

**Political Parties and Elections**  
**POLI 208**  
**Spring 2011**

PROFESSOR	Jason M. Roberts
OFFICE	Hamilton 315
OFFICE HOURS	Tues/Thur 10:00-11:00, Friday 1:00-2:00, and by appointment
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TIME	Tues/Thur. 2:00-3:15

## Course Description

This course is intended as a broad survey of American Political Parties and U.S. Elections. We will focus on historical development of parties, electoral institutions, and recent elections.

## Expectations

I expect all students to behave professionally in this class. I am generally intolerant of disruptive behavior in the classroom, including talking during lectures, browsing the Internet, and ESPECIALLY the ringing of cell phones or pagers. Class discussions are expected to be civil, rational, and respectful of the opinions of others. Although class attendance is not mandatory, you will be held responsible for all material in the textbooks and in lectures, even if you miss a class. Moreover, I expect all students to attend class prepared to participate in any class discussion and to show up on time. I reserve the right to hold “pop” quizzes if no one is participating in class discussion.

## Required Texts

- Stonecash, Jeffrey M. 2010. *New Directions in American Political Parties*. New York: Routledge Press.
- Abramson, Paul, John H. Aldrich, and David W. Rohde. 2010. *Change and Continuity in the 2008 Elections*. Washington: CQ Press.
- Fiorina, Morris. 2009. *Disconnect: The Breakdown of Representation in American Politics*. Norman, OK. University of Oklahoma Press.
- All of the other readings below will be posted on Blackboard.
- Students are responsible for staying informed of the issues. Reading a daily, national newspaper such as *The New York Times* or the *Washington Post* is highly recommended.

## Course Requirements

**Exams (2) 60%** Exams will be taken in class. The final exam is *not* comprehensive. Exams will primarily consist of short answer type questions and essay questions.

**Writing Assignment 30%** The writing assignment will be a 10-12 page research paper and worth 30% of your grade for this class. The paper will be based on course readings and your own research. More details will be handed out in class.

**Engagement 10%** Your class participation will be evaluated. I strongly encourage all students to actively participate in discussion. Class attendance is part of your participation grade, as is participation in discussion.

## Writing Assignment

- **Research Paper:** Details on the paper will be distributed in class. It will be due on April 12, 2011.

## Miscellany

### Grading and Makeups

A final grade of “incomplete” will only be given in this course under exceptional circumstances and is solely at the discretion of the instructor. Assignments turned in late will be penalized one letter grade per day late. In addition, written assignments that do not follow the guidelines of the assignment and/or have poor grammar and spelling will be severely penalized. As a general rule, make-ups for exams will not be given. Students who must miss exams because of scheduled activities of an official University student organization, a religious holiday, or a verifiable illness should contact the instructor IN ADVANCE of missing an exam so that alternative arrangements can be made.

### Assignments

You are responsible for keeping a copy of all written assignments for the course. This ensures that we will not run into problems with lost assignments. You are also responsible for keeping copies of the assignments once they are handed back. Sometimes errors do happen, and a grade may not be recorded for you. If this happens you must be able to produce the GRADED paper to verify that the assignment was completed and that the grade is correct.

### Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty is broadly defined as submitting work that is not your own without attribution, and is not acceptable in this or any other academic course. Any academic dishonesty found on an assignment results in a failing grade for that assignment and will be prosecuted to the fullest extent permissible under University of North Carolina guidelines, which can be accessed at: <http://honor.unc.edu>.

## **Student Disabilities**

Any student with a documented disability condition (e.g. physical, learning, psychiatric, systemic, vision, hearing, etc.) who needs to arrange reasonable accommodations should contact the instructor and the Academic Success Program (919-962-7227) at the beginning of the semester.

## **Instructor Availability**

If you would like to speak with me outside of class time, feel free to stop by my office during regularly scheduled office hours. If you are unable to meet during office hours, you can arrange an alternate time to see me by setting up an appointment. I also try to respond quickly to email inquiries.

## **Communication**

Periodically the instructor may communicate with students via email, regarding assignments, schedule changes, or other course related matters. Students are responsible for the content of *all* such communications.

## Tentative Course Outline

Readings should be done before the class for which they are listed.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Required Readings</b>
January 11	Introduction	n/a
January 13	Why Parties?	Aldrich Chs. 1, 2
January 18	American Party History	APSA report, Stonecash Ch. 5
January 20	American Parties Today	Stonecash Chs. 1, 2
January 25	The Changing American Party	Stonecash Chs. 3, 8
January 27	Party Coalitions	Stonecash Chs. 6, 7, 10
February 1	Nominations	Hetherington Ch. 3
February 3	Positioning	TBA
February 8	Polarization	Fiorina Ch. 1, Abram. Ch. 2
February 10	Disconnect	Fiorina Chs. 2, 3
February 15	Why Polarization?	Fiorina Chs. 4,5
February 17	How Polarized?	Abram. Ch. 5
February 22	Who is Polarized	Fiorina Ch. 6, Abram. Ch. 6
February 24	What to do?	Fiorina Chs. 7, 8
March 1	Catchup and Review	n/a
March 3	Exam 1	n/a
March 8	NO CLASS—SPRING BREAK	n/a
March 10	NO CLASS—SPRING BREAK	n/a
March 15	Incumbency, Strategy, and Choice	Jacobson
March 17	Midterms	Abramowitz, Campbell, Renda
March 22	No Class	n/a
March 24	Midterms 2010	n/a
March 29	Primary 2008	AAR Ch. 1
March 31	No Class	n/a
April 5	The Candidate	n/a
April 7	General Election 2008	AAR Chs. 2,3
April 12	Voting in 2008	AAR Chs. 4, 5
April 14	No Class	n/a
April 19	Parties, Issues and the Vote	AAR Chs. 6-8
April 21	2012 and Beyond	AAR Ch. 11
April 26	Catchup and Review	n/a
April 30 - 4:00 p.m.	FINAL EXAM	n/a