

Political Science 341
Political Parties, Elections, and Voting
Fall, 2006

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Course Description: National elections, and in particular the election of a president, are widely considered to be the central focus of all political activity in the United States. Citizens pay more attention to national elections compared to state and local elections, and the outcomes of these elections are considered barometers of the national mood. The purpose of this course is to examine national elections in detail.

In order to understand the electoral process and the interactions between the voters, the candidates, and the other pieces of the puzzle, we will break down the election process into three primary components: the parties, which nominate the candidates; the electoral process, issues of money, the media, and power; and finally, we will look at what happens on election day--who votes, who doesn't, and why.

We will spend the semester looking at these topics using the presidential elections of 2000 and 2004 as our primary focus. If you are unfamiliar with the events of these elections, I strongly urge you to take some time early in the semester and catch up.

The course is designed to be both a lecture and discussion course. While there will be days that I will lecture, the primary driving force of the class will be your involvement. For that reason, it is vitally important that you keep up with the readings as they are assigned.

In addition to the lecture material, this course will also involve a semester-long election simulation. The members of the course will be divided into groups and each group will choose candidates, create strategies, and produce advertising. More details about the simulation are provided in the simulation rulebook that you will also receive in class.

Textbooks:

Abramson, Paul et al., [Change and Continuity in the 2004 Elections](#).

Maisel, S. [Parties and Elections in America: The Electoral Process](#).

Scott, G. & Garrison, S. [The Political Science Writer's Manual](#),

There are two required texts for the course. I highly recommend the Scott & Garrison text if you do not already have a copy, but if you own a previous edition from another course, you do not need to purchase this edition. All of the readings are listed in the semester outline at the end of

the syllabus. Additional readings may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor. You are expected to come to class with the readings completed.

Course Requirements: There are three basic requirements for the course: two exams, one book review, and a research project. The grade breakdown is as follows:

Examinations	200 Points
Large Assignment	250 Points
In-Class Discussion	50 Points

The examinations will consist of short answer identification questions and longer essay questions. The examinations are NOT comprehensive. The dates are listed on the semester outline. The instructor reserves the right to change the dates and content as needed for the course. Make-up examinations will be long essay exams given at the discretion of the instructor. Attendance is mandatory for the scheduled exams. Make-up exams will NOT be given unless you contact the instructor prior to the regularly scheduled time AND only if inability to take the exam on time is for good reason. Keep in mind that oversleeping, hangovers, and forgetfulness NOT valid reasons. If a genuine emergency prevented prior contact, see, call or e-mail the instructor as soon as possible after the exam. Failure to take an exam will result in zero points on that exam.

For the large assignment, you have two options.

1. You may trace either a 2000, 2002, or 2004 election campaign statewide in the print and on-line media from the earliest campaign stages through the actual election in November. Both major parties must be included. (If you study the 2002 Minnesota Gubernatorial campaign, you of course must also include the Independence Party along with the Republican and Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party.) You would then write a paper in which the central focus would be an analysis of the campaign on the basis of the analytical elements or components of campaigns as described in class AND in our reading materials. (A simple chronology will NOT be acceptable.)

Your sources must be major newspapers such as The New York Times, the Washington Post and the Los Angeles Times. The three major area newspapers (Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel, St. Paul Pioneer Press, Madison State Journal) as well as major state newspapers in other areas may also be used. The news magazines like Time, US News and World Report and Newsweek are NOT acceptable as major sources. You may also make use of reliable on-line sources. (Check with me on the acceptability of particular on-line sources.)

This paper must be at least 20 pages long with a minimum of 10 documented sources. You must follow all of the conventions listed in the Scott and Garrison book for formatting and presentation. The paper is due on the final day of class.

