

POL300H / USA311H  
W 12:00-2:00 PM  
McLennan Laboratories MP 137  
255 Huron Street

Visiting Professor Matthew Lebo  
<https://sites.google.com/a/stonybrook.edu/matthew-lebo/>

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### **I. Introduction and learning objectives:**

We will study political parties and their role in U.S. congressional and presidential campaigns while paying close attention to the 2016 races. In particular, we will focus on understanding the causes of successes and failures in primary and general election campaigns. We will also cover topics such as the U.S. electoral system, public opinion, redistricting and gerrymandering, polarization, voting behaviour, and campaign financing. Readings and assignments will include in-depth empirical research on these and other contemporary aspects of American politics. In preparation for the 2016 election we will discuss election forecasting, electoral maps and math, and presidential debates.

A background in American politics is preferred but not required.

### **II. Course Requirements**

- i. Weekly readings. I will assign readings each week on the topic of the week. Some weeks there may be a lot, some less. The average will be about 100 pages per week. The readings will extend from textbook chapters to scholarly data driven articles to historical pieces to shorter journalistic accounts.
- ii. Follow the campaign in the news. Make one of the following your homepage for the duration of the campaign and read some of the others:
  - a) at least one major, non-partisan newspaper such as The New York Times, The Washington Post or The Wall Street Journal; and
  - b) one serious political magazine (print or online) such as Slate, The Daily Beast, Politico, The Hill, or The Weekly Standard; and
  - c) one political-science website such as The Monkey Cage, Mischiefs of Faction, Vox, or 538;
  - d) one history website such as History News Network.
- iii. Watching campaign events. Students are expected to watch the major political events of the campaign season. Watch the debates, news, and especially election night.

### **III. Required Text**

There are 2 required textbooks for the course and both are (hopefully) available at the bookstore.

1. Marjorie Randon Hershey. *Party Politics in America 16<sup>th</sup> Edition*. ISBN-13: 9780205992096. Can be bought or rented on Amazon.

2. John Sides, Daron Shaw, Matt Grossmann, Keena Lipsitz. *Campaigns & Elections 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*. ISBN-13: 978-0393938524. New e-books are about \$30:

<http://books.wwnorton.com/books/webad.aspx?id=4294990361>

Used first editions are available more cheaply online and would be okay to use but pay attention to chapter numbers.

There will also be additional readings that I will direct you to.

#### IV. Course Requirements:

Students are expected to attend class regularly and to be prepared for questions by completing reading assignments *before* the class for which they are assigned. **For exams, students are responsible for material covered in lectures that may not be in the text and for material in the text that may not be covered in lectures.** Final grades will be based on the results of a mid-term test (worth 25% of the final grade), and one final paper (worth 20% of the final grade). Unannounced quizzes may be given from time to time also. The mid-term exam will be composed of mostly essay questions. Class participation and attendance is worth 10% of your grade. The two short assignments are worth 15% each.

Class participation and attendance: 10%

Two short written assignments: 15% each DUE October 12 and November 2.

Mid-term: 30% Wednesday November 16<sup>th</sup>, in class.

Final Paper: 30% Due Wednesday November 30<sup>th</sup> in class.

Groups paper: choose one group of American voters defined by gender, ethnicity, language, race, or something else I approve. Discuss the history of the voting patterns for that group – how have they evolved, for what reasons, how have they voted in recent elections including this year’s primaries, etc. Discuss the political evolution of this group in terms of their voting patterns and activism. Where do they stand in the Clinton vs. Trump race and how does that compare to the last 3 presidential elections? EIGHT pages double spaced minimum not counting tables and bibliography. *DUE OCTOBER 12. You need to have chosen your group and complete a basic outline and list of sources you plan on using to be turned in by September 28.*

State paper: Choose a state and discuss its likely presidential choice in 2016. Discuss the state’s history in terms of presidential choice as well as Senators, members of Congress, and state offices. Is it reliably Democratic, Republican, split, or what? How is the history of the parties in your state relevant to the present party context? What are the demographics - racial, gender, economic, and geographic – of your state? How have they played a role in its presidential vote in recent elections and how are the demographics likely to affect the choice this year? The paper should be analytical. Focus on how the answers to these questions explain the likely outcome in your state on November 8<sup>th</sup>. EIGHT pages double spaced minimum not counting tables and bibliography. *DUE NOVEMBER 2. You need to have chosen your state and complete a basic outline and list of sources you plan on using to be turned in by October 19.*

All assignments must be handed in on paper at the start of class the day they are due or beforehand. I will not open email attachments. If you are handing in something late take a copy to the department office. Any paper that is handed in late will lose 5% per day it is late. After 7 days the paper will receive a grade of 0.

