

# Topics in American History American Political Parties

**Fall 2022**

**Asynchronous Online Class:** This course is entirely online and asynchronous. We have no formal meeting times. You as a student are responsible for logging in regularly and completing your coursework on time. I as your instructor will provide information via Canvas to detail what class materials you should read, watch, and submit for each week to maintain progress in this course.

**Instructor:** Mr. Robert Skelton/ Office: MHRA 3103 / email: [rdskelto@uncg.edu](mailto:rdskelto@uncg.edu)  
Office Hours: By appointment between 10 am and 7pm, Mon-Fri.

**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? What interests did these parties represent? 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 voters disillusioned with one or both major parties, now is a great time to look at the history of party formation, representation, leadership, and the factors that shaped and altered the parties over time. We will examine the key role 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 changed their ideologies and constituencies over time. An otherwise obscure Martin Van Buren shaped party organizing in manners still seen today. Presidents Lincoln and Roosevelt led majority Congresses to increase federal power to tackle two of the nation's toughest challenges, the Civil War and the Great Depression. Partisan backlash ensued as opposition parties regained strength. Also, while federal politics will predominate this course, we will examine how state- and local-level partisan politics often more directly impact people's lives than what occurs at a federal level.

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## **Learning Objectives and Course Outcomes**

This course is built to meet the learning objectives and competencies listed below. They are derived from the Minerva's Academic Curriculum and are common with other UNCG courses.

### **Student Learning Objectives and Competencies (GHP, GMO, MDEQ, CW, WI)**

#### **Historical Perspectives (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

#### **Diversity and Equity (MDEQ)**

Courses in this competency focus on systems of advantage and oppression, structures of power, and institutions while making connections to US or global societies and examining intellectual traditions that address systems of injustice. These courses equip students with the intellectual skills and tools needed to connect both their positionalities and experiences as they reimagine their relationships with the world.

In a Diversity & Equity course, students will:

1. Describe how political, social, or cultural systems and structures, in the past or present, have advantaged and oppressed different groups of people.
2. Describe how political, social, or cultural systems, in the past or present, have produced and sustained ideas of difference and, in the face of that, how marginalized groups have meaningfully engaged in self-definition.
3. Examine individual and collective responses for addressing practices of disenfranchisement, segregation, or exclusion.

#### **Course Learning Outcomes**

1. Analyze US political parties from the founding to the early 2000s 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 and Expectations

### 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 Critchlow book is available via hardcopy and digitally through the UNCG Bookstore and through online booksellers. The Baker/Critchlow edited volume sections 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.

### Instructor Expectations:

- I will provide feedback on discussion posts within 24-48 business hours after they are due and within 2 weeks for papers and exams.
- I will monitor all discussion posts and provides feedback when appropriate.
- I will answer all emails from you students within 24 business hours on weekdays and 48 hours on weekends.
- I will use Canvas announcements to send any course updates and new information as early in the week as possible.

### Student Expectations:

- Plan to spend at least 3-5 hours a week completing this course. This time includes reviewing the module, submitting your assignments, and participating in the discussions.
- If you are unable to meet a deadline or experience a personal issue that might affect your ability to complete coursework, please notify me immediately.
- Be respectful of others in your discussion posts and replies. Your feedback should be constructive and sensitive. Think about the replies that you would want to receive. Please review these [netiquette guidelines](#) for the course.
- If you have a specific question about your course, email me. If you have a general question about the specific topic that week, use the Q & A discussion forum so that everyone can share their answers. Your question and the answer may benefit others in the course.

## Assignments

**Syllabus Quiz: (5%)** I will assign a single open book quiz this semester, and it will help you get acquainted with key points from the syllabus. This quiz will emphasize those areas that you might need to refer back to during the course of the semester. You need to read the syllabus, take the quiz, and score more than 70% on the quiz to access the remainder of the course.

**Discussion Posts: (25%)** Every week, you will respond to a discussion prompt on Canvas by posting a 150-word response to a question(s) concerning the readings for that week along with two 50+word responses to your classmates. I'll open a discussion assignment at the beginning of the week (Monday) for each discussion section, and it will close it on Sunday at 11:59 p.m. I will use your discussion posts as the principal means to evaluate your participation.

In your initial post, you should respond thoughtfully and specifically to the question by referring to the assigned readings. Effective discussion post answers do the following: 1) Answer the question directly; 2) Include examples from your readings; 3) Take a position on the issue in question, and 4) back up the position with information from the readings.

In your responses to your classmates, reply to their posts in a way that deepens the analysis, clarify differences, or reference important examples may result in extra credit. Feel free to agree or disagree but use good netiquette if you disagree.