--OR--

2. If you choose to participate in the simulation, the 250 points within the simulation will be determined by the following factors:

Weekly Activity Journal:	100 points
General Election Success:	75 points *Victory Equation (see below)
Instructor Evaluation	50 points
Peer Evaluation:	25 points

Victory Equation:

In the interests of encouraging competitive elections, your points for the elections will be determined by the margin of victory in the election phase. In essence, if you run a close race and lose, you still get most of the points. If you lose badly, you will not get many points. The multiplier is determined based on the following:

Both Candidates From Your Party Win Seats

Your Candidate Wins And Places First	100%
Your Candidate Wins And Places Second	95%
Your Candidate Wins And Places Third	92%

One Candidate From Your Party Wins A Seat

Your Candidate Wins And Places First	98%
Your Candidate Wins And Places Second	94%
Your Candidate Wins And Places Third	90%
Your Candidate Loses And Places Fourth	82%
Your Candidate Loses And Placed Fifth	80%
Your Candidate Loses And Places Sixth	75%

No Candidate From Your Party Wins A Seat

Your Candidate Loses And Places Fourth	78%
Your Candidate Loses And Placed Fifth	75%
Your Candidate Loses And Places Sixth	72%

Attendance: Students are expected to attend class, but no formal attendance will be taken. Be warned, however, that failure to attend will result in discussion. In addition, a substantial portion of the exams will be based on material covered ONLY in the classroom. Consistent failure to attend will lower your grade dramatically. You are responsible for ALL information covered in lecture, including changes in the reading assignments, changes in test dates, and in-class homework assignments.

Students With Disabilities: Any student who has a disability that will in any way impede his or her completion of the course needs to speak to the instructor as soon as possible about alternative arrangements. All possible arrangements will be made to accommodate students in need of assistance.

Cheating and Plagiarism: Do it and you run the risk of failing the course. This should seem obvious, but it must be made clear--if you are caught cheating, every remedy made available to the instructors on this campus will be pursued. Cheating is defined as attempting to improve

your grade through any method considered unethical by the university, including copying another student's test, bringing crib sheets for exams, writing notes on your hands or on the brim of your baseball cap, etc.

Plagiarism is defined as claiming any other author's intellectual work as your own. This can include copying parts of another written work and not giving the original author credit for it; using summaries of work written by others and claiming it as your own, etc. Plagiarism is NOT limited to copying another author's work word-for-word. If you use the author's IDEAS without giving the author credit for them, you are just as guilty as if you had Xeroxed the statements and put yourself down as author.

Reading Assignments

Remember: Most Thursday classes will include time for the simulation.

A=Abramson, Change and Continuity

M=Maisel, Parties and Elections in America: The Electoral Process

<u>DATE</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Readings</u>
9/5	Political Parties Defined	M Ch. 1
9/7	Simulation Preparation	
9/12-9/14	Parties In Historical Context	M pp. 29-56
9/19-9/21	Parties In Government	M Ch. 11
9/26-9/28	Party Organization	M pp. 57-70
10/3-10/5	Party Nominations	M Ch. 8, A Ch. 1
10/10-10/12	Election Campaigns	M Ch. 9
10/17-10/19	The Media in Campaigns	M Ch. 10

**** MIDTERM EXAMINATION TENTATIVELY SCHEDULED FOR OCT. 24 ****

10/26-11/2	Money And Campaigns	M Ch. 5
11/7-11/9	Voting Behavior: Some Theories	M Ch. 3,
11/14-11/16	Who Votes?	A Ch. 4, Az Ch. 4
11/21	Determinants of Voting	A Chs. 5-8
11/28-11/30	Changes in Voter Loyalties	TBA
12/5-12/7	Divided Government	TBA
12/12-12/14	The Future of Parties and Elections	M Ch. 12, A Ch. 12

*****FINAL EXAM—1 PM, Wednesday, December 20th 10 AM*****

STANDARDS FOR GRADING

Geoff Peterson

A: designates work of extra-ordinarily high quality; reflects thorough and comprehensive understanding of the issues at hand; arguments are clearly organized with supporting ideas.

B: designates work of high quality; reflects a clearly organized but less than comprehensive understanding of the issues at hand; presents organized arguments that are supported by ideas.

C: Designates work which meets the minimal requirements of the assignment; written work reflects adequate organization and development of ideas, but arguments are communicated in a superficial or simplistic manner.

D: Designates work of poor quality which meets the minimum requirements of the assignment, but demonstrates poor organization of ideas and/or inattention to development of ideas, grammar, and spelling; treatment of material is superficial and/or simplistic; may indicate that the student has not read assignments thoroughly.

F: Designates work of poor quality that does not meet the minimum requirements of the assignment or task; fails to reflect an understanding of the issues at hand; fails to present organized arguments or fails to adequately support arguments with ideas; or which is not handed in on time.