Course Catalog and Objectives:

Per the course catalog: “An examination of the central role of parties in the American democratic system, including its elections, political coalitions, and permeability to interest groups and public opinion.”

Per my vision: This course addresses topics at the very core of the practice of American democratic politics: the behavior of voters and non-voters, the creation and maintenance of political parties, and the conduct of competitive elections for public office. These are not separate topics, for parties are essential in every democracy (but not in non-democracies) to running elections and governing the polity. Parties are currently regarded with great suspicion by most middle-class Americans, yet we have found no alternative to them.

First up is why political parties are essential parts of a democracy. We answer that with theory from political science filtered through the uniquely American tradition of having just two national political parties with a realistic chance for each to elect a President and control the national Congress. It is unusual among democracies to do this, as we shall see. We take a comparative look at party systems (contrasting American to foreign systems) and a historical one (evaluating past American party practices). We distinguish parties from interest groups, political factions, and political coalitions. We look at parties as organizations, which run elections, including the complicated American national primary system. We look at the strange current system of financing parties and candidates. We look directly at national and state elections, with intensive review of recent national results. We study voters and nonvoters, together with the business of polling by which we learn about it. We look at parties-in-government, as the central organizing entity of the national legislature and most state assemblies. Finally, we look closely at the Tea Party and its potential impact on the American political scene.

Required Texts:

One word about the books. Read them. I know that is a crazy concept and some of you might even think I am evil for even suggesting it. College professors usually have very good reasons for making you get books for classes. Typically, the most important reason is that we want you to read the book. I am aware that there is a large amount of reading every week, but it is essential to come to class prepared to learn.

Course Requirements:

Grade Breakdown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Celebrations (3)</td>
<td>100 (500 total)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party Paper</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polling Paper</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidate Paper</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-class Participation</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL POINTS</strong></td>
<td><strong>700</strong></td>
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Celebrations of Learning (3; 100 points each): We will have three celebrations of learning over the course of the semester. They will NOT be cumulative, although much of the material will build upon itself. They will be in-class and closed-book. If you wear a party hat the day of a celebration you will receive two bonus points. No, I am not kidding.

**Format:** Your celebrations will consist of both in-class and take home exams. In class, you will have multiple choice, fill-in, and short essays. The take home will consist of more critical thinking essays and application and need to be printed and attached to your in-class celebration. You will receive a study guide prior to the celebration that will detail questions to consider prior to celebrating. Take homes will be distributed a week before you celebrate.

**Party Paper (100 points):** For this paper, you will need to write no fewer than 5 pages examining a major American political party’s position toward a political issue. This paper will need to cover the history of the party’s stance, the reasons for the current stance, deviations within the party, the potential electoral impact, and the opposition. Issue stances will include: abortion, global warming, budget, Iraq, prayer in schools, gay marriage, voter identification, Afghanistan, social security, Medicaid, free trade, farm subsidies, education reform, healthcare, and the PATRIOT ACT. You will be assigned a paper topic online within the first week. More info will follow.

**Polling Paper (100 points):** The fact is we can only truly learn politics by doing. For this reason, we will take time this semester to learn about writing, conducting, and analyzing political polls. You will have to administer a poll to an n of at least 40 people and then write up an analysis of your data. The paper will again be no fewer than 5 pages. More info will follow.

**Candidate Paper (100 points):** In this paper, you will write no fewer than 5 pages examining a Republican candidate (or potential candidate) for the party nomination in 2012. You will provide a brief biography of the candidate, a chronology of their campaign thus far, an examination of their performance, and then either: a) why they dropped out or b) your prognosis for their chances at
winning. Candidates will include: Mitt Romney, Tim Pawlenty, Rick Perry, Sarah Palin, Newt Gingrich, Michele Bachmann, Ron Paul, Jon Huntsman, Rick Santorum, and Herman Cain. You will be assigned a candidate within the first week. More info will follow.

In-Class Participation (100 points): Attendance is NOT enough on its own. Ultimately, this is your class. I will open up topics with lecture, required readings, and possibly videos. But the purpose is only to give some structure to our time. You are voting-aged adults. With this freedom comes a responsibility to try to be part of the “informed citizenry.” It is up to you to actively participate with questions and opinions. If you never talk, you will receive zero points.

