

POLS 4130: Political Parties and Interest Groups
Syllabus – Spring 2020

Course Information

- Section 4560 – TR in Clement 128 at 11:10 am
 - This class will meet in person on Tuesdays
 - This class will meet through Zoom on Thursdays
 - Zoom Info:
 - <https://apsu.zoom.us/j/83337040715?pwd=Zk5meGl3QjFnQ2ozN29iUHIDVkl0Zz09>
 - Meeting ID: 833 3704 0715
 - Passcode: POLS4130T
- Instructor: Dr. Kevin M. Baron (his/him/Dr./Professor)
 - Email: baronkm@apsu.edu
 - Phone: 931-221-7581
 - Office: Clement 143D
 - Office hours will be virtual meetings held via [Zoom](#) or by phone (931) 219-2140, scheduled by request as needed
 - The quickest way to reach me is via my APSU email

Course Description

Are political parties necessary in a democratic society? Why does the U.S. maintain a two-party system and is there a connection between the partisan elites and the citizenry? How do interest groups influence the main decision makers? Why do interest groups align with political parties, and should their influence be restricted? The debate about the role of political parties in the American political system dates back to the founding of the American Nation, even though the writers of the Constitution did not like political parties nor include them in the Constitution. The party structure is ingrained to every democratic society, including the United States. Often, however, there appear many challenges to the American partisan structure both at the mass and elite levels. Is partisanship as an idea to blame, or the rules of the game, which are made by the parties? In this class, we will discuss the conceptual and practical foundations of the party system in the United States and investigate the extent to which the political party structure influences political outcomes, in the context of continuing pressures by the citizenry and various interest groups.

It is an interesting time to be studying political parties, as divided government has become more common and voter alignment to partisan allegiances is strong. Newer ideas such as *asymmetric politics* and *negative partisanship* has become staples to attempt to understand the current state of the Republican and Democratic parties. But older ideas like party realignment seem like they can be useful in perhaps understanding how and why parties might reform and change. To better understand the challenges of the contemporary period, we must understand the history, and the institutionalized role of political parties and interest groups.

Course Goals and Objectives

The course contributes to the mission of the university and the political science program. By taking this course, students will:

- To critically examine the institutions of political parties and interest groups – what they are, how they function, and the impacts they have on political outcomes.
- Provide a perspective to evaluate how effective parties and interest groups are on policy and political outcomes in the real world.
- Explore differing theories and ideological perspectives that influence and animate political parties within the political system, especially in understanding the party role within a polarized and depolarized climate.
- Be able to clearly differentiate political parties and interest groups as separate tools for individuals to seek political action through.
- To better develop critical thinking, writing, and analytical skills for research and communication.
- Distinguish between assumptions and evidence in evaluating arguments.

Course Requirements

Textbooks

- Mark D. Brewer and L. Sandy Maisel, *Parties and Elections in America: The Electoral Process*, 8th Edition, Rowman and Littlefield.
- Jeffrey M. Berry and Louis Sandy Maisel, *The Oxford Handbook of American Political Parties and Interest Groups*, 2010. **Available from the APSU Library** <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/austinpeay-ebooks/detail.action?docID=584549>
 - You will need to login to the Woodward Library Website to access.

- Additional readings will be provided electronically on either D2L or direct. These readings are listed in the Class Schedule section on the week in which we will be discussing them.

Assignments and Grades – The main course assignments will consist of two at home exams based on the material covered; three take-home written papers; along with various discussion posts or short response papers; attendance and participation are expected but is not graded. Late assignments will be accepted for reduced points. See **APPENDIX A and B** at the end of the syllabus for more details on the assignments and the grading rubric.

Points will be assigned based on the following:

- Exam 1: 100 points (15%)
- Exam 2: 100 points (15%)
- Paper 1: 100 points (15%)
- Paper 2: 100 points (15%)
- Paper 3: 100 points (25%)
- Weekly Work – Discussion Posts/Response Papers: 100 points (15%)
- Attendance and Participation: 0 Points - you are not rewarded for doing what you should be doing. Be an active learner, no one else will do it for you.

Grades will be assigned based on the following scale:

100 – 90% = A	79 -70% = C	59% and Below = F
89 – 80% = B	69 – 60% = D	

Class Philosophy – Learning is an active and interactive process. This is a Hyflex Course, which means you will be expected to be motivated on your own, do the work as listed within D2L on the course schedule, complete readings and assignments, and reach out to me to ask questions or seek clarification on topics and issues. We will be meeting in person one day per week, a synchronous zoom meeting one day per week, and all the rest of the work will be online. It is to your advantage to think of this class like an online class that meets a couple of times per week. All material and assignments are posted to allow you to go through the work on your time and at your pace each week, relatively speaking. You must be an ACTIVE LEARNER, no one will do this for you. You must take an active role in your education, especially for an online course. Ask questions, support opinions and reasoned arguments with fact, and remember – it is fine to challenge someone’s

ideas, but not the person, respect for each other is essential for civil discourse. If you email me a picture of your favorite animal, I will give you five bonus points on one assignment or paper.

