



“Diagram of the Rise and Fall of American Political Parties, from 1789 to 1880, inclusive,”

Topics in American History American Political Parties

Lecture: Tuesday and Thursdays, 3:30-4:45 p.m. in MHRA 1215

Instructor: Mr. Robert Skelton/ Office: MHRA 3103 / email: rdskelto@uncg.edu

Course Description: Permanent political parties have become a mainstay in American life. Yet, the Founders feared them—in fact, President George Washington warned against them in his farewell address. How have they come to dominate American politics? Why have so many Americans historically felt that the parties do not represent their interests? How and when did the current system originate? Why has partisanship intensified during periods of racial and social conflict? Also, in spite of criticisms, how have parties contributed to the American political landscape?

With so many ordinary voters disillusioned with one or both major parties, now is a good time to look at the history of party formation, representation, leadership, and the combination of factors that shaped and altered the parties over time. We will examine the key roles that Thomas Jefferson played in establishing the first parties and then how his legacy carried over into future systems. We will also look at how voting changed with the parties. The parties have expanded, contracted, and contested this hallmark of our democracy from the beginning. An otherwise obscure Martin Van Buren shaped party organizing in manners still seen today. Presidents Lincoln and Roosevelt led majority Congresses to increase the powers of the federal government to tackle two of the nation’s toughest situations facing presidents, the Civil War and the Great Depression. These efforts were met by partisan backlash as their opposition parties regained strength. Also, while federal politics will predominate this course, we will also examine how city, county, and state level partisan politics often have more direct impact to people’s lives than what occurs at a federal level.

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Course Objectives

Student Learning Objectives (GHP, GMO, MDEQ)

GHP

1. Use a historical approach to analyze and contextualize primary and secondary sources representing divergent perspectives.
2. Use evidence to interpret the past coherently, orally and/or in writing

Course Learning Outcomes

1. Analyze US political parties from the founding to the late 1900s to understand how they shaped life in the US, creating problems, opportunities, and conflict.
2. Contextualize and interpret primary source information—the building blocks of historical analysis—to determine how these sources shape interpretations of political events in American history.
3. Demonstrate the ability to communicate historical ideas effectively through writing and speaking.

Course Readings:

Critchlow, Donald T. *American Political History: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015. Available in bookstore, Amazon and other locations.

Baker, Paula, and Donald T Critchlow, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of American Political History*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2020.

<https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199341788.001.0001>.

The Adkins book and the Baker/Critchlow edited volume are available electronically through the UNCG Library and on Canvas. I will also include sections from other secondary sources along with several primary source materials, all of which will be posted on Canvas.

Assignments and Grading Scheme

Attendance: (10%) Attending 25 of 28 classes will result in full credit. Please see Attendance Policy on page 11 for details on excused and unexcused absences.

Discussion Posts: (10%) Every week, you will respond to a discussion prompt on Canvas by posting a 150-word response to one of several questions concerning the readings for that week. I'll open a discussion window at the beginning of the week (Monday) for each discussion section, and it will close on Thursday at 1:00 (before class on Thursday). In your post, you should respond thoughtfully and specifically to the question by referring to the assigned readings. Thoughtful responses to your peers that go beyond simple agreement to deepen the analysis, clarify differences, or reference important examples may result in extra credit.

While I will use your discussion posts as the principal means to evaluate your participation, I will be asking questions and encouraging discussions of this material in class. The content is fascinating, and your engagement with it will help you and your class to understand the content better (I think it will help you understand today's world better too!).

Writing Assignment 1 (15%): The first writing assignment will be a response paper (750-900 words) to the readings for a particular class session of the student's choice. Students will sign up for these response papers during the first week. The response paper will be due the Friday of the week of the material. I will supply the writing prompts and essay guidelines in Canvas.

Writing Assignment 2 (15%): The students will evaluate assigned primary source(s) and write a 500-600 word essay in response to a framing question that the source can answer. I will supply the writing prompts and essay guidelines in Canvas.

Mid-Term Exam: (25%) The midterm exam will be a take-home, open-book exam covering material from the first half of the course. Students will write 4-5 identification responses (150-250 words), and one 3-4 page essay that evaluates a key course concept.

Final Exam: (25%) The final exam will be a take-home, open-book exam covering material from the second half of the course. Students will write 4-5 identification responses (150-250 words), and one 3-4 page essay that evaluates a key course concept.