**Writing Assignment 1 (15%):** The first writing assignment will be a podcast analysis that you will write a 500-600 essay in response to an episode from the Now and Then Podcast. 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 750-900 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: (20%)** The midterm exam will be an 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: (20%)** The final exam will be an 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.

## **Grading Scheme**

**Mid-Term Grade:** In keeping with UNCG policy, I will post a midterm grade for you in UNCGenie by the end of the sixth week of the term (September 23rd). That grade will not appear on your transcript or in your GPA calculations. Instead, it is intended to help you and your academic advisor understand how you are doing in the course up to that point. If you review your midterm grade and find it to be lower than you hoped, I encourage you to talk to me so we can make a plan together for your success.

**Final Grade:** I will post final grades to UNCGenie approximately one week after the final exam is due. I use a 1000-point grading system, so each percentage point of your grade is worth 10 points. As a result, each exam will offer up to 250 points each, the writing assignments will offer up to 150 points each, and the overall attendance and discussion posts will offer up to 20 points each or 200 points collectively. You need to gain at least 600 points to pass, 700 points to earn a C, 800 points to earn a B, and 900 points to earn an A grade.

### **Grades follow this scale:**

A+ = 97% and above;	A = 94-96%;	A- = 90-93%;
B+ = 87-89%;	B = 84-86%;	B- = 80-83%;
C+ = 77-79%;	C = 74-76%;	C- = 70-73%;
D+ = 67-69%;	D = 64-66%;	D- = 60-63%;
F = <60%		

## 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 – 16-21 Aug – Introduction, Political Parties, & Constitutions**

#### **Tuesday 16 Aug – First Day of Class**

Read: Syllabus

Stearns – Why Study History? (1998)

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

Lectures: Posted in Canvas

Primary Sources: US Constitution

Virginia Constitution and Declaration of Rights

Video: *A New System of Government* (0 – 22:40)

### **WEEK 2 – 22-28 Aug – The Early Republic**

#### **Monday 22 Aug – Last day to change or drop course with refund**

Read: Klarman, *The Framers' Coup* (Introduction)

Critchlow, *American Political History* pp. 1-17, 18-26

Oxford Handbook (OxH) Early Republic pp. 45-50

Lectures: Posted on Canvas

Primary Sources: Franklin Statement: Constitutional Convention, 1787

Madison: Federalist #10, 1787

Federal Farmer IX – Anti-Federalist Letter, 1788

Washington: Farewell Address, 1796

Video: *James Madison Discusses Ratification & The Federalist Papers...* (1:00-31:45)

### **WEEK 3 – 29 Aug – 4 Sep – First Political Parties**

Lectures: Posted on Canvas

Read: McDonald, *States' Rights and the Union* (1-6, 71-96)

OxH Early Republic pp. 50-57

Primary Sources: Letter from Danbury Baptist Association to Thomas Jefferson

Letter from Thomas Jefferson to the Danbury Baptist Association

Madison: State of Union Address, 1816

Madison: Veto of Internal Improvements Bill, 1817

Videos: Harris, *The Founding Fathers and the Debate...* (10 min)

**WEEK 4 – 5-11 Sep – Party System and Democracy in America**

**Monday 5 Sep: Labor Day (no meetings or assignments due)**

Lectures: Posted in Canvas

Read: Hofstadter – *Toward a Party System*, pp. 212-252  
Critchlow pp. 32-45

Primary Sources: Tennessee General Assembly Protest Against the Caucus, 1823  
Van Buren: Letter to Thomas Ritchie, 1827  
Everett – Removing Indians to West of Mississippi, 1830  
Lumpkin, Removal of Cherokee Indians from Georgia, 1835

Videos: *The American President...The Professional Politician* (0-9:18)  
Perdue, *The Cherokee Nation and the Trail of Tears*

**First Writing Assignment Due**

**WEEK 5 – 12-18 Sep – 19<sup>th</sup> Century Social Movements and Male Suffrage**

Lectures: Posted in Canvas

Read: Keyssar – *The Right to Vote* Ch 3 pp. 53-76  
OxH Politics of Slavery pp. 79-87  
OxH Religion and American Politics pp. 281-282

Primary Sources: Rhode Islanders Protest Property Restrictions, 1834  
Black Philadelphians Defend Their Voting Rights, 1838  
Virginia Constitution, 1851

Videos: *Shaping America:...Lesson 17, Perfecting America* (0-28:25)  
*The Dorr Rebellion* (0-19)

**WEEK 6 – 19-25 Sep – Slavery and Third Parties**

Lectures: Posted in Canvas

Read: Keyssar – *The Right to Vote* Ch. 4 pp. 81-87  
Critchlow pp. 46-59

Primary Sources: Petition to End Gag Rule, 1838  
Compromise of 1850 Acts  
Douglass, The Slavery Party Speech, 1853  
Know-Nothing National Platform, 1855  
Democratic, Republican, and Whig Party Platforms of 1856

