

POLITICAL PARTIES AND INTEREST GROUPS
Summer I 2008

12:00pm AB1 302

Political Science 360.01
Dr. Mitzi Mahoney

CONTACT INFORMATION:

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COURSE DESCRIPTION: In indirect democracies, intermediary institutions such as political parties, interest groups, the media, and social movements, help link citizens to governments. In this course we will explore the nature and role of two of these intermediary institutions, political parties and interest groups. In the first section of the course we will examine the nature of interest groups and political parties, including the historical and philosophical context in which political parties and interest groups have developed. We will also analyze the functions that intermediary institutions play in democracies. In the second phase of the course, we focus on interest groups, specifically their organizational and institutional structures, their strategies and techniques, and their impact on politics and policy. In the third section we focus on political parties, specifically their organizational and institutional structures, their strategies and techniques, and their impact on politics and policy. In the fourth section of the course we will analyze the interdependence and interactions of parties and interest groups in American politics.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: My objectives for students in the class include:

- expanding students' knowledge base of political parties and interest groups
- learning about the major principles, theories, models, methods that inform our study of political parties and interest groups
- learning to apply the major principles and theories to understand current political phenomena
- developing the analytical skills to critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view

COURSE READINGS: Course assignments will be posted on Blackboard.

Marjorie Hershey. PARTY POLITICS IN AMERICA, New York: HarperCollins, 2008.

Additional Readings: I will make additional reading assignments throughout the semester. These will be posted on Blackboard.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Exams: Two exams will be given. Each is worth *** of the grade. The exams will include identification, short answer, and essay questions.

Research Project: The research project entails analyzing political party and interest group behavior on a specific policy issue. You will select a policy issue currently on the national government's agenda. The purpose of the paper is to map party and interest group activities on this issue and analyze their impact on the policy. Details of the research project are posted on Blackboard.

Class Contribution: Your involvement in class is crucial to a successful learning experience. This requires regular attendance, preparation, and participation.

COURSE EVALUATION:

Exam I	20%
Exam II	20%

CLASSROOM POLICIES:

Make Up Exams: Make up exams will be given to students who miss an exam because of illness, a death in the family, or an official university activity. You must notify me immediately if you miss an exam. Make up exams will be given at the convenience of the faculty member. Make up exams will consist of essay questions.

Attendance: After three unexcused absences, I reserve the right to deduct one point from the final grade for each additional unexcused absence.

Religious Holy Days Policy: A student may be excused from class in order to observe a religious holy day if the student presents the faculty with a written statement regarding the religious holy day.

Academic Honesty Policy: Students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach and to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences. Academic dishonesty includes cheating on exams or other academic work, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials. **Any student found cheating on exams or plagiarizing another's work will be given an F for the course.**