I use a 1000-point grading system, so each percentage point of your grade is worth 10 points. This will result in each exam being worth 250 points, the writing assignments being worth 150 points each, and the overall attendance and discussion posts being worth 100 points each.

Grades follow this scale:

A+ = 97% and above;
B+ = 87-89%;
C+ = 77-79%;
D+ = 67-69%;
F = <60%

A = 94-96%;
B = 84-86%;
C = 74-76%;
D = 64-66%;

A- = 90-93%;
B- = 80-83%;
C- = 70-73%;
D- = 60-63%;

Course Schedule

[See Canvas for full assignments and guiding questions. I may substitute or supplement sources if I discover even better ones. I will inform you beforehand if I make changes.]

WEEK 1

Tuesday August 17: Lecture: Introduction and Why Do We Study History?

Read: Syllabus

Stearns – Why Study History? (1998)

Thursday August 19: Lecture: Why did political parties form? What general purposes have they served?

Read: American Government: Power and Purpose Ch. 12 pp 512-541

Primary Source: US Constitution

WEEK 2

Tuesday August 24: Lecture: First Government of United States

Read: Critchlow pp. 1-17

Oxford Handbook (OxH) Politics of Constitution pp. 27-42

Primary Sources: Franklin Statement: Constitutional Convention, 1787

Madison: Federalist #10, 1787

Federal Farmer IX – Anti-Federalist Letter, 1788

Thursday August 26: Lecture: Before the Party – Washington and Adams

Read: Critchlow pp. 18-26

OxH Early Republic pp. 45-50

Primary Sources: Washington: Farewell Address, 1796

Adams: Inaugural Address, 1797

WEEK 3

Tuesday August 31: Lecture: Rise of the First Party System

Read: Critchlow pp. 26-31

OxH Early Republic pp. 50-57

OxH Religion and American Politics pp. 278-280

Primary Sources: Letter from Danbury Baptist Association to Thomas Jefferson

Letter from Thomas Jefferson to the Danbury Baptist Association

Week 3 (continued)

Thursday Sep 2: Lecture: Power of the President and Fall of the First Party System

Read: Digital History – The Era of Good Feelings, pp. 1-7

Primary Sources: Report of the Hartford Convention, 1815

Madison: State of Union Address, 1816

Madison: Veto of Internal Improvements Bill, 1817

WEEK 4

Tuesday Sep 7: Lecture: An Era of Good and Bad Feelings

Read: Critchlow pp. 32-38 Hofstadter – Toward a Party System, pp. 212-252

Primary Sources: Tennessee General Assembly Protest Against the Caucus, 1823

Van Buren: Letter to Thomas Ritchie, 1827

Thursday Sep 9: Lecture: Democrats and Whigs: The Second Party System

Read: Critchlow pp. 39-45

OxH Democrats and Whigs pp. 62-75

Primary Sources: Everett – Removing Indians to West of Mississippi, 1830

Lumpkin, Removal of Cherokee Indians from Georgia, 1835

Democratic and Whig Party Platforms, 1844

WEEK 5

Tuesday Sep 14: Lecture: Movements: Religion, Abolition, Women's Rights

Read: OxH Politics of Slavery pp. 79-87

OxH Religion and American Politics pp. 281-282

Primary Sources: Stanton: Speech on Women's Rights, 1848

Report of Proceedings of the Colored National Convention, 1848

Thursday Sep 16: Lecture: Voting Rights in Antebellum America

Read: Keyssar – The Right to Vote Ch 3 pp. 53-76

Primary Sources: Black Philadelphians Defend Their Voting Rights, 1838

Rhode Islanders Protest Property Restrictions, 1834

Virginia Constitution, 1851

WEEK 6

Tuesday Sep 21: Lecture: Slavery and the Decline of the Second Party System

Read: Critchlow pp. 46-54

Primary Sources: Gag Rule, 1836
Compromise of 1850 Acts
Douglass, The Slavery Party Speech, 1853

Thursday Sep 23: Lecture: Third Parties (Part 1) and Rise of the Third-Party System

Read: Critchlow pp. 55-59

Keyssar – The Right to Vote Ch. 4 pp. 82-87

Primary Sources: Know-Nothing National Platform, 1855
Democratic, Republican, and Whig Party Platforms of 1856

WEEK 7

Tuesday Sep 28: Lecture: Civil War

Read: Critchlow pp. 60-67

OxH Civil War and Reconstruction pp. 96-103

Primary Sources: Morrill Land Grant Act, 1862
Wade-Davis Bill and Lincoln Pocket Veto, 1864

