

# POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTIONS

Political Science 215

Fall 2012

Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays  
10:30 – 11:20 am, Mattson 102

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Course home page (see below for more): <http://www.gustavus.edu/~cgilbert/p215/elect.htm>

Chris Gilbert's office hours: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, 9:00 – 10:00 am  
Monday and Wednesday, 11:30 am – 12:20 pm  
or by appointment

*COURSE OVERVIEW:* U.S. politics encompasses numerous organizations and activities. But to most ordinary citizens, the true driving forces of politics in America are the two major political parties and the elections they contest every 2/4 years. Parties have traditionally been the primary mediating institutions between citizens and their governments. Elections are the means by which citizens choose their leaders at regular intervals; no other political events generate as much public interest in politics, especially in presidential election years. This course will consider the important functions that parties and elections serve in our political system. We will pay particular attention to the major issues and themes of presidential elections, focusing in depth on the elections of 2008 and 2012; we will also spend time discussing the 2012 election results and what they mean for the future of U.S. politics.

*FORMAT:* Expect to discuss what you have read with the instructor and one another every class period. In order for you to contribute meaningfully and comprehend more in class, **reading assignments should always be completed in advance.** No other topic in U.S. politics has as much accumulated research as parties and elections. Nevertheless, there are still new things to discover, and your perspectives on all class topics are valued and welcomed. The goal is to talk **WITH** you throughout the semester, as opposed to merely talking to you or at you. Make it your goal to talk with, listen to, and learn from one another.

*BOOKS:* all are available in the Book Mark, and all are required:

- Marjorie Hershey, *Party Politics in America* (15<sup>th</sup> edition ONLY)
- Stephen Wayne, *The Road to the White House, 2012* (9<sup>th</sup>/2012 edition ONLY)
- Michael Nelson, *The Elections of 2008*
- Richard Semiatin, *Campaigns on the Cutting Edge* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition ONLY)

*CLASS HOME PAGE:* The web page contains this syllabus and additional materials about parties and elections. The web page will have class handouts and supplementary readings; it will be the only place to obtain exam study guides and other additional materials.

**ASSIGNMENTS:**

First exam (October 1)	15%*
Second exam (November 9)	20%*
Final exam (December 19)	20%
Election prediction paper (due Nov. 5)	10%
Election analysis paper (due Dec. 10)	20%
Group election review project	5%
Class attendance/participation	10%

**GRADING:**

A =	93.000 average and above
A- =	90.000 through 92.999
B+ =	87.000 through 89.999
B =	83.000 through 86.999
B- =	80.000 through 82.999
C+ =	77.000 through 79.999
C =	73.000 through 76.999
C- =	70.000 through 72.999
D+ =	67.000 through 69.999
D =	60.000 through 66.999
F =	less than 60.000

\* the higher score on the first two exams will count for 20%, the lower score will count for 15%

### **EXPLANATION OF ASSIGNMENTS**

**CLASS PARTICIPATION:** Come to class prepared to discuss what you have read and to speak up with questions or opinions; reading in advance is essential if you are going to be a meaningful, active participant in this course. Participation involves more than just speaking up; listening to your professor and classmates is a valued form of participation, too. Participation counts for much more than attendance in determining this portion of your grade.

**CLASS ATTENDANCE:** Please plan to attend every class session; attendance will be taken daily. If you are unable to attend, please advise the instructor in advance when possible. Missing class due to illness is not going to adversely affect your grade. ***I reserve the right to lower the final course grade of students who make it a habit of skipping this class.***

**EXAMS:** Each exam covers roughly one-third of the course. The final exam may have a brief cumulative section as well. Study guides will be posted on the class web page at least one week before each exam, detailing the format for each exam. The exams will cover material from the readings and class discussions. Question types include multiple choice, identification and essays.

