

The Evolution of the American Party System

Chapman University
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is intended to explore how partisanship and parties have been shaped and changed throughout U.S. history. We will begin by reviewing some prominent approaches to measuring and conceptualizing party identity, including its stability, the role of institutions, and the idea of partisanship as an identity. Then, we will explore the development of parties and party attachment from the U.S. Founding to the present. Finally, the class will conclude by examining contemporary literature on party attachment and exploring how the previously discussed trends are changing or continuing today.

We will focus particularly on how psychological attachments to parties have changed or acted similarly throughout U.S. history. However, we will also explore how the intensity of those attachments and the impact of race have impacted partisanship.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

I encourage participation in lecture, however given and some people's natural tendency to not want to talk in large groups, participation will include coming to the instructor's office hours and email correspondence. Thus, it is really a measure of engagement, rather than how much you talk.

The overall grade will also be based on the midterm and final. The midterm will be a take-home (open book/note) exam with a series of short answer questions, while the final will be a more traditional paper of 8-10 pages. The midterm questions will be released a week before the midterm is due. The final prompts are at the bottom of this syllabus.

Grade Breakdown

Midterm Paper: 30%

Final Paper: 50%

Participation: 20%

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS

Part One: Theories of Partisanship

Week 1, September 3: Defining Partisan Attachment

Cambell et al. *The American Voter*, pages 8-17, 42-88, 96-101, 118-167, 188-205

Week 2, September 10: Partisanship and Public Opinion

John Zaller (1992) *The Nature and Origin of Mass Opinion*, pages 6-52, 97-128, 265-289, 310-332

Week 3, September 17: Parties as Institutions

Cohen et al. *The Party Decides: Presidential Nominations Before and After Reform*, pages 1-46, 187-234, 333-364

Week 4, September 24: Partisanship as Identity

Leonie Huddy (2013) “From Group Identity to Political Cohesion and Commitment”, **just 1-5, 18-31**

Shanto Iyengar et al. (2012) “Affect Not Ideology” (24)

Shanto Iyengar and Sean Westwood (2015) “Fear and Loathing across Party Lines: New Evidence on Group Polarization” (16)

Leonie Huddy and Nadia Khatib (2007) “American Patriotism, National Identity, and Political Involvement” (14)

Midterm Assigned

Part Two: Historical Analysis

Week 5, October 1: American Founding

Federalist 51

Richard Hofstadter’s *The Idea of a Party System*, 1-121

Midterm Due

Week 6, October 8: Antebellum Parties

Richard Hofstadter’s *The Idea of a Party System*, 122-276

Week 7, October 15: Civil War

Nathan Kalmoe’s *With Ballots and Bullets*, 1-134

Week 8, October 22: Reviewing the 19th Century

Joshua Lynn’s *Preserving the White Man’s Republic*, Introduction and Chapter 1

Noel Ignatiev’s *How the Irish Became White*, Chapter 3

Frances Lee’s “Patronage, Logrolls, and “Polarization”: Congressional Parties of the Gilded Age, 1876–1896”

Week 9, October 29: Mid-20th Century Conservatism

Richard Hofstadter's *The Paranoid Style in American Politics*, 3-144

Week 10, November 5: Civil Rights Movement

Taeku Lee's *Mobilizing Public Opinion*, Introduction, Chapters 1, 2, 6, 7

Part Three: Contemporary Partisanship

Week 11, November 12: Race and Party Attitudes

Marisa Abrajano and Zoltan Hajnal's *White Backlash*, pages 61-112

Michael Tesler and Davis Sears' *Obama's Race*, pages 1-28, 75-93, 142-160

Week 12, November 19: The Tea Party

Christopher Parker's (2016) "A history of American Reactionary Movements" (24)

Christopher Parker and Matthew Barreto's *Change They Can't Believe In*, Introduction, Chapters 1,2, 5

Week 13, November 26 – No Class

Week 14, December 3: Latino Partisanship

Matthew Barreto's *Ethnic Cues*, entire book, **except** chapters 5, 6

Week 15, December 10: Contemporary Theories of Partisan Division

Liliana Mason's *Uncivil Agreement*, Chapters 1, 2, 4, 5

Christopher Achen and Larry Bartels' *Democracy for Realists*, 232-266, 297-328

MIDTERM ASSIGNMENT

*Pick **one** of the three following concepts. First, in a paragraph or so, articulate what the concept means, drawing from the text in question. Second, apply it to an example of your choice that helps explain and assess the relevance of the concept. This example can be a real-world instance, contemporary or historical, a personal anecdote, or a hypothetical example, as long as it helps articulate the concept.*

1. R-A-S Model
2. Invisible Primary
3. Affective Polarization

Pick one of the two following questions:

4. To what extent is the account in the *American Voter* consistent with the idea of partisanship as a social identity?
5. To what extent is the RAS model consistent with Coen et al. (2012)'s theory of parties?

Now answer the following question:

6. Which theory/reading that we have discussed do you find most relevant to understanding American parties/partisanship? Explain why and, if necessary, discuss its limitations and your own suggestions on how to improve this understanding.

FINAL PROMPTS

Feel free to answer any of these questions or a combination of them. This paper will be graded primarily on whether you a. advance a clear and interesting argument throughout and b. you draw effectively on the material taught in the course. These are largely invitations for you to apply the material in the class to your own understanding of contemporary politics. If you would like to write a paper that does not respond to a prompt, just come talk to or email me.

1. What historical trend is most relevant in understanding contemporary partisanship?
2. What factor do you believe is most relevant in driving party attachment to either major U.S. political party?
3. How central is race to American partisanship?