Midterm Exam Posted to Canvas

Thursday Sep 30: Lecture: Reconstruction and the Spread of Republicanism

Read: Critchlow pp. 67-73

OxH Civil War and Reconstruction pp. 103-108

Keyssar – The Right to Vote Ch. 4 pp. 87-107

Primary Sources: North Carolina Black Codes, 1865
Colored Convention Meeting with House Committee, 1869
Fifteenth Amendment Print, 1870

WEEK 8

Tuesday Oct 5: NO CLASS TODAY - Midterm Due (upload .docx file to Canvas)

Week 8 (Continued)

Thursday Oct 7: Lecture: Redemption

Read: Critchlow pp. 74-81

OxH Civil War and Reconstruction pp. 108-111

OxH Gilded Age and Progressive Era pp. 115-120

Primary Sources: Elias Keils Letter to Attorney General Williams, 1874

Martin Gary Plan of Campaign, 1876

Cainhoy Riots Reporting, NY Times & NY Herald, 1876

WEEK 9

Tuesday Oct 12: Fall Break – NO CLASS

Thursday Oct 14: Lecture: Rise of the Political Machine

Read: The Rise and Fall of Urban Political Patronage Machines, pp. 427-445

Primary Sources: Nast: Cartoons of Boss Tweed, 1871

Riordan: Strenuous Life of a Tammany District Leader, 1905

WEEK 10

Tuesday Oct 19: Lecture: Immigrants

Read: OxH Gilded Age and Progressive Era pp. 120-122

OxH Ethnic Policy pp. 295-305

OxH Immigration Policy pp. 371-376

Primary Sources: Nast: Uncle Sam's Thanksgiving Dinner, 1869

Nast: Uncle Sam Explains Immigration, 1877

O'Brien Named First Boston Irish Mayor, 1884

Phelan: Excluding Chinese Residents, 1901

Thursday Oct 21: Lecture: Third Parties (Part 2): Fusion and Populists

Read: OxH Third Parties pp. 227-238

Primary Sources: Dispatch from Mississippi Colored Farmers' Alliance, 1889

Omaha Platform of the People's Party, 1892

Bryan, Cross of Gold Speech 1896

WEEK 11

Tuesday Oct 26: Lecture: Democratic Party and Segregation

Read: Wood – The South pp. 44-52

Primary Sources: Massachusetts, Australian Ballot, 1888
Watson, The Negro Question in the South, 1892
Washington: My Views on Segregation, 1915

Thursday Oct 28: Lecture: Rise of the Progressives

Read: Critchlow pp. 85-89

OxH Gilded Age and Progressive Era pp. 123-131

OxH Third Parties pp. 232-233

Primary Sources: Pennypacker: Veto of State Eugenics Law, 1905
Report of NY State Factory Investigating Committee (Triangle
Shirtwaist Fire), 1916 (pp. 81-83)

Second Writing Assignment Due (upload .docx file to Canvas)

WEEK 12

Tuesday Nov 2: Lecture: Women's Movement and Voting Rights

Read: Keyssar, The Right to Vote Ch. 6 pp. 196-221

OxH Gender and Political Citizenship 354-356

Primary Sources: Blackwell: Answering Objections to Women's Suffrage, 1917
Eastman: Now We Can Begin, 1920

Thursday Nov 4: Lecture: Great Depression and the New Deal

Read: Critchlow pp. 93-102

OxH Depression and War pp. 135-146

Primary Sources: Roosevelt: Commonwealth Club Speech, 1932
Great Depression Interviews – Franklin, Perriello, Silverman, Vidal

WEEK 13

Tuesday Nov 9: Lecture: World War II and the Cold War

Read: Critchlow pp. 102-112

OxH Depression and War pp. 146-149

Party Politics and National Policy pp. 151-155

Primary Sources: Randolph & Roosevelt: Discrimination in Defense Industry, 1941
Margaret Chase Smith: Declaration of Conscience, 1950

Thursday Nov 11: Lecture: Civil Rights Movement

Read: Critchlow pp. 113-116

OxH Voting Rights pp. 208-210

OxH Third Parties pp. 234-237

Primary Sources: States' Rights Democratic Party Platform, 1948

Jackson Advocate Dixiecrat Party No Encouragement (1948)