**ELECTION PAPERS:** Each student will be assigned one specific U.S. House, U.S. Senate, or gubernatorial election taking place on Tuesday, November 6. **Chris will assign the elections by mid-September and post this on the course webpage.** You will write two papers about your assigned election:

1. The **Election Prediction paper** is due the day before the election (Monday, November 5) but will be written from the point of view of the day **AFTER** the election – **predict** the outcome (write as if the election has already occurred) and **explain** why the outcome happened. This paper should have some discussion of the context of the election, although the full discussion of electoral context will appear in the final paper. This paper should be about 3 pages and can be no more than 4 pages in length. Note that this paper should predict what you believe **WILL** happen (what you **WANT** the outcome to be is irrelevant and inappropriate in this paper), and the persuasiveness and

accuracy of your prediction will factor into your grade.

2. The **Election Analysis paper**, due about a month after the actual election, will offer a complete assessment of your assigned race – discuss the election and results (the real results this time) in the context of the state or district, the candidates and campaign, influences from the presidential race, and other relevant factors (including information about voter preferences from exit polls, if available). This paper should be 6-8 pages, plus any tables or other material you wish to include. The grade for this paper is independent of the grade for the first paper (although there can be and probably will be some material you will use in both papers).

**Both papers are research papers: the conclusions you draw (before AND after the election) should be solidly supported by material you find in the course of your research. Proper attribution of sources (using any standard citation method), and a final complete list of works cited and consulted, are required as well.** The papers should be typed and double-spaced, with a separate title page, normal margins and fonts.

**Assignment of elections** will take place by Friday, September 21; specific assignments will be posted on the course web page.

**The Election Prediction paper is due on Monday, November 5, by 4:30 pm at Chris's office, without exception.** Due to the nature of the assignment, there can be no such thing as a late paper! Late papers receive a 0.

**The Election Analysis paper is due Monday, December 10, by 4:30 pm at Chris's office.** There will be **no extensions** to this due date unless extraordinary circumstances arise; all students should plan on turning in a completed paper by this date. Late papers will be penalized 20 points (two letter grades) for each day late.

**GROUP ELECTION REVIEW PROJECT:** Students will sign up in pairs to research and report on one significant presidential election. Each pair will prepare a one-sheet summary (one piece of paper, both sides) of the election, covering at least the aspects listed below plus whatever else you think the class should know about your assigned election that fits on one sheet of paper. These summaries will be due on various dates in October (schedule will be posted on the course webpage). On your assigned day you will review your sheet with the class and indicate the most significant aspect of the election, based on your research. All summaries will be posted on the course website and this material will be included in relevant exams. Aspects that **must** be covered include:

- the historical context in which the election took place (what was going on in the country, who had been in office, key events of the previous 4 years)
- the major candidates: who were they (background, experience, political views, running mates), whom did they defeat for their nominations (if the nomination was contested), what were their campaign themes, how did they present themselves to the voters
- the results of the election: where did candidates have particularly good or bad results, and some analysis of what the deciding factors were for voters

- the long-term impact of the election, how it affected politics in the next 2-4 years (or beyond, if applicable)

It is not necessary to give a bibliography of sources consulted to the class. However, you must prepare a list of works consulted for me (due on the day of your presentation) so that I know where your information came from. If you have any problems in finding information, please feel free to come see me or consult with a reference librarian. The course webpage will also have some useful links for studying elections.

We will sign up for this assignment by the **third week of September**; presentation of summaries will begin **the week of October 10, continuing through the month of October**.

Each person in the pair will receive the same grade for the assignment. An exception will be made if it is demonstrated to me that one person has failed to do his/her fair share of the work. You are responsible for developing a productive collaborative arrangement with your partner.

### **ADDITIONAL CLASS POLICIES**

*HAND THINGS IN ON TIME, PLEASE:* In general, grades for specific assignments will be reduced at least one letter grade for each day late.

*CELL PHONES, IPODS, and other such electronic devices:* Turn them OFF when class is in session – no ringing, no vibrating, no IM, no distractions for yourself or your classmates. Using a laptop to take notes is acceptable as long as you perform NO non-class-related tasks while doing so (e.g. do not disrespect your professor and classmates by checking Facebook during class!!).

*SCHEDULE CONFLICTS:* Students with advance notice of schedule conflicts (e.g., school-related activities that conflict with our class time) should present a list of these to Chris as soon as the conflict dates are known. There should be few or no schedule conflicts that cannot be resolved – the key is early notification. The Academic Schedule Conflicts policy found in the *College Catalog* exists to inform you of your obligations and to help us work out any problems.