Note for Spring 2021: Due to the ongoing health pandemic caused by COVID-19, I want to forewarn you that it is possible for changes to occur. As this course is fully online, any issues on campus should not disrupt too much, although access to resources and internet can be problematic. You will be notified directly by me about any changes to the course. Second, if you run into issues, problems related to the course, technology, or with your personal health, please let me know so arrangements can be made. I am always willing to work with you to ensure your success in the class, but you must keep me informed of your situation so we can work out a plan.

COVID-19 Statement and Guidelines

Austin Peay State University is concerned for the health and well-being of the entire community. The nature of COVID-19 is such that each of our individual actions affects not only our personal well-being but also those of every other person with whom we interact or share a space. Given the possibility of changes to CDC guidelines or those of local or state officials, students and faculty alike will need to be adaptable and flexible as events may occur that necessitate a change in the course schedule or mode of delivery. To minimize the disruption that might occur if a student falls ill or is unable to attend classes for some other legitimate reason, class materials must be made available electronically to students unless the nature of the coursework makes this impossible.

To enhance the health and safety of the APSU community, it is expected that every member of this course acknowledges the following university guidelines:

Masks and face coverings: All students are expected to wear masks or face coverings and maintain physical distancing in all university buildings. Both are necessary classroom requirements that will help keep our community safe.

1. All students and instructors must arrive to class wearing a mask or face covering over their mouth and nose. If a student does not have a mask or face covering, the student must pick up a disposable mask (available throughout campus – in classrooms and in administrative academic department offices) before joining the class session.

2. If a student habitually arrives to class without wearing a mask or face covering, the student may be advised that they can only attend an online section of the course, if such an option is available, for the remainder of the semester. If the course is not available online, the student will be informed that the in-person course is the only option and they will be given one more opportunity to return to class and wear a mask or face covering. The instructor will file a report with the Dean of Students in the Office of Student Affairs. The student may face sanctions up to and including the student being administratively withdrawn from the course and not receive a refund of tuition or fees.
3. If a student refuses to put on a mask or face covering in a class, after being instructed to do so, the instructor will request that the student leave the class. The instructor will file a report with the Dean of Students in the Office of Student Affairs. The student will face sanctions up to and including the student being administratively withdrawn from the course and not receive a refund of tuition or fees. If a student refuses to leave the classroom upon request from an instructor, campus police will be called to escort the student from the classroom. In this case, the student will again be referred to the Dean of Students in the Office of Student Affairs. If this situation occurs, the faculty member may take a break or dismiss the class for that day at their discretion. (Questions regarding Failure to Comply Code of Student Conduct violations should be directed to the Dean of Students, 931-221-7323).
4. If a student has a medical condition that inhibits the student's ability to wear a mask or face covering, the student must contact Disability Services to receive an accommodation (931-221-6230). If a student seeks an exception to the mask requirement, the faculty member and advisor should work with the student to seek an online section of the course. If an online section is not available, or the student does not wish to enroll in the online course, the faculty member will provide instruction to the student remotely, using available lecture capture and other appropriate technology.

Student Absences: Students unable to attend class due to COVID-19 policy or another serious illness, will:

1. Notify their instructor and follow campus guidelines regarding a safe return to campus;
2. Not be penalized for class absences assuming they make up missed assignments in a timely fashion, in consultation with (and at the discretion of) the instructor; and
3. Be provided reasonable accommodations to access all course materials and will be given the opportunity to complete missed assignments online as is practicable.

Student Illness: If a student tests positive for COVID-19 or is experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms (fever or chills, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, cough, muscle pain, sore throat, headache, fatigue, new loss of taste or smell, congestion or runny noses, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea), remain at home, please [complete the COVID 19 reporting form](#), and seek medical assistance or COVID-19 testing if instructed to do so. Students may reach out to Boyd Health Services for guidance. The student should not return to class (or campus activities) until the student has been released by Boyd Health Services. Boyd Health Services will provide guidance during the quarantine/isolation period and a representative from the Office of the Dean of Students will contact the student to provide additional information.

