

Political Parties and Interest Groups

Dickinson College, Spring 2015
MWF 11:30-12:20, Denny Hall – 313

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Office Hours: Tuesday 10:00-11:30; Friday 9:00-10:30, and by appointment

Course Description and Learning Objectives

This course provides an overview of extra-governmental organizations – political parties and interest groups. We will briefly cover the history and formation of both entities within the American context.

With respect to political parties, following are questions we will consider and discuss:

- What is a political party? What is the history of parties in the United States?
- How do parties function as organizations? Who are the key figures making decisions about how parties function?
- What role do political parties play in elections, specifically presidential primary elections? How has this role changed throughout American history?
- How do elected officials rely on parties? Is there anything to be gained from this?
- How do individuals choose a political party to affiliate with?

With respect to interest groups, following are questions we will consider and discuss:

- What are interest groups and how do they form?
- Do groups represent all interests in the United States equally? If not, which interests tend to be overrepresented?
- How do interest groups operate? In other words, who are the key figures making decisions about how groups function?
- How do interest groups influence or affect the American political process, specifically with respect to elections and policymaking?
- How do interest groups interact with other governmental entities, specifically Congress, the Presidency, and the Courts?

Ultimately, the class has three learning objectives:

1. You will gain substantive knowledge related to the questions listed above.
2. You will engage with literature in political science, raising interesting questions and connecting readings to one another in a sophisticated and interesting way.
3. You will research and understand how parties and interest groups function in today's American political environment and be able to speak about those functions from a particular perspective.

Course Materials

There are four required books for this course (available at the bookstore):

- Cohen, Jeffrey E., Richard Fleisher, and Paul Kantor, eds. 2001. *American Political Parties: Decline or Resurgence?* CQ Press. (CFK in Syllabus)
- Cohen, Marty, David Karol, Hans Noel, and John Zaller. 2008. *The Party Decides: Presidential Nominations Before and After Reform.* University of Chicago Press.
- Grossman, Matt, ed. 2014. *New Directions in Interest Group Politics.* Routledge.
- Olson, Mancur. 1971. *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups.* Harvard University Press.

Additional readings are available on Moodle or online through the Dickinson College Library as specified in the syllabus.

Requirements and Grading

Active participation in course discussion is an essential element of the course, and will be critical to successfully learning the material. The success of this course depends upon your regular attendance and contributions to class discussion. Course attendance is not optional. That said, I know things sometimes come up and, as such, you may have two absences throughout the course of the semester without penalty. I do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences, so please use these three judiciously. Missing classes more than two times will result in a reduction of your attendance and participation grade.

Furthermore, simply showing up for class is not enough to guarantee a high participation grade. I also expect you to read the assigned material and to be prepared to ask questions and offer thoughtful, critical analysis about it during class. Attendance alone with little or no contribution to class discussions will earn you approximately a C in participation.¹

Beyond participation, your grade will be based on your leading of class discussion (within a small group of 2-3), two papers and in-class activities, a midterm exam, and a final exam that will include an in-class and a take-home component. The relative weight of each component and its due date is listed below:

Attendance and Participation		10%
Class Discussion Leader and Response Paper	January 28; February 6; February 16; February 23; March 18; March 27; April 10; or April 20	10%
Candidate Paper/Elevator Speech in Class	February 18	15%
Midterm Exam	March 4	20%
Interest Group Paper/Elevator Speech in Class	April 13	15%
Final Exam and Paper	May 8	30%

¹ I recognize that some students are hesitant to speak in front of the class. If this is the case, please come talk with me during office hours early in the semester.

Academic Integrity

From Dickinson College's Community Standards... "Respect for ideas — our own and others' — is a hallmark of academic integrity. We show respect by acknowledging when we have used another's words or ideas in our work. We expect others to acknowledge when they use our ideas or words in their work. Students are expected to do their own work on quizzes, papers, examinations, class assignments, etc. Normally, a paper may be submitted in fulfillment of an assignment in only one course. Exceptions require permission from the instructors. Collaboration must be noted in writing and requires the consent of all instructors."

(http://www.dickinson.edu/uploadedFiles/student_life/resources/dean_of_students/content/2012-2013%20Community%20Standards.pdf)

With respect to the response papers, candidate and interest group papers, midterm exam, and final exam, I expect you do to you own work – no exceptions. Students will work on groups to lead class discussion and I will talk more explicitly about this in class when students sign up for days. If you ever have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism or cheating, please ask questions sooner rather than later.

Accommodations

Dickinson College makes reasonable academic accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Students requesting accommodations must make their request and provide appropriate documentation to Disability Services in Biddle House. Because classes change every semester, eligible students must obtain a new accommodation letter from Director Marni Jones every semester and review this letter with their professors so the accommodations can be implemented. The Director of Disability Services is available by appointment to answer questions and discuss any implementation issues you may have. Disability Services proctoring is managed by Susan Frommer at [717-254-8107](tel:717-254-8107) or proctoring@dickinson.edu. Address general inquiries to Stephanie Anderberg at [717-245-1734](tel:717-245-1734) or e-mail disabilityservices@dickinson.edu.

I am committed to including all students in this course and am happy to discuss accommodations with students, provided that this conversation happens early in the semester and definitely before any papers are due or exams are scheduled.

Course Schedule

January 19 – Introduction, No reading

Unit 1: Political Parties

What is a Party? And Historical Overview of Parties in the U.S.

