Science</i> 3:449-74.</p> <p>W: Coleman, J. 1999. "Unified Government, Divided Government, and Party Responsiveness." <i>American Political Science Review</i>. 93:821-35.</p> <p>F: Snyder, James and Michael Ting. 2002. "An Informational Rationale for Political Parties." <i>American Journal of Political Science</i> 46(1): 90-110.</p>	
3.5 Does America have a political knowledge/participation problem?	<p>M: Lecture</p> <p>M: "What the Public Knows — In Pictures, Words, Maps and Graphs." Pew Research.</p> <p>W: Galston, William A. "Political knowledge, political engagement, and civic education." <i>Annual review of political science</i> 4.1 (2001): 217-234.</p> <p>F: Prior, Markus. "News vs. entertainment: How increasing media choice widens gaps in political knowledge and turnout." <i>American Journal of Political Science</i> 49.3 (2005): 577-592.</p>	F-LR
3.12 How groups help/harm civic engagement.	<p>M: Lecture</p> <p>W: Lupia, Arthur. "Shortcuts versus encyclopedias: Information and voting behavior in California insurance reform elections." <i>American Political Science Review</i> 88.1 (1994): 63-76.</p> <p>W: Arceneaux, Kevin, and Robin Kolodny. "Educating the least informed: Group endorsements in a grassroots campaign." <i>American Journal of Political Science</i> 53.4 (2009): 755-770.</p> <p>F: Small, in class assignment. Details to come.</p>	F-LR
3.19 How parties help/harm civic engagement?	<p>M: APSA Committee on Political Parties. 1950. "A Report of the Committee on Political Parties." <i>American Political Science Review</i> 44 (3,Part 2): i-xii, 1-99.</p> <p>W: Layman, Geoffrey C., and Thomas M. Carsey. "Party polarization and" conflict extension" in the American electorate." <i>American Journal of Political Science</i> (2002): 786-802.</p>	F-LR

	<p>W: Dancey, Logan, and Geoffrey Sheagley. "Heuristics behaving badly: party cues and voter knowledge." <i>American Journal of Political Science</i> 57.2 (2013): 312-325.</p> <p>F: Jonathan Ladd. "Negative partisanship may be the most toxic form of polarization" June 2, 2017</p>	
3.26	SPRING BREAK NO CLASS. Relax and think about A2	
4.2	Ian Out! MPSA conference in Chicago. No class work on A2	
4.9	Assignment 2 Presentations	A2 Due Monday
4.16 What do Groups do in Washington?	<p>M: Hall, Richard D., and Frank W. Wayman. 1990. "Buying Time: Moneyed Interests and the Buying of Mobilization of Bias in Congressional Committees." <i>American Political Science Review</i> 84:797-820.</p> <p>W: Schlozman, Kay Lehman and John T. Tierney. 1983. "More of the Same: Washington Pressure Activity in a Decade of Change." <i>Journal of Politics</i> 45(2): 351-77.</p> <p>W: Hojnacki, Marie and David C. Kimball. 2001. "PAC Contributions and Lobbying Contacts in Congressional Committees." <i>Political Research Quarterly</i> 54(1): 161-80.</p> <p>F: Take The Money And Run. <i>This American Life</i> (Podcast).</p>	F-LR
4.23 What do political parties do in Washington?	<p>M: Lecture</p> <p>M: Jones, David R. "Party polarization and legislative gridlock." <i>Political Research Quarterly</i> 54.1 (2001): 125-141.</p> <p>W: Tam Cho, Wendy K., and James H. Fowler. "Legislative success in a small world: Social network analysis and the dynamics of congressional legislation." <i>The Journal of Politics</i> 72.1 (2010): 124-135.</p> <p>F: Why politics needs more conflict, not less. Ezra Klein Show.</p>	F-LR
4.30	Ian's Grab Bag of relevant blog posts and podcasts. To Be distributed.	
5.5 Finals	Due date is to be determined.	

## **Course and University policies**

### **Academic Honesty**

All the work you do in this course is expected to be your own. Absolutely no cheating or plagiarism (using someone else's words or ideas without proper citation) will be tolerated. Any cases of cheating or plagiarism will be reported to the Office of the Dean of Students. If you cheat, you will fail the course. Please review the University's policy regarding academic integrity: <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/acadinteg.html>

### **Disabilities Accommodation**

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) provides protection from illegal discrimination for qualified individuals with disabilities. Students requesting instructional accommodations due to disabilities must arrange for such accommodation. Please review the University's services for such accommodations: <http://www.colorado.edu/sacs/disabilityservices/index.html>

### **Discrimination & Harassment**

The University of Colorado Boulder (CU-Boulder) is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working, and living environment. The University of Colorado does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status in admission and access to, and treatment and employment in, its educational programs and activities. Individuals who believe they have been discriminated against should contact the Office of Discrimination and Harassment (ODH) at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Student Conduct (OSC) at 303-492-5550. Information about the ODH and related policies and resources available to assist individuals regarding discrimination or harassment can be obtained at <http://hr.colorado.edu/dh/>

### **Religious Observances**

The University of Colorado acknowledges a legal and moral obligation to accommodate all students who must be absent from classes or scheduled exams in order to observe religious holidays. Details of this policy may be found on the University of Colorado web site. Students who have a religiously based conflict with classes or exams must notify me and arrange a way to make up missed work. For campus religiously based conflict policies, see [www.colorado.edu/policies/fac\\_relig.html](http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html).

### **Late assignments/Excuses**

I like to think we are all reasonable people who generally fail to take advantage of each other. In the spirit of this mutual kinship I have a few policies regarding late assignments and absences. There are legitimate excuses for late assignments/absences. I consider legitimate excuses limited to personal/family emergencies and serious illness. Excuses like "bad hair day" or "new season of bingeable Netflix Television" do not apply. If possible, notify me before an assignment is due or if you plan to miss class. Again, I am reasonable, but at a point these could harm your participation grade.