With 700 total points, you will need the following number of points for each letter grade:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Points Needed</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>627-700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>557-626</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>487-556</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>417-486</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0-416</td>
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</tbody>
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The Fine Print:

1) In this class, we will be having open discussions on potentially controversial topics on which different individuals may have very strong differing opinions. I am a fan of frank discussion and debate, but everything must be done in a professional, respectful manner. Please never force me to cut off a good conversation by stepping over the line.

2) My job is to make sure you get the most out of this class as possible. I am paid to help you, so do not be afraid to ask.

3) Please do not pack up your books, notebooks, and coats until class is over. I will always do my best to get us through the material with about five minutes left to spare, but it just is not always possible. Packing up your things is disrespectful to those around you, but most importantly to me.

4) Cell phones on vibrate or silent only. I cannot call or text while teaching this class, so neither can you.

5) Papers are due at the BEGINNING of the assigned class. No exceptions. Ever. Every day late is a letter grade. And weekends are two days.

6) You are expected to have read prior to class. If you are unable to participate due to not having read, it will reflect heavily—and poorly—on your participation grade.

7) If you miss a celebration without receiving an extension from me in advance, you must provide documentation of your absence or you will receive either (a) half of the possible points or (b) one point lower than the lowest class score—whichever is lower. Since you have celebration dates well in advance, only medical emergencies will allow you to miss a celebration without prior notification.

Academic Honesty:

Per the Undergraduate Bulletin: Academic honesty is one of the most important qualities influencing the character and vitality of an educational institution. Academic misconduct or dishonesty is inconsistent with membership in an academic community and cannot be accepted. Violations of academic honesty represent a serious breach of discipline and may be considered grounds for disciplinary action, including dismissal from the University. Academic dishonesty is defined to include those acts which would deceive, cheat, or defraud so as to promote or enhance one’s scholastic record. Knowingly or actively assisting any person in the commission of an above-mentioned act is also academic dishonesty. Students are responsible for upholding the principles of academic honesty in accordance with the “University Statement of Student Rights” found in the
STUDENT HANDBOOK. The University requires that all assignments submitted to faculty members by students be the work of the individual student submitting the work. An exception would be group projects assigned by the instructor. In this situation, the work must be that of the group. Academic dishonesty includes:

**Plagiarism.** In speaking or writing, plagiarism is the act of passing someone else’s work off as one’s own. In addition, plagiarism is defined as using the essential style and manner of expression of a source as if it were one’s own. If there is any doubt, the student should consult his/her instructor or any manual of term paper or report writing. Violations of academic honesty include:
1. Presenting the exact words of a source without quotation marks;
2. Using another student’s computer source code or algorithm or copying a laboratory report; or
3. Presenting information, judgments, ideas, or facts summarized from a source without giving credit.

**Cheating.** Cheating includes using or relying on the work of someone else in an inappropriate manner. It includes, but is not limited to, those activities where a student:
1. Obtains or attempts to obtain unauthorized knowledge of an examination’s contents prior to the time of that examination.
2. Copies another student’s work or intentionally allows others to copy assignments, examinations, source codes or designs;
3. Works in a group when she/he has been told to work individually;
4. Uses unauthorized reference material during an examination; or
5. Have someone else take an examination or takes the examination for another

**Academic Accommodations:**

Students with a documented disability should discuss the situation with me to assure that necessary accommodations are being made. Southeast Missouri State University and Disability Support Services remain committed to making every reasonable educational accommodation for students with disabilities. Many services and accommodations which aid a student’s educational experience are available for students with various types of disabilities. It is the student’s responsibility to contact Disability Support Services to become registered as a student with a disability in order to have accommodations implemented.

**Attendance:**

Per the Undergraduate Bulletin: Students are expected to attend all classes and to complete all assignments for courses in which they are enrolled. An absence does not relieve the student of the responsibility to complete all assignments. If an absence is associated with a university-sanctioned activity, the instructor will provide an opportunity for assignment make-up. However, it is the instructor’s decision to provide, or not to provide, make-up work related to absences for any other reason.

**Civility:**

Every student at Southeast is obligated at all times to assume responsibility for his/her actions, to respect constituted authority, to be truthful, and to respect the rights of others, as to respect private and public property. In their academic activities, students are expected to maintain high standards of honesty and integrity and abide by the University's Policy on Academic Honesty. Alleged violations of the Code of Student Conduct are adjudicated in accordance with the established procedures of the judicial system.
Schedule:

BS = Bibby and Schaffner; CS = Craig and Hill; MW = Miller and Walling

Week 1 (August 22, 24, 26): Overview and Introduction

Questions to Consider:
- What are parties?
- What do they do?
- What is their goal?

