This graduate seminar provides an examination of political parties in the United States. The literature on parties is vast and is connected to almost every subfield in the areas American and comparative politics. It also displays a range of methodologies from historical study to formal modeling and statistical analysis. Our goal is survey what the best and most prominent scholarship has to say about U.S. parties as they relate to representation, the policy making process, and the connection of citizens to the political process. The readings emphasize topics that are of interest to researchers today, so the material tends to be contemporary rather than classic.

**Responsibilities**

I expect that students will do all of the “required” reading and come to class prepared to discuss it in a thoughtful fashion. The “recommended” reading is not required but may be helpful preparation for your final paper and further study. The number of pages required each week is kept at manageable level. Careful reading and participation in class discussion are the keys to making the class productive for everyone involved. You might not immediately understand everything in the readings. In particular, the methodologies deployed in the readings will be difficult to grasp if you have not yet taken courses in research design and statistics. That is fine. I ask that you give it a serious try and then bring your insights as well as your questions to class.

Each student will write five reaction papers during the semester. These should be uploaded to the Learn@UW site by **Wednesday at 4pm** for each of the five weeks you select. The papers should assess, critique, and synthesize that week’s readings. Merely summarizing the readings is not appropriate, but drawing out their contributions to identify weaknesses or commonalities can be useful. Each reaction paper should be two to three double-spaced pages. I will work these into class discussion. You should be prepared to discuss the materials covered in each class, whether or not you wrote a reaction paper for that session.

A final paper is due in hard copy to my mailbox in North Hall on **Monday, December 17 at 4pm**. The paper may be either a literature review or a research paper. A literature review is recommended for first year graduate students in Political Science or students from other disciplines; it should survey in a comprehensive fashion the state of literature on a topic related to parties and then identify shortcomings and promising areas for future research, possibly including a research design. A research paper is recommended for graduate students in Political Science who are beyond the first year; it should focus on a specific question with original research and a limited review of relevant literature.
Most papers will be 20-30 pages long (with standard one-inch margins, double-spacing, and a scholarly reference list).

To facilitate development of the paper, a tentative paper proposal of about one single-spaced paged submitted in hard copy on **Friday October 19 at 4pm** for feedback. The proposal should indicate what question you are planning to investigate and what literature, theories, and/or data you will draw upon.

Be aware of campus IRB requirements and act early if you decide to collect original data. I am pleased to discuss your paper ideas at any point during the semester.

With my permission, you may co-author the paper with a fellow student. All co-authored projects should be research papers rather than literature reviews.

Reaction papers and class participation each account for one fourth of the overall course grade. The final paper accounts for the other half.

**Readings**

The seminar revolves around scholarly readings. Many of the course readings are from recent journal articles or isolated book chapters. They will be posted to Learn@UW.

Several books are recommended for purchase because of the amount of reading from them and their value as resources beyond the semester:


These books are on reserve at the library, but should be purchased if possible. Interlibrary loan is also possible. Note that the Karol book is available as an e-book through the library’s web site.

Although not required, several recent edited volumes provide survey of the field that could be especially helpful to students. In particular, I recommend Hershey, Burden, and Wolbrecht, ed., *CQ Guide to U.S. Political Parties* (2014 CQ Press) and Stonecash, ed., *New Directions in American Political Parties* (2010 Routledge).

**Other Considerations**

Your success in this class is important to me. All students are strongly encouraged to visit office hours not only to discuss your paper but also to let me know how the course is working for you.
If you have a disability or circumstance that could affect your performance, please contact me early in the semester so that we can consider accommodations. The McBurney Center for Disability Services can provide official documentation of disabilities.

If you must miss class due to illness or another valid, unavoidable conflict, please contact me in advance.

I reserve the right to modify the syllabus timeline or specific readings as needed.

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. This includes using someone else’s words or ideas without proper attribution. I will report any cases of academic dishonesty to the appropriate dean’s office.

Please only use electronic devices in class for referencing course materials, taking notes, and occasionally tracking down online items that are necessary for our discussions. Everything else should be quieted and stowed away for later use.

**Syllabus**

**September 6: Introduction to the Course**

**September 13: What is a Party?**

**Required**
- Aldrich, *Why Parties?* [chapters 1-5 & 8]
- Cohen et al., *The Party Decides* [chapters 2-3]

**Recommended**

**September 20: Party Dynamics**

**Required**
- Carmines and Stimson, *Issue Evolution* [chapters 2, 3, & 5-8]

**Recommended**
Smidt, “Polarization and the Decline of the American Floating Voter” (2015 American Journal of Political Science)

**September 27: Issue Alignments and Policies**

**Required**
Karol, *Party Position Change in American Politics* [chapters 1-3 & 5]
[Also review Carmines & Stimson, *Issue Evolution*]

**Recommended**
Shafer and Claggett, *The Two Majorities*

**October 4: Party Brands**

**Required**
Wright, “Unemployment and the Democratic Electoral Advantage” (2012 American Political Science Review)

**Recommended**
Neiheisel and Niebler, “The Use of Party Brand Labels in Congressional Election Campaigns” (2013 Legislative Studies Quarterly)
Snyder and Ting, “An Informational Rationale for Political Parties” (2002 American Journal of Political Science)
October 11: Parties and Groups

**Required**
Schlozman, *When Movements Anchor Parties* [chapters 1-4, 7-8]

**Recommended**
Grossman and Dominguez, “Party Coalitions and Interest Group Networks” (2009 *American Politics Research*)

October 18: Geographic Polarization

**Required**
Chen and Rodden, “Unintentional Gerrymandering: Political Geography and Electoral Bias in Legislatures” (2013 *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*)

**Recommended**

October 25: Partisanship in the Public Mind

**Required**
Goren, “Party Identification and Core Political Values” (2005 *American Journal of Political Science*)

**Recommended**
Bafumi and Shapiro, “A New Partisan Voter” (2009 *Journal of Politics*)
Hajnal and Lee, *Why Americans Don’t Join The Party*

**November 1: Presidential Nominations**

**Required**
Cohen et al., *The Party Decides* [chapters 4-9]

**Recommended**
Norrander, *The Imperfect Primary* (2015 Routledge)
Shafer, *Quiet Revolution* (1983 Russell Sage Foundation)

**November 8: Sub-Presidential Nominations**

**Required**

**Recommended**
Adams and Merril, “Candidate and Party Strategies in Two-Stage Elections Beginning with a Primary” (2008 *American Journal of Political Science*)
Burden, Jones, and Kang, “Sore Loser Laws and Congressional Polarization” (2014 *Legislative Studies Quarterly*)

**November 15: Activists**

**Required**
Carmines and Stimson, *Issue Evolution* [chapter 4]
**November 29: Parties in Government**

**Recommended**

**Required**
- Cox and McCubbins, *Setting the Agenda* (2005 Cambridge University Press) [chapters 1 & 2]

**Recommended**

**December 6: Factions and Minor Parties**

**Required**
- Parker and Barreto, *Change They Can’t Believe In* (2013 Princeton University Press – available as e-book) [chapters TBD]
- Williamson, Skocpol, and Coggin, “The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism” (2011 *Perspectives on Politics*)

**Recommended**

**December 17: Final Paper Due**