POLITICAL PARTIES & ELECTIONS, FALL 2012

**CONCLUDING THOUGHTS ABOUT PARTIES:**

**RESPONSIBILITY, REFORM**

Hershey chapters 15, 16

Monday, November 19

**Chapter 15 terms**: responsible parties/party government; arguments for and against party government; divided government; how Republicans were a “temporarily responsible party” early in the Gingrich era; ideological party; examples of issues where the Democratic, Republican platforms offer clear choices; internal divisions within each major party; retrospective evaluations; conditions in which party government in the U.S. is most likely to occur

**Chapter 16 terms**: the nature of the electorate; political institutions and rules that influence parties; social/societal forces that influence parties; how party decline in 1960s and 1970s affects parties in the electorate, party organizations, parties in government; why there was a rise in more cohesive parties in government starting in the 1980s and extending through today; how parties’ intermediary roles are changing

15.1 We will spend about half the class having a debate centered on the proposition: **Responsible parties and party government are NOT desirable in the United States political system.** Read Hershey chapter 15 carefully; familiarize yourself with the arguments for and against responsible parties. The first 5 minutes of class will be spent organizing all sides, then the debate begins.

We will divide into three sides:

* Side 1 supports the proposition (is NOT in favor of having responsible parties)
* Side 2 opposes the proposition (DOES want responsible parties in the U.S.)
* Side 3 gets to JUDGE, by reviewing the evidence for and against, and by asking questions of both sides during the debate

15.2 Would the presence of an active, visible, and moderately successful third party in American politics alter the conclusions you have drawn about today’s debated proposition? Speculate.

16.1 Consider Table 16.1 (p. 314). Which of the environmental influences on parties is the most influential influence in recent years, and why?

16.2 What do U.S. citizens need from the Democratic and Republican parties? Specifically, should they be stronger and/or do we need them to be stronger? Consider the ideas from the closing section of the chapter (pp. 323-327) and our debate discussions as you address this question.