Robinson: Montgomery Bus Boycott, 1954

Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party Agenda, 1964

WEEK 14

Tuesday Nov 16: Lecture: Movements of the 1960s and early 1970s

Read: OxH Gender and Politics pp. 356-364

Primary Sources: National Organization for Women – Statement of Purpose, 1966

Seattle Gay Liberation Front Program Platform Statement, 1970

Thursday Nov 18: Lecture: Rise of Conservatism

Read: Critchlow pp. 116-121

OxH Party Politics and National Policy pp. 155-157

OxH Religion and American Politics pp. 287 (Culture Wars)-290

Primary Sources: Goldwater: Republican National Convention Address, 1964

Schlafly: What's Wrong with Equal Rights for Women, 1972

WEEK 15

Tuesday Nov 23: Lecture: Conservatives in Power

Read: Critchlow pp. 122-126

Primary Sources: Reagan: First Inaugural Address, 1981

Buchanan: On the Culture War, 1992

Thursday Nov 25: Thanksgiving Holiday – NO CLASS

WEEK 16

Tuesday Nov 30: Summary Review – Final Exam Posted

Tuesday Dec 7: FINAL EXAM DUE

COVID Class Policies (Required Syllabus Statement)

As we return for fall 2021, the campus community must recognize and address continuing concerns about physical and emotional safety, especially as we will have many more students, faculty, and staff on campus than in the last academic year. As such, all students, faculty, and staff are required to uphold UNCG's culture of care by actively engaging in behaviors that limit the spread of COVID-19. Such actions include, but are not limited to, the following:

- [Following face-covering guidelines](#)
- Engaging in proper hand-washing hygiene when possible
- Self-monitoring for symptoms of COVID-19
- Staying home if you are ill
- Complying with directions from health care providers or public health officials to quarantine or isolate if ill or exposed to someone who is ill.

Instructors will have seating charts for their classes. These are important for facilitating contact tracing should there be a confirmed case of COVID-19. Students must sit in their assigned seats at every class meeting and must not move furniture. Students should not eat or drink during class time.

To make it easier for students to hear their instructor and/or read lips and if conditions permit, instructors who are fully vaccinated and who can maintain at least six feet of distance from students may remove their masks while actively teaching if they choose, but will wear a mask at all other times while in the classroom, including during the periods before and after class

A limited number of disposable masks will be available in classrooms for students who have forgotten theirs. Face coverings will also be available for purchase in the UNCG Campus Bookstore. Students who do not follow masking requirements will be asked to put on a face covering or leave the classroom to retrieve one and only return when they follow the basic requirements to uphold standards of safety and care for the UNCG community. Once students have a face covering, they are permitted to re-enter a class already in progress. Repeated issues may result in conduct action. The course policies regarding attendance and academics remain in effect for partial or full absence from class due to lack of adherence with face covering and other requirements.

For instances where the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (OARS) has granted accommodations regarding wearing face coverings, students should contact their instructors to develop appropriate alternatives to class participation and/or activities as needed. Instructors or the student may also contact OARS (336.334.5440) who, in consultation with Student Health Services, will review requests for accommodations.

Class Policies

Academic Integrity: Cheating, plagiarism, and other acts of academic dishonesty are serious offenses that compromise your ability to learn. While this class may have some opportunities involving group work, most assignments are individual, and you are expected to complete your own work. You should also cite your sources to give credit to the originators of source material. You will turn in your assignments through Canvas, so that the Turnitin app can review your papers and exams to ensure it has no plagiarized content. **If you do not understand or have confusion about what plagiarism is, please see me. I'll gladly spend the time to explain what situations constitute plagiarism and how to avoid them (good citations are essential).**

Also, let me suggest that you watch "Plagiarism 2.0: Information Ethics in the Digital Age" (link below):

<https://login.libproxy.uncg.edu/login?url=https://fod.infobase.com/PortalPlaylists.aspx?wID=102633&xtid=43790>

(Beware specifically "Patch Writing" a form of plagiarism that plagues undergraduates, starting at 4:30). See also chapter from Rampolla at top of Canvas page. (my text: I find the Rampolla excellent, and will attach

Enrollment in this course and submission of each written assignment constitute your acceptance of UNCG's Academic Integrity Policy. You can find the full Academic Integrity Policy here:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B0rFGGhJvbDHUExSZmFFaWFmb00/view>

Attendance Policy: You are expected to attend every class. Your success in this course depends in part on your ability to regularly attend class. Please inform me of an absence in advance when possible. I will excuse three (3) absences during the semester with no questions asked. **If you encounter extenuating circumstances that result in more than three total absences, you should contact me in writing.** Otherwise, every absence above three for the semester will result in a reduction of your course grade.