*POLICY ON EXCEPTIONS:* Plan on taking all exams at the appointed time and completing all other work by indicated due dates. Because of events beyond your control (e.g. a major illness), sometimes this is not possible despite good-faith efforts on your part. Therefore, exceptions and extensions will be considered on an individual basis. **NOTE: nonacademic personal commitments and end-of-semester travel plans are NOT valid reasons for requesting extensions or exceptions. Nor are activities scheduled well in advance, e.g. extracurricular activities or obligations for other classes.** As with class attendance, please inform Chris well in advance of such conflicts. This policy is consistent with the Academic Schedule Conflicts policy found in the *College Catalog*.

*ASSISTANCE FOR STUDENTS WHOSE FIRST LANGUAGE IS NOT ENGLISH:* Support for English Language Learners (ELL) and Multilingual students is available via the College's ELL Support staff person, Andrew Grace (agrace@gustavus.edu or x7395). He can meet with individual

students for tutoring in writing, consulting about academic tasks, and helping them connect with the College’s support systems. The College’s ELL staff person can provide students with a letter to me that explains and supports academic accommodations (e.g. additional time on tests, additional revisions for papers). In addition, ELL and multilingual students can seek help from peer tutors in the Writing Center. **I am very happy to discuss this process and determine accommodations based on specific individual needs with any student who qualifies.**

*ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DOCUMENTED DISABILITIES:* Gustavus Adolphus College is committed to ensuring the full participation of all students in its programs. If you have a documented disability (or you think you may have a disability of any nature) and, as a result, need reasonable academic accommodation to participate in class, take tests or benefit from the College’s services, then you should speak with the Disability Services Coordinator, for a confidential discussion of your needs and appropriate plans. Course requirements cannot be waived, but reasonable accommodations may be provided based on disability documentation and course outcomes. Accommodations cannot be made retroactively; therefore, to maximize your academic success at Gustavus, please contact Disability Services as early as possible. Disability Services (<https://gustavus.edu/advising/disability/>) is located in the Advising and Counseling Center; Disability Services Coordinator Laurie Bickett (lbickett@gustavus.edu or x6286) can provide further information. **I am very happy to discuss this process and determine accommodations based on specific individual needs with any student who qualifies.**

*ACADEMIC HONESTY:* Plagiarism or cheating in any form corrupts the intent of all that we do as a community of scholars. Consistent with the Gustavus Academic Honesty Policy (found in the *College Catalog*) and the Honor Code (also in the *College Catalog*), the policies and procedures for this course are as follows:

- Violations of the Academic Honesty Policy will result in at least a grade of 0 for the specific assignment, and failure for the course in the case of egregious violations. Students accused and/or penalized for these violations, AND students who become aware of such violations, have specific rights and responsibilities, as outlined in the Honor Code section of the *College Catalog*.
- Each exam and graded paper will contain the statement "**On my honor, I pledge that I have not given, received, or tolerated others' use of unauthorized aid in completing this work.**" Students are required to sign on each exam or paper; typing the statement on a paper submitted electronically is equivalent to signing.
- Students CAN consult with each another and with the professor while working on individual or group assignments and preparing for exams; these are examples of "authorized aid." Individual papers should consist only of each student's own work.
- Under the Honor Code, proctoring of exams is at the instructor's discretion. I will be present at exams to answer any questions that may arise.

