

POLSC 214
Spring 2006
Sections 001&002: M/Th 1:10-2:25pm
HW 706

Prof. William D. Adler
Office: 1742 HW
Hours: M 4:15-5:15pm, Th 12-1pm
and by appointment
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Political Parties and Interest Groups

Citizens and political actors in the United States are connected to each other through a variety of institutions. Among the most important of these "linkage institutions" are political parties and interest groups. Important as political parties and interest groups may be, however, it is not obvious why they arose and why they have persisted. According to one influential school of thought within political science, building and maintaining political organizations is a costly form of "collective action," with uncertain benefits for those who undertake such work. We shall examine why political actors have decided to invest their effort and resources in creating, sustaining, and reforming parties and groups. Political parties and interest groups have also changed over time. Many analysts speak of the decline of parties and the increasing importance of interest groups. We shall explore the relationship between the two types of linkage institutions and cast a critical eye on the claims that groups have superseded parties in importance.

Required Books

There are two required texts for this course. They are available at Shakespeare Bookstore:

- John H. Aldrich, *Why Parties? The Origin and Transformation of Political Parties in America* (University of Chicago, 1995). ISBN 0-226-01272-7

- Course Pack for POLSC 214, produced by Campus Course Paks (www.ccpaks.com).

Course Requirements

- 1) Complete all readings on schedule. If you miss a class, email me for the next reading assignment, as the schedule may change.
- 2) Attend on time and actively participate in class discussions. Those who arrive more than 5 minutes late will automatically be marked as absent. Each student is allowed only **two** unexcused absences.
- 3) Read *The New York Times* (or another major newspaper) **every day**. Current events will frequently come up during class as examples of the principles we discuss. This will enable everyone to connect what can be vague ideas with real-world events. The *Times* is available for free online (www.nytimes.com).

4) I reserve the right to occasionally conduct quizzes in short answer format. This will not be necessary if I am satisfied that everyone is completing the assigned reading and participating in discussions.

5) Take the three required exams. They consist of essay questions and will be given in-class. I will likely give you sample questions ahead of the test. Only the two highest exam grades will count toward your final grade; therefore, if you are satisfied with your grades on the first two exams, you are not required to take the third exam. Make-up exams will only be given in the event of an emergency, verified with proper documentation (like a doctor's note for illness). Exams are cumulative.

6) There is a course website on Blackboard, at <https://blackboard-doorway.cuny.edu>. Make sure to sign up, since I will use it occasionally to send messages to the class and post announcements.

7) Write **10** summaries of readings. Each summary must be 1-2 pages in length and must be turned in at the beginning of the class when we are discussing that reading. You may summarize any of the readings you so choose, but no more than 1 summary per class will be accepted. I will reject summaries that do not properly cover the material in the reading or lack a basic understanding of the material. Rejected summaries may not be resubmitted. I strongly encourage you to submit summaries early in the semester.

All assignments must be typed in a 12 point font, double spaced, with one-inch margins, and have page numbers. Papers not meeting these criteria will not be accepted. All papers must also be submitted to www.turnitin.com (note that I **will not** accept papers not submitted to turnitin.com):

Class ID - 1444869
password - government

Grading

Work conducted towards the end of the semester will be more heavily weighted in my mind when dispensing final grades; in other words, *improvement counts*.

Attendance/Participation/Quizzes: 25%

Summaries: 25%

Exams: 50% (25% each)

Incompletes will only be given for valid, documented emergencies. As well, please note that Hunter College rules specify that credit/no credit grading may only be used if a student has completed all the work assigned for the course.

Any student found plagiarizing work will receive a grade of **zero** for that assignment, and will be reported to the Dean's Office for potential disciplinary proceedings.