January 21 – Cohen et al, Chapter 2, pages 19-45; Aldrich, John. 1995. "Politics and Parties in America." In *Why Parties? The Origin and Transformation of Political Parties in America*. University of Chicago Press; pages 3-27. (Available on Moodle)

January 23 – Altman and Miller. 2014. "Party Down" *Time Magazine* March 3 (Available on Moodle); Cohen et al, Chapter 3, pages 47-80; Sign up for class discussion slots

Parties as Organizations

January 26 – CFK, Chapters 7 and 8, pages 138-183

January 28 – CFK, Chapters 5 and 6, page 103-137

January 30 – Cohen et al, Chapter 4, pages 81-106

Parties in Nominations

February 2 – Cohen et al, Chapter 5, pages 107-156

February 4 – Cohen et al, Chapter 6, pages 157-186

February 6 – Cohen et al, Chapter 7, pages 187-234

Parties in Government

February 9 – CFK, Chapter 9, pages 187-208

February 11 – Aldrich, John. 1995. “Why Parties Form.” In *Why Parties? The Origin and Transformation of Political Parties in America*. University of Chicago Press; pages 28-61. (Available on Moodle)

February 13 – Guest Speaker – Professor Andrew Rudalevige; No reading

February 16 – CFK, Chapter 10, pages 209-228; Mayhew, David. 1974. “Processes and Policies.” In *Congress: The Electoral Connection*. Yale University Press; pages 81-158 (Available on Moodle)

February 18 – **Member of Congress Paper Due**; No reading

Parties in the Electorate

February 20 – CFK, Chapters 1 and 2, pages 11-54

February 23 – CFK, Chapters 3 and 4, pages 55-99

February 25 – Cohen et al, Chapter 9, pages 277-332

February 27 – Philpot, Tasha. 2007. “Toward a Theory of Party Image Change.” In *Race, Republicans, and the Return of the Party of Lincoln*. University of Michigan Press; pages 10-30. (Available on Moodle)

March 2 – Midterm Review

March 4 – **Midterm Exam**

March 6 – TBA

SPRING BREAK

Unit 2: Interest Groups
How do groups form?

March 16 – *Federalist #9* (http://thomas.loc.gov/home/histdox/fed_09.html); *Federalist #10* (http://thomas.loc.gov/home/histdox/fed_10.html)

March 18 – Olson, Chapters 1 and 2, pages 5-64 (skim pages 23-33)

March 20 – Olson, Chapter 6, pages 132-167

Who do groups represent?

March 23 – Grossman, Chapter 1

March 25 – Grossman, Chapters 3 and 4

March 27 – Baumgartner, Frank R. and Beth L. Leech. 1998. "Bias and Diversity in the Interest-Group System." In *Basic Interests: The Importance of Groups in Politics and in Political Science*. Princeton University Press, pages 83-99. (Available on Moodle)

How do groups operate?

March 30 – Grossman, Chapter 5

April 1 – Kollman, Ken. 1998. "Tactics and Strategies." In *Outside Lobbying: Public Opinion & Interest Group Strategies*. Princeton University Press, pages 28-57. (Available on Moodle)

April 3 – Grossman, Chapter 6; Hojnacki, Marie. 1997. "Interest Groups' Decisions to Join Alliances or Work Alone." *American Journal of Political Science* 41(1): 61-87. (Available via JSTOR)

Influence of groups on elections

April 6 – Grossman, Chapter 8; Francia, Peter L. 2013. "Onward Union Soldiers? Organized Labor's Future in American Elections." In *Interest Groups Unleashed*, edited by Paul S. Herrnson, Christopher J. Deering, and Clyde Wilcox. CQ Press, pages 129-152.

April 8 – Pitney Jr., John J. 2013. "Iron Law of Emulation: American Crossroads and Crossroads GPS." In *Interest Groups Unleashed*, edited by Paul S. Herrnson, Christopher J. Deering, and Clyde Wilcox. CQ Press, pages 170-192.

April 10 – Ansolabehere, Stephen, John M. de Figueiredo, and James M. Snyder Jr. 2003. "Why Is There so Little Money in U.S. Politics?" *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* 17(1): 105-130. (Available via JSTOR); La Raja, Raymond J., and Brian F. Schaffner. 2014. "The Effects of Campaign Finance Spending Bans on Electoral Outcomes: Evidence from the States about the Potential Impact of *Citizens United v. FEC*." *Electoral Studies*. 33: 102-114. (Available on Moodle)

Influence of groups on policymaking

April 13 – **Interest Group Paper Due**; No reading

April 15 – Grossman, Chapter 9 (Policymaking)

April 17 – No Class, MPSA Conference

April 20 – Hall, Richard L., and Frank W. Wayman. 1990. "Buying Time: Moneyed Interests and the Mobilization of Bias in Congressional Committees." *The American Political Science Review* 84(3): 797-820. (Available via JSTOR); Grossman, Matt, and Kurt Pyle. 2013. "Lobbying and Congressional Bill Advancement." *Interest Groups & Advocacy* 2(1): 91-111. (Available on Moodle)

April 22 – Leech, Beth L., Frank R. Baumgartner, Timothy M. La Pira, and Nicholas A. Semanko. 2005. "Drawing Lobbyists to Washington: Government Activity and the Demand for Advocacy." *Political Research Quarterly* 58(1): 19-30. (Available via JSTOR)

How do groups interact with other parts of government?

April 24 – Grossman, Chapter 10 (Congress)

April 27 – Grossman, Chapter 11; Peterson, Mark A. 1992. "The Presidency and Organized Interests: White House Patterns of Interest Group Liaison." *The American Political Science Review* 86(3): 612-625. (Available via JSTOR)

April 29 – Grossman, Chapter 12; Caldeira, Gregory A., and John R Wright. 1988. "Organized Interests and Agenda Setting in the U.S. Supreme Court." *The American Political Science Review* 82(4): 1109-1127. (Available via JSTOR)

May 1 – Wrap-up; Grossman, Chapter 14

Final Exam: Friday, May 8 at 9:00 a.m.