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## DAILY SCHEDULE: TOPICS, READING ASSIGNMENTS

The web version of this syllabus has links to all handouts distributed in class ("Topics covered" column) as well as additional readings, exam study guides and other materials. If this schedule changes for some reason, the web version will be changed and should be considered the "official" schedule; I promise to notify you ASAP if/when the schedule is changed.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Topics covered</i>	<i>Reading</i>	<i>Assignments &amp; announcements</i>
W September 5	Introduction to the study of parties and elections	None	
F September 7	American political parties and the 2-party system	Hershey 1, 2	
M September 10	Third parties in US politics	Reading to be distributed	
W September 12	Party organizations: local, state, national	Hershey 3, 4	
F September 14	Activists: the parties' core supporters	Hershey 5	
M September 17	An introduction to presidential elections	Wayne 1	Group election review pairings and assignments determined by today
W September 19	Campaign finance	Wayne 2 Hershey 12	
F September 21	More campaign finance: a look at 2008 and 2012	Nelson 8 (Currinder) 2012 reading to be distributed	Election paper assignments posted by today
M September 24	Political environments: understanding the context of campaigns	Wayne 3 Hershey 6	First exam study guide posted by today
W September 26	Party coalitions and party systems over time	Hershey 7	
F September 28	More discussion of party coalitions and changes over time	More Hershey 7	
M October 1	<b>FIRST EXAM</b>		
W October 3	NO CLASS		NOBEL CONFERENCE  First presidential debate scheduled for tonight
F October 5	NO CLASS		Chris @ conference, King & Queen @ Gustavus
M October 8	Voter turnout	Hershey 8	

W October 10	Party roles in candidate selection, primaries and caucuses  1800 summary	Hershey 9	Vice presidential debate scheduled for October 11
F October 12	The legal environment of presidential campaigns  1824, 1828 summaries	Wayne 4	
M October 15	Presidential nomination politics  1860, 1876 summaries	Wayne 5	Second presidential debate October 16
W October 17	Moving from the primaries to the general election  1896, 1912 summaries	Wayne 6	
F October 19	Organization and strategy in presidential general election campaigns  1932, 1948 summaries	Wayne 7	
M October 22	<b>NO CLASS</b>		FALL BREAK  3 <sup>rd</sup> /final presidential debate tonight
W October 24	The roles of the media in presidential campaigns  1952, 1960 summaries	Wayne 8	By this time, you should be following your assigned election closely
F October 26	Explaining election outcomes  1968, 1980 summaries	Wayne 9	
M October 29	2008 nomination battles  1992, 1996 summaries	Nelson 1 (Nelson) Nelson 2 (Burden)	
W October 31	Explaining the 2008 election outcome	Nelson 3 (Pomper) Nelson 7 (Mellow)	
F November 2	2008 congressional races and media trends	Nelson 5 (Jacobson) Nelson 6 (Hershey)	Second exam study guide posted by today
M November 5	The meaning of the 2008 election, as it looked in early 2009	Nelson 9 (Mayhew)	<b>Election prediction paper due TODAY by 4:30 pm</b>

W November 7	2012 election recap	none; we will discuss November 6 election results	
F November 9	<b>SECOND EXAM</b>		
M November 12	NO CLASS		Chris @ conference
W November 14	Party roles in legislative politics	Hershey 13	
F November 16	Party roles in the executive branch and courts	Hershey 14; one additional reading to be posted	
M November 19	How responsible are the political parties, how responsible should they be?	Hershey 15, 16	wouldn't it be nice to have your election analysis paper done before break?! ☺
W November 21	<b>NO CLASS</b>		Thanksgiving break
F November 23	<b>NO CLASS</b>		Thanksgiving break
M November 26	Looking to the future: campaigns and fundraising	Semiatin 1 (Semiatin) Semiatin 2 (Boatright)	
W November 28	The evolution of paid and social media	Semiatin 3 (Devine) Semiatin 4 (Turk)	
F November 30	The future of polling and voter mobilization	Semiatin 5 (Nelson) Semiatin 6 (Semiatin)	
M December 3	Party and interest group adaptations	Semiatin 7 (Renner) Semiatin 8 (Kasniunas and Rozell)	
W December 5	Future trends in press coverage and campaign finance	Semiatin 9 (Graf and Mayer) Semiatin 10 (Francia, Joe and Wilcox)	
F December 7	Future roles for women and minority candidates	Semiatin 12 (MacManus) Semiatin 13 (Stokes-Brown)	
M December 10	The future of redistricting	Semiatin 11 (Crouch)	<b>Election analysis paper due TODAY by 4:30 pm</b>
W December 12	Electoral and campaign reform	Wayne 10 Semiatin 14 (Simpson)	Final exam study guide posted by today
F December 14	Final thoughts	To be announced	
Wednesday, December 19	<b>FINAL EXAM 3:30 – 5:30 pm Mattson 102</b>		