Student Complaints and Appeals Procedures - Discuss your concerns with your faculty member or contact the department chair if you need assistance in resolving an issue. APSU has a variety of policies and procedures for students to file a complaint, appeal, or grievance. [Please visit this webpage for more information.](#)

Academic and Classroom Misconduct - Students are always expected to conduct themselves appropriately. Academic and classroom misconduct will not be tolerated. Students must read the “Code of Student Conduct” in the new Student Handbook for an understanding of what will be expected of them within the academic setting. Policy 3:035 will be followed in reporting any suspected cases of academic misconduct.

Disability Policy – At any time during the semester a student who has a disability which may affect their academic performance is encouraged to make an appointment with me to discuss this matter, and/or should contact Disability Services; telephone 221-6230; TTY 221-6278; fax 221-7102; or go to the APSU [Office of Disability Services website](#).

Policy on minors in the classroom - Minors (any non-student under the age of 18) accompanying staff, faculty, students or visitors on campus are not permitted in the classroom.

Service animals in the classroom - Consult Policy 3:007 Animals on Campus for appropriate situations allowing service animals in the classroom.

Class Schedule:

*EXPECTATION is that you will have completed the readings BEFORE class, come prepared to discuss and ask questions. You must take an active role in your learning, no one will do it for you.

Week 1, Jan. 19 - 24: Let's Get This Party Started Right

- Syllabus and Course Overview
- Anson D. Morse, "What is a Party?" *Political Science Quarterly*, 11/1:68-81 (1896).
- Lee Drutman, "America is Now the Divided Republic the Framers Feared," *The Atlantic*, Jan. 2, 2020.

Section 1 – Why Parties? Party Structure, Organization, and Governing

- **Week 2, Jan. 25 - 31: Why Parties? A Theoretical Perspective**
 - Brewer and Maisel, Chapter 1: Elections and Political Parties
 - Aldrich and Grynawski, "Theories of Parties," Chapter 2 in the *Oxford Handbook*
- **Week 3, Feb. 1 - 7: Structure of the American Party System**
 - Brewer and Maisel, Chapter 2: American Political Parties and Party Organization
 - Paul S. Herrnson, "The Evolution of National Party Organizations," Chapter 13 in the *Oxford Handbook*.
 - David R. Mayhew, "Electoral Realignment," *Annual Review of Political Science* 3: 449-479 (2000).
- **Week 4, Feb. 8 - 14: Party in Government**
 - Brewer and Maisel, Chapter 11: Party in Government

- David Rohde, “What a Difference Twenty-Five Years Makes: Changing Perspectives on Parties and Leaders in the US House,” Chapter 17 in the *Oxford Handbook*.
- Barbara Sinclair, “Partisan Models and the Search for Party Effects in the US Senate,” Chapter 18 in the *Oxford Handbook*.

Exam 1

Section 2 – Parties in the Electorate

- **Week 5, Feb. 15 - 21: Party in the Electorate and Why No 3rd Parties**
 - Brewer and Maisel, Chapter 3: Voting and Other Forms of Political Participation
 - Ronald Rapoport, “Winning Isn’t Everything: Third Parties and the American Two-Party System,” Chapter 12 in the *Oxford Handbook*.
- **Week 6, Feb. 22 - 28: Partisanship and Polarization**
 - Grossman and Hopkins, *Asymmetric Politics*, Chapter 1
 - Alan Abramowitz and Steven Webster, “The rise of negative partisanship and the nationalization of U.S. elections in the 21st Century,” *Electoral Studies* 41: 12-22 (2016).
 - State of American Political Parties using the V-Dem and Global Party Survey data

Paper 1

- **Week 7, March 1 - 7: Campaign Finance Reform & The Media**
 - Brewer and Maisel, Chapter 5: Campaign Finance
 - Brewer and Maisel, Chapter 10: The Media and the Electoral Process
- **Week 8, March 8 - 14: Presidential Nominations and Elections**
 - Brewer and Maisel, Chapter 8: Presidential Nominations
 - Brewer and Maisel, Chapter 9: Presidential Elections
 - Sydney Milkis and Jesse Rhodes, “The President, Party Politics, and Constitutional Development,” Chapter 20 in the *Oxford Handbook*.

Exam 2

Section 3 – Representation, Influence, and Agenda Setting

- **Week 9, March 15 - 21: The Balance of Representation**
 - Brewer and Maisel, Chapter 4: Organized Groups in the Political Process
 - McFarland, “Interest Group Theory,” Chapter 3 in the *Oxford Handbook*

- **Week 10, March 22 - 28: Who Participates and Why**
 - Kay Schlozman, “Who Sings in the Heavenly Chorus? The Shape of the Organized Interest System,” Chapter 22 in the *Oxford Handbook*.
 - Dara Strolovitch and David Forrest, “Social and Economic Justice Movements and Organizations,” Chapter 24 in the *Oxford Handbook*.
- **Week 11, March 29 - April 4: How to Win Friends and Influence Policy**
 - Frank Baumgartner, “Interest Groups and Agendas,” Chapter 27 in the *Oxford Handbook*.
 - Beth Leech, “Lobbying and Influence,” Chapter 28 in the *Oxford Handbook*.