Classroom Conduct: I expect students to assist in maintaining a classroom environment that is conducive to learning. In order to assure that all students have the opportunity to gain from time spent in class, please avoid distracting your fellow students and me. I will ask students to leave class if their behavior is disruptive. Please review the Disruptive Behavior in the Classroom Policy for additional information.

Communications: Make sure you read your email regularly. I will primarily use Canvas tools to provide you with information. For example, I will make periodic

announcements regarding important course information using the “Announcements” function. I will provide feedback on your assignments using comments. I may also send you an email message via Canvas or your UNCG email address . It is your responsibility to monitor and read all of these communications in a timely manner.

I will gladly respond to your Canvas or campus emails. Please allow me a full day to respond (or two on weekends and holidays). I will try to reply sooner.

I also encourage you to contact me for an office hours. My regular office hours are on Mondays from 1-2 p.m. and on Tuesdays, and Thursdays, I will be available before class from 2:30-3:30 p.m.

Late Work: All papers and discussion posts are due at the start of class on the date listed on the syllabus. You must complete the midterm and final exam on the dates listed on the syllabus. If you need more time, contact me, as we may be able to negotiate some latitude. For unexcused late assignments, I will deduct 3% of the value of an assignment for each day that assignment is late up to a 20% total deduction.

Syllabus Modifications: I reserve the right to modify or alter any part of the syllabus as the course progresses. It is your responsibility to keep up with class announcements about any alterations. Any modifications will appear on the Canvas syllabus page. **Always check Canvas first for any changes and for deeper questions and guidelines.**

Technology: I welcome the use of technology in the classroom to the degree that it facilitates your learning and does not impede or distract the class. I expect that many of you will use laptops or tablets for notetaking and document reading purposes and I welcome this use of technology. Please refrain from playing unrelated videos or engaging with your social media accounts while in the classroom. If you need to urgently communicate with someone, please step out of class until you complete your communications. If I find that your device usage distracts me or your classmates, I'll ask you to stop what you are doing. Focusing on my lecture and our discussions will greatly improve your ability to understand the class content and to succeed in your class assignments.

Resources for You

History Department: Have you considered majoring or minoring in history? It's easier than you think! Browse our website and Facebook page for more information. Feel free to reach out to any professor to discuss how history might fit into your study plans. (<https://his.uncg.edu>)

Jackson Library: The library (<https://library.uncg.edu/>) is available to help you with research needs. In particular, you might find the History Resources (<https://uncg.libguides.com/his>) page helpful with brief descriptions of primary sources, secondary sources, and a reference guide for Chicago-Turabian style of source documentation.

Office Hours: My office hours are an opportunity for you to visit with me outside of class to discuss concerns or questions you have about the class. I am available during these times if you want to drop by my office. I can also meet with you outside of office hours; but I ask that you make an appointment.

UNCG Writing Center: Offers students assistance with writing assignments. Please contact them to set an appointment. (<https://writingcenter.uncg.edu/>)

UNCG Speaking Center: Offers students assistance in improving your public speaking skills. (<https://speakingcenter.uncg.edu/>)

Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (OARS): If you have any needs or questions related to disability issues, please contact the folks at OARS. I prioritize making this course accessible to all of the students in it, and I will work with OARS to accommodate students' requests. You do not need to disclose details about your disability to me to receive accommodations. (<https://ods.uncg.edu/>)

Student Health Services: Offers students assistance with can help with these or other issues you may experience. You can learn about the free, confidential mental health services available on campus by calling 336-334-5874, visiting their website at <https://shs.uncg.edu/>

Health and Wellness: Issues regarding your health and well-being may impact your ability to learn, and during your time in the university, you may experience one or more situations that can impede your academic success. These might include illnesses, strained relationships, anxiety, high levels of stress, alcohol or drug problems, feeling down, or loss of motivation. Student Health Services and The Counseling Center can help with these or other issues you may experience. You can learn about the free, confidential mental health services available on campus by calling 336-334-5874, visiting their website at <https://shs.uncg.edu/> or visiting them at the Anna M. Gove Student Health Center at 107 Gray Drive. For undergraduate or

graduate students in recovery from alcohol and other drug addiction, The Spartan Recovery Program (SRP) offers recovery support services. You can learn more about recovery and recovery support services by visiting <https://shs.uncg.edu/srp> or reaching out to recovery@uncg.edu.