## V. Schedule

### Week 1: September 14: Introduction – The Story of Polarization in America

Readings: The Single Most Important Fact about American Politics:

<http://www.vox.com/2014/6/13/5803768/pew-most-important-fact-american-politics>

Lilliana Mason. 2015 “I Disrespectfully Agree: The Differential Effects of Partisan Sorting on Behavioral and Issue Polarization.” *American Journal of Political Science* 59(1): 128-45.

### Week 2: September 21: What are Political Parties?

Readings:

Madison, Federalist 10.

Hershey Chapter 1

Sides et al. Chapter 6.

### Week 3: September 28: The American Two-Party System and Presidential Election Basics

Readings:

Hershey Chapter 2

Sides et al. Chapter 1

### Week 4: October 5: Party Activists

Readings:

Hershey Chapter 5

Sides et al. Chapter 3

Williamson, Skocpol, and Coggin, "The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism" *Perspectives on Politics*, 2011. [http://scholar.harvard.edu/files/williamson/files/tea\\_party\\_pop.pdf](http://scholar.harvard.edu/files/williamson/files/tea_party_pop.pdf)

### Week 5: October 12: Party Identification

#### **GROUPS PAPER DUE**

Readings:

Hershey Chapter 6

Abramowitz, Alan I., and Kyle L. Saunders. "Is polarization a myth?" *The Journal of Politics* 70.02 (2008): 542-555.

### Week 6: October 19: How Parties Choose Candidates

Readings:

Hershey Chapter 9

Sides Chapter 8

### Week 7: October 26: Presidential Primaries

Readings:

Hershey Chapter 10

Sides Chapter 7

Bawn, Cohen, Karol, Masket, Noel and Zaller, "A Theory of Political Parties: Groups, Policy Demands and Nominations in American Politics" *Perspectives on Politics*, 2012.

Andrew Prokop (2015), “Political scientists think ‘the party’ will stop Trump. They shouldn’t be so sure,” Vox.

Nate Silver (2016), “The Republican Party May Be Failing: What ‘The Party Decides’ could get wrong about Donald Trump and the GOP,” FiveThirtyEight.

Week 8: November 2: The General Election

**STATE PAPER DUE**

Readings:

Hershey Chapter 11

Sides Chapter 4

Ezra Klein, "The Green Lantern Theory of the Presidency Explained."

<http://www.vox.com/2014/5/20/5732208/the-green-lantern-theory-of-the-presidency-explained>

Forecasting Papers: TBA

NOVEMBER 8 – ELECTION DAY. EVENING EVENT TBA.

Week 9: November 9: What Happened?

Readings:

New York Times, Washington Post, Vox, and any analysis of the election you can find.

We'll discuss the races for President (Electoral College and the vote), House, and Senate as well as exit polls and other available data.

Week 10: November 16:

**MIDTERM EXAM IN CLASS**

Week 11: November 23: House and Senate Elections

Jamie Carson, Gregory Koger, Matthew Lebo, and Everett Young. 2010. "The Electoral Consequences of Party Loyalty in Congress." Reprinted for AJPS Special Online Issue on 2010 Elections.

<https://docs.google.com/a/stonybrook.edu/viewer?a=v&pid=sites&scid=c3Rvbnlicm9vay5lZHV8bWF0dGhldy1sZWJvfGd4OjQ2MTU2OGIxZjdkMDkzNA>

Barry Burden. 2010. "Local and National Forces in Congressional Elections" Oxford Handbook of American Elections and Political Behavior.

<http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199235476.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199235476-e-24>

This American Life: "Take the Money and Run for Office"

Transcript: <http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/461/transcript>

audio: <http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/461/take-the-money-and-run-for-office>

Week 12: November 30: Redistricting, Reapportionment, and Gerrymandering

**FINAL PAPER DUE**

McGhee, "The Effect of Redistricting on House Elections, Revisited" in *The Monkey Cage*, a *Washington Post Blog*, October 15, 2012.

Anthony J. McGann, Charles Anthony Smith, Michael Latner, and J. Alex Keena. 2015. "A Discernable and Manageable Standard for Partisan Gerrymandering." *Election Law Journal* Volume 14, Number 4.

Also, go to Common Cause and look up redistricting: [http://www.commoncause.org/search/advanced-search.html?state\\_or\\_national=483903345&spstate\\_or\\_national=&spissue=486060669&spcampaign=504575261&doctype=&spstartDate=&spendDate=](http://www.commoncause.org/search/advanced-search.html?state_or_national=483903345&spstate_or_national=&spissue=486060669&spcampaign=504575261&doctype=&spstartDate=&spendDate=)

## **VI. Makeup Exam Policy**

It is essential that you understand the following policy for the course since *no exceptions will be made*. No exams may be taken early for any reason. A student who misses an exam must provide a *very good* reason supported by evidence such as a hospital admittance form. If you are ill prior to an exam, let me know as soon as possible beforehand if you may miss the exam. Makeup exams will consist entirely of long essays. Failure to write one of the exams without providing a sufficient excuse will result in a grade of zero for that exam.

## **VII. What is Expected from Students**

I expect every student to come to class fully prepared. That means you have read the required reading prior to class. This will make much of the lecture review for you and you will find class to be a good time to raise questions you may have about the reading. Class discussion is more interesting than lectures and is greatly enhanced by well informed questions and comments. I hope that you feel free to voice your comments and to question my lectures. However, you are expected to be respectful of myself and the other students in the class especially when it comes to discussing issues with which people may have strong feelings.

Staying informed with current events is a good way for you to apply what you are learning in class to the real world. In terms of grades, there is no substitution for hard work. Review sessions will be given the class before each exam and students may ask any relevant question that is **not** phrased as: “Will \_\_\_\_\_ be on the test?” Test questions will be fair, though difficult, and will come from books or lecture material. If you have questions or require additional help, please let me know.

## **VIII. Electronic Devices**

Just in case you did not know, your professors can see you playing on your phones, tablets, and laptops and it annoys them. They can also tell the difference between someone taking class notes on a laptop and someone who is ignoring the lecture and playing on their laptop. I do not want to be policing your behavior in the classroom but you can assume that if you are playing on a device, I will notice and be annoyed. And while you are on your phones I will be covering material that you are expected to learn but is not in the texts. Just turn your devices off and take hand-written notes in class. Studies have shown that students learn best that way.

## **IX. Academic Integrity:**

Academic integrity is essential to the pursuit of learning and scholarship in a university, and to ensuring that a degree from the University of Toronto is a strong signal of each student’s individual academic achievement. As a result, the University treats cases of cheating and plagiarism very seriously. The University of Toronto’s Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Policies/PDF/ppjun011995.pdf>) outlines the behaviours that constitute academic dishonesty and the processes for addressing academic offences. Potential offences include, but are not limited to:

In papers and assignments:

1. Using someone else’s ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement;
2. Submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor;
3. Making up sources or facts;

4. Obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment.

On tests and exams:

1. Using or possessing unauthorized aids;
2. Looking at someone else's answers during an exam or test;
3. Misrepresenting your identity; and
4. When you knew or ought to have known you were doing it.

In academic work:

1. Falsifying institutional documents or grades;
2. Falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University, including (but not limited to) doctor's notes; and
3. When you knew or ought to have known you were doing so.

All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following procedures outlined in the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters. If students have questions or concerns about what constitutes appropriate academic behaviour or appropriate research and citation methods, they are expected to seek out additional information on academic integrity from their instructors or from other institutional resources.

#### **X. Accommodations for Disability**

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or Accessibility Services at (416) 978-8060; [accessibility.utoronto.ca](http://accessibility.utoronto.ca).