Paper 2

- **Week 12, April 5 - 11: Elections, Parties, and Interest Groups**
 - Clyde Wilcox and Rentaro Iida, “Interest Groups in American Elections,” Chapter 29 in the *Oxford Handbook*.
 - Michael Heaney, “Linking Political Parties and Interest Groups,” Chapter 30 in the *Oxford Handbook*.

Section 4 – Change Over Time

- **Week 13, April 12 - 18: Political Parties Then...**
 - APSA Committee on Political Parties, 1950 Report, “Toward a More Responsible Two-Party System.”
 - Forward
 - Summary
 - Austin Ranney, “Toward a More Responsible Two-Party System: A Commentary,” *American Political Science Review* 45: 488-499 (1951).
- **Week 14, April 19 - 25: ...And Now**
 - [The American Presidency Project](#) on Political Party Platforms
- **Week 15, April 26 – May 5: Finish Out Final – Paper 3**
 - **Paper 3** – Final Paper will be due by 11:59 pm on May 5

APPENDIX A

Criteria for Assignments

😊 Exams

- There will be two exams given during the semester. The exams will be a mixture of short answer and essay questions. Exams will be done at home on D2L within a given period of time. More details and the exam questions will be provided to you in D2L when the exam opens.

😊 Papers

- Specific instructions for each Paper will be given in D2L when they are assigned. In general, Papers are designed to have you critically think about and analyze core ideas and concepts from the course, along with providing real world examples to support your position in the paper. These papers are designed to have you grapple with ideas and demonstrate an understanding of the course material and your ability to apply theories and analyze a situation. Papers one and two you will be given a week to write them, while Paper 3 you have more time.
 - **Note on Paper 3** which serves as your final. This paper will be specifically focused on analyzing party continuity and change over time by focusing on party platforms from 1960 to 2020. The platforms are available through the [American Presidency Project at UCSB](#), and while we will talk about this content in the final week of the course, you will be given a longer timeframe for this paper as it requires more work than the other two papers. More details are given in D2L.
 - Standard formatting on Papers will be as follows:
 - Approximately 1500 words
 - Double-spaced
 - Standard font and margins
 - You must use in-text citations and provide a bibliography at the end. You must use a standard citation style of either APA, MLA, or Chicago. If you are unfamiliar with citation styles, [go to the Woodward Library which has guides on each](#).

😊 Weekly Work

- Some weeks will have discussion posts or response papers. These are shorter writing assignments that will have you focus on one specific aspect covered during the week, and often allow for you to bring your own perspective into the conversation. In this way, we can better understand the content from the class as it applies to the real world of our current politics. The specific topics and instructions will be provided in D2L. These assignments will be due by the end of the week in which they are assigned.

APPENDIX B:

General Grading Criteria for Written Papers

Your grade for any written work or papers will be based on the following evaluation spectrum. Overall, writing assignments will test how well you understand the material from the course, how you can analyze ideas and concepts while placing them into context. Utilization of and applying real world examples are useful in demonstrating your understanding of the material. When grading these assignments, I base my assessments of your work on these approximations. This is NOT an exact rubric but offers a general assessment guide.

- **Directions and Organization:** How well you follow the assignment directions, provide each section, and organize the paper so it fits together as explained. The paper should be structured in a clear and rational/logical manner. This also includes timeliness on making sure your assignments are submitted on time. (20 points total)
- **Analysis and Argument:** Your ability to demonstrate an understanding of the material covered in the paper. You should demonstrate an understanding of the purpose of the material, how to use it, and to offer well-reasoned arguments, originality, and clarity of thought. Your work should provide sound analysis based on scientific reasoning and evidence. (40 points total)
- **Literature and Citations:** Your ability to demonstrate proper use of citations. First to show that you understand the literature and can integrate other researchers work into your own, citing their work where appropriate. Demonstrate your mastery of a citation style – APA, MLA or Chicago – and use it clearly and consistently throughout the paper. (20 points total)
- **Writing:** Beyond the organization and clarity of the paper organization, how well the paper is written, which includes spelling and grammar, sentence structure, paragraph structure, organization of ideas, clarity of writing. All papers should be proofread multiple times and revised as needed prior to submission. (20 points total)