Schedule of Classes and Exams

Part I: Parties in Historical Context

January 26th: Introduction

January 30th, February 2nd: Theories of Party Formation

Aldrich, chapter 1: "Politics and Parties in America"

Joel H. Silbey, "Beyond Realignment and Realignment Theory: American Political Eras, 1789-1989" [course pack #1]

Andrew J. Polsky, "A Theory of American Partisan Regimes" [course pack #2]

February 6th, 9th, and 16th: Early American Parties
(February 13th: No classes)

Aldrich, chapter 3: "Founding the First Parties"

Aldrich, chapter 4: "Jacksonian Democracy"

Joel H. Silbey, "The Country Demands the Existence of Parties" and "Organize! ORGANIZE! ORGANIZE!" [course pack #3]

February 21st, 23rd, 27th and March 2nd: Parties and the Civil War
(February 20th: No classes -- February 21st: Classes on a Monday schedule)

Aldrich, chapter 5: "Whigs and Republicans"

William E. Gienapp, "Spring Breakthrough" [course pack #4]

Andrew J. Polsky, "'Mr Lincoln's Army' Revisited: Partisanship, Institutional Position, and Union Army Command, 1861-1865" [course pack #5]

Mark E. Neely, Jr., "The Civil War and the Two-Party System: A Reconsideration" [course pack #6]

Jeffrey A. Jenkins, "Partisanship and Contested Elections in the House of Representatives, 1789-2002" [course pack #8]

March 6th and 9th: Party Ideologies and Race

John Gerring, "A Chapter in the History of American Party Ideology: The Nineteenth-Century Democratic Party (1828-1892)" [course pack #7]

Paul Frymer, "National Party Competition and the Disenfranchisement of Black Voters in the South, 1866-1932" [course pack #9]

Monday, March 13th: First Exam

Part II: Contemporary Parties

March 16th, 20th, 23rd, and 27th: Activists and Ideological Polarization

Aldrich, chapter 6: "Party Activists and Partisan Cleavages in Contemporary Elections"

Geoffrey Layman, *The Great Divide: Religious and Cultural Conflict in American Party Politics*, chapter 3 [course pack #10]

Aldrich, chapter 8: "The Critical Era of the 1960's"

Christina Wolbrecht, *The Politics of Women's Rights: Parties, Positions, and Change*, chapter 2 [course pack #11]

March 30th and April 3rd: Racial Politics and the South

Paul Frymer, "Capture Inside the Democratic Party" [course pack #12]

Merle Black and Earl Black, *The Rise of Southern Republicans*, chapters 7 and 8 [course pack #13]

April 6th and 10th: Elections

Barry C. Burden, "The Nominations: Technology, Money, and Transferable Momentum" [course pack #14]

Marian Currinder, "Campaign Finance: Funding the Presidential and Congressional Elections" [course pack #15]

Wednesday, April 12th – Sunday, April 23rd: Spring Break

April 24th: Polarization and Parties in Congress

Richard Fleisher and Jon R. Bond, "Evidence of Increasing Polarization Among Ordinary Citizens" [course pack #16]

Roger H. Davidson, "Congressional Parties, Leaders, and Committees: 1900, 2000, and Beyond" [course pack #17]

Thursday, April 27th: Second Exam

Part III: Interest Groups

May 1st and 4th: Interest Groups in History

Daniel Tichenor and Richard Harris, "Organized Interests and American Political Development" [course pack #18]

Elisabeth S. Clemens, *The People's Lobby: Organizational Innovation and the Rise of Interest Group Politics in the United States, 1890-1925*, chapter 5 [course pack #19]

May 8th and 11th: Interest Group Advocacy

Jeffrey M. Berry, *The Interest Group Society*, chapter 2 [course pack #20]

Diana Dwyre, "Campaigning Outside the Law: Interest Group Issue Advocacy" [course pack #21]

Eric M. Uslaner, "Cracks in the Armor? Interest Groups and Foreign Policy" [course pack #22]

May 15th: Lobbying

Rogan Kersh, "Corporate Lobbyists as Political Actors" [course pack #23]

Third Exam: TBA