Videos: Douglass, *What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?* (3:50-34:00)

## **WEEK 7 – 26 Sep-2 Oct – Republicans and Civil War**

### **Monday 26 Sep - Midterm Exam Posted to Canvas**

Lectures: Posted in Canvas

Read: Keyssar – *The Right to Vote* Ch. 4 pp. 87-107  
Critchlow pp. 60-67

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

Video: Lincoln, “Dubious Legality of the Emancipation Proclamation”  
Foner, “Lincoln, The Republican Party, & the War”

## **WEEK 8 – 3-9 Oct – Reconstruction and African American Suffrage**

### **Monday Oct 3: Midterm Due**

Lectures: Posted in Canvas

Read: Critchlow pp. 67-73  
OxH Civil War and Reconstruction pp. 103-111  
OxH Gilded Age and Progressive Era pp. 115-120

Primary Sources: North Carolina Black Codes, 1865  
Colored Convention Meeting with House Committee, 1869  
Elias Keils Letter to Attorney General Williams, 1874  
Martin Gary Plan of Campaign, 1876  
Cainhoy Riots Reporting, NY Times & NY Herald, 1876

Video: “Reconstruction: America After the Civil War,” Part 1 Hour 2 (0-55)

**Friday Oct 7: Last day to withdraw from a course without incurring a WF grade**

## **WEEK 9 – 10-16 Oct – 19<sup>th</sup> Century Urban Politics and Immigrants**

### **Monday 10 Oct & Tuesday 11 Oct: FALL BREAK (NO ASSIGNMENTS DUE)**

Lectures: Posted in Canvas

Read: Reid/Kurth “Rise and Fall of Urban Political Patronage Machines” (427-445)  
Critchlow pp. 74-81  
OxH Ethnic Policy pp. 295-305

Primary Sources: Nast: Cartoons of Boss Tweed, 1871  
Riordan: Strenuous Life of a Tammany District Leader, 1905  
Nast: Uncle Sam’s Thanksgiving Dinner, 1869  
O’Brien Named First Boston Irish Mayor, 1884  
Phelan: Excluding Chinese Residents, 1901



Videos: Richardson, "How the Gilded Age Created the Progressive Era" (47:13)

## **WEEK 10 – 17-23 Oct – Populists and Segregation**

Lectures: Posted in Canvas

Read: Ali, *In the Lion's Mouth: Black Populism in the New South, 1886-1900* (Intro)  
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  
Watson, The Negro Question in the South, 1892  
Washington: My Views on Segregation, 1915

Video: "Does 'The Wonderful Wizard of Oz' Have a Hidden Message?" (4:43)  
Blackmon, "Slavery By Another Name" Intro (6:45); film (14:00-36:41)  
Bryan, "Cross of Gold" Speech, audio of W. J. Bryan (9:41)

## **WEEK 11 – 24-30 Oct – The Progressives and Women's Suffrage**

Lectures: Posted in Canvas

Read: Keyssar, *The Right to Vote* Ch. 6 pp. 196-221  
Critchlow pp. 84-91  
OxH Gilded Age and Progressive Era pp. 123-131

Primary Sources: Massachusetts, Australian Ballot, 1888  
Pennypacker: Veto of State Eugenics Law, 1905  
Report of NY State Factory Investigating Committee (Triangle Shirtwaist Fire), 1916 (pp. 81-83)  
Blackwell: Answering Objections to Women's Suffrage, 1917  
Eastman: Now We Can Begin, 1920

Videos: "The United States Children's Bureau...", Dig: A History Podcast (31:48)

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

## **WEEK 12 – 31 Oct – 6 Nov – Wars and the Great Depression**

Lectures: Posted in Canvas

Read: Katznelson, *Fear Itself*, Introduction pp. 3-23  
Critchlow pp. 90-104

Primary Sources: Roosevelt: "Purging The Democratic Party" under videos  
Great Depression Interviews – Franklin, Perriello, Silverman, Vidal

Videos: FDR Library: "FDR and World War II" (32:16)

Roosevelt, Fireside Chat “Purging the Democratic Party” (8:02)  
(Optional): Full fireside chat (27:34)

### **WEEK 13 – 7-13 Nov – Cold War and Civil Rights**

Lectures: Posted in Canvas

Read: Heale, *McCarthy’s Americans* (Preface, Ch. 1) pp. xi-xvii, 7-27  
Critchlow pp. 105-119  
OxH Depression and War pp. 146-149

Primary Sources: Margaret Chase Smith: Declaration of Conscience, 1950  
States’ Rights Democratic Party Platform, 1948  
Jackson Advocate Dixiecrