

Master of American History and Government  
Ashland University

**AHG 642:  
POLITICAL PARTIES**

*Sunday, July 22, to Friday, July 27, 2007*

Instructors: Marc Landy and Sidney Milkis

Course Focus: This course focuses on the development of the American Party System from its origins in the 1830's up to the present day. It describes the critical transformations that the parties have undergone and the challenging political circumstances they currently face. It explains the role of parties in maintaining the decentralized political system of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and in building the administrative state of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Because Congress is the arena for so much of the interplay between parties at the national level, special attention is paid to the relationship between Congress and the parties, especially in the past few decades.

Learning Objectives:

1. Students will understand the key principles that undergird the American Party System.
2. Students will understand the relationship between the Constitution and political parties
3. Students will examine the relationship between political parties and Congress
4. Students will examine the origins and development of the party system and of the two major political parties
5. Students will examine the transformational shift in the structure and dynamics of the parties that took place in the 1960's and 1970's.
6. Students will examine the key political dynamics at play in the contemporary party system.
7. Students will contemplate alternative possibilities regarding the future of American party politics

**Requirements:**

- Students will take an in-class final examination.

**Students auditing the course as a part of a Teaching American History Grant program must complete the readings and fully participate in the seminars during the week.**

## Required Texts

Richard Hofstadter, *The Idea of a Party System*, U. CAL Press, ISBN: 0520017544

Sidney Milkis, *Political Parties and Constitutional Government: Remaking American Democracy*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, ISBN: 0801861950

*Plunkitt of Tammany Hall*, ISBN: 1419141813

James Reichley, *Life of the Parties*, Rowman & Littlefield, 2000. ISBN: 0742508889

Thomas Mann and Norman Ornstein, *The Broken Branch: How Congress Is Failing America and How to Get It Back on Track*, Oxford University Press, ISBN: 0195174461

Course Pack (CP)

## Schedule

### Sunday, July 22

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#### 4:30 – 6:00 pm: Introduction & Session 1 –

**Topic:** Parties and American Democracy

Focus: What were the leading views of political parties in Great Britain and America in the 18th Century? Which of these views were most important in the United States at the time of the Founding? What role have political parties played in American political life? (Can they be described as civic associations?) What role have critical partisan realignments played in the development of American politics? How have parties influenced the evolution of Congress?

Readings:

Hofstadter, Chapter 1  
Milkis, Chapter 1  
Reichley, Chapter 1  
Mann and Ornstein, 1-46

#### 7:00 – 8:30 pm Session 2 - Institute Lecture (attendance required)

### Monday, July 23

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#### 9:00 am - 10:30 am: Session 3

**Topic:** The Constitution-Against-Parties

Focus: What does Hofstadter mean in claiming that America has a “constitution-against-parties”? In Federalist 10, Madison makes a distinction between republican and democratic government – how will republican government, as embodied by the Constitution, moderate partisanship? Madison identifies the task of breaking and controlling the “violence of faction” as a principal objective of the Constitution – what is the relationship between parties and factions? Does the American Constitution privilege a two-party system?

Reading:

*James Madison, Federalist Papers 10 and 51(CP)*  
Reichley, Chapter 2  
Hofstadter, Chapter 2

#### **10:50 am - 12:20 pm: Session 4**

Topic: Party Politics in Early America – Part I: Jeffersonian Democracy

Focus: How did Madison, perhaps the leading architect of the “constitution-against-parties,” come to play a principal part in the founding of the Jefferson Republican party (Did he change his mind about the how the Constitution should shape party politics?) What is the “idea of a party system”? Did the Republicans and Federalists embrace this idea? Has Washington’s warning about the dangers of party politics been heeded through American history?

Readings:

Milkis, 13-22

Reichley, Chapter 3

Hofstadter, Chapters 3 & 4

*George Washington, “Farewell Address.”(CP)*

#### **4:30 - 6:00 pm: Session 5**

Topic: Party in Early America, Part II: The Rise of the Jacksonian Democrats

Focus: What lessons can be drawn from the “Era of Good Feelings” about the relationship between American democracy and the political parties? What are the similarities and differences between Jeffersonian Democracy and Jacksonian Democracy? What role did local self-government play in the development of the American party system?

Readings:

Milkis, pp. 22-34

Reichley, Chapter 4

Hofstadter, Chapter 5.

### **Tuesday, July 24**

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#### **9:00 am - 10:30 am: Session 6**

Topic: Toward A Party System

Focus Questions: How did the Democrats and Whigs transform party politics into a party *system*? What role did Martin Van Buren play in advancing the development of the American party system? Did the party system that emerged during the first three decades of the twentieth century transform the original Constitution?

Readings:

Reichley, Chapter 5; Hofstadter, Chapter 6  
James Ceaser, *Presidential Selection: Theory and Development* (Princeton University Press, 1979), Chapter 3 (CP)  
Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Volume I, Part 2, Chapter 2 (CP)  
Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Volume II, Part 2, Chapters 4, 5, 7 (CP)

### **10:50 am - 12:20 pm: Session 7**

Topic: The Rise of the Republican Party and Lincoln

Focus: How did the rise of Republican Party affect the development of the American party system? Was Lincoln a statesman or party broker? Can these roles be reconciled? Did the Civil War Realignment remake American Politics?

Readings:

Milkis, pp. 34-41  
Reichley, Chapter 6  
*Stephen Douglas and Abraham Lincoln, Debate at Freeport* (CP)  
Marc Landy and Sidney M. Milkis, *Presidential Greatness* (Kansas University Press, 2000), Chapter 5. (CP)

### **4:30 - 6:00 pm: Session 8**

Topic: Machine Politics

Focus: What is a political machine? Did these organizations invigorate or corrupt American democracy? Why did reformers like Mary Simkovitch and Jane Addams see some value in machine politics?

Readings:

Reichley, Chapter 7  
Plunkitt of Tammany Hall (entire)  
Mary Kingsbury Simkhovitch, "Friendship and Politics," *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 17, no. 2 (June 1902) (CP)  
Jane Addams, "Why the Ward Boss Rules," *Outlook* LVIII (April 2, 1898), 879-882. (CP)

## **Wednesday, July 25**

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### **9:00 am - 10:30 am: Session 9**

Topic: The 1896 Election and Beyond – The Gilded Age and the Populist Challenge

Focus Questions: What was the Populist Party stand for? Did the Populists co-opt the Democrats or did the Democrats co-opt the Populists in 1896? How did William Jennings Bryan function as party leader? What great changes did Mark Hanna bring to party organization and electioneering? Should Hanna be called the father of the modern American political party?

Readings:

Reichley Chapter 8

*Populist Party Platform of 1892*

*William Jennings Bryan Cross of Gold Speech (CP)*

### **10:50 am - 12:20 pm: Session 10**

Topic: 1912 – 1918 - The Heyday of Progressivism

Focus Questions: How, if at all, did the Republicans and Democrats change during the Progressive Era? What did the Progressive Party stand for? Why were Progressives so hostile to parties? How did TR and Woodrow Wilson function as party leaders? Why did both parties become less progressive after WWI?

Readings:

Milkis 42-71

Reichley Chapter 9-11

Progressive Party Platform, *Elihu Root, Invisible Government Speech (CP)*.

### **4:30 - 6:00 pm: Session 11**

Topic: 1918– 1936 - The Making of the New Deal Democratic Party

Focus Questions: Why did the Democratic Party languish in the 1920's? Why was Al Smith nominated in 1928? What was the composition of the Democratic Party coalition in the 1920's? What was the composition of the Republican Party coalition? Why was FDR nominated in 1932? What key changes took place within the Democratic Party culminating in the 1936 landslide? How did FDR function as a party leader? What was the role of the Democratic Party in forging the modern administrative state?

Readings:

Milkis 72-102

Reichley Chapters 12-13

*FDR Acceptance of Nomination for Second Term (CP)*

**Thursday, July 26**

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**9:00 am - 10:30 am: Session 12**

Topic: 1936 – 1968: The Entrenchment of the New Deal Democratic Party

Focus Questions: After 1936, what were the critical lines of factional cleavage within the Republican and Democratic parties? Why did Truman win the 1948 election? Why did Kennedy win the 1960 Democratic Party nomination? Why did Goldwater win the 1964 Republican nomination? What was the relationship of each party to the burgeoning administrative state?

Readings:

Reichley, Chapters 14-16.

### **10:50 am - 12:20 pm: Session 13**

Topic: 1968-1992 The Rebirth of the Republican Party

Focus: What caused the end of Democratic Party dominance? What was the state of party rivalry in the 1970's? What was the nature of Reagan's party leadership? What were the key lines of cleavage within the Democratic and Republican parties? How did the Democratic party influence congressional reform in the 1970's and vice versa? What strategy did Gingrich adopt as leader of the Republican minority in Congress?

Readings:

Mann and Ornstein 47-90

Milkis 103-136

Reichley, Chapters 17-20.

### **4:30 - 6:00 pm: Session 14**

Topic: 1992-2006 Clinton Democrats – Gingrich and Bush Republicans

Focus: What was the impact of the Perot campaign on the 1992 election? How did Clinton try to change the Democratic Party? How did he function as party leader? Why did the Republicans win the 1994 congressional elections? How did Gingrich try to change the Republican Party? What was the role of party in the Clinton impeachment? How has the national GOP influenced the behavior of Republicans in Congress since 2000? How has Bush functioned as a party leader? Why did the Democrats win the 2006 elections? Why do Mann and Ornstein say that there has been a decline in the "institutional identity" of Congress?

Readings:

*Contract with America (CP)*

Milkis, 137-173

Mann and Ornstein 90-192, 211-243

**Friday, July 27**

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**9:00 am - 10:30 am: Session 15**

Topic: 2006 and Beyond The Future of Party Politics

Focus Questions: How does the past history of party politics help us to understand the present? Can it help predict the future? What are the most important lines of cleavage within in each of the two parties? How do the themes and rhetoric adopted by the leading presidential candidates in each party help us to understand the current state of party dynamics?

Readings:

Milkis 174-186;

Milkis, "The Virtues of Partisan Rancor," *The Chronicle Review (The Chronicle of Higher Education)*, March 2, 2007, B6-B9. (CP)

**10:50 am – 12:20 pm: Session 16**

Session Review and Questions

**1:30 pm – 3:00 pm: Session 17**

**Final Comprehensive Examination**