Readings:
- M: None
- W: BS 1
- F: None

Week 2 (August 29, 31, September 2): History of Political Parties

Questions to Consider:
- What is a realignment?
- How have parties changed with time?
- What about minor parties?

Readings:
- M: BS 2
- W: None
- F: None

Week 3 (September 5, 7, 9): The American Party System and Their Organization

Questions to Consider:
- Why do we have two parties in our country?
- What characteristics are unique to the American party system?
- How are parties organized?

Readings:
- M: BS 3
- W: BS 4
- F: None

Week 4 (September 12, 14, 16): Nominations

Party Paper Due by 10 am on September 12

Questions to Consider:
- How are individuals nominated to state and congressional offices? The presidency?
- What are the different kinds of primaries? What is a caucus?

Readings:
- M: BS 5
- W: BS 6
- F: None
Week 5 (September 19, 21, 23): Voters and Campaigns

*Questions to Consider:*
- How do parties reach voters?
- What impacts party identification?
- What is the Electoral College? Does it work?
- How are campaigns financed?

*Readings:*
- M: BS 7
- W: BS 8
- F: None

Week 6 (September 26, 28, 30): After They’re Elected

*Celebration One will be held on September 30*

*Questions to Consider:*
- How do parties function in government?
- What role do parties play?
- How do parties influence polarization?

*Readings:*
- M: BS 9
- W: BS 10
- F: None

Week 7 (October 3, 5): Campaign Basics and Voters

*Questions to Consider:*
- Do campaign matters?
- What is the strategy behind campaigns?
- What are swing votes and why do they matter?
- What is a competent voter?

*Readings:*
- M: C 1
- W: C 2 and 3
- F: C 4

Week 8 (October 10, 12, 14): Money and Ads

*Questions to Consider:*
- How does money influence campaigns and elections?
- What kind of advertising should candidates use?

*Readings:*
- M: C 5
- W: C 6
Week 9 (October 17, 19, 26): The News, Internet, and Direct Democracy

Questions to Consider:
- How does the news cover campaigns?
- How has the internet altered campaigns?
- How has direct democracy changed elections?

Readings:
- M: C 7
- W: C 8
- F: C 9

Week 10 (October 24, 26, 28): Grassroots, Consultants, and Ethics

Celebration Two will be held on October 28

Questions to Consider:
- What are grassroots campaigns and how do they work?
- What impact have political consultants had on campaigns?
- Are campaigns ethical generally? How do they change when there is a scandal?
- What is the paradox of voting?

Readings:
- M: C 10, 11
- W: C 12, 13
- F: None

Week 11 (October 31, November 2, 4): Polling

Questions to Consider:
- Anything and everything about polling!

Readings:
- M: Online files
- W: Online files
- F: Online files

Week 12 (November 7, 9, 11): More Polling

Questions to Consider:
- Anything and everything about polling!

Readings:
- M: Online files
- W: Online files
- F: Online files
Week 13 (November 14, 16, and 18): The Tea Party and Its Victors

*Questions to Consider:*
- What is the Tea Party movement?
- Which Tea Party candidates were successful, why?

*Readings:*
- M: MW 1
- W: MW 2, 3, 4, 5
- F: MW 6, 7, 8

Week 14 (November 21): Tea Party Primary Losers

*Polling Paper due by 10 am on November 23*

*Questions to Consider:*
- Which Tea Party candidates failed to get out of the primary, why?

*Readings:*
- M: MW 9, 10

Week 15 (November 28, 30, December 2): Tea Party Losers

*Questions to Consider:*
- Which Tea Party candidates failed to win their general elections, why?

*Readings:*
- M: MW 11, 12
- W: MW 13, 14
- F: MW 15, 16

Week 16 (December 5, 7, 9): Future of the Tea Party

*Candidate Paper due by 11:59:59 am on December 7*

*Questions to Consider:*
- Where does the Tea Party go from here?
- What does it mean?

*Readings:*
- M: MW 17
- W: MW 18
- F: None

Week 17 (December 12): Final Celebration

*Final Celebration will be held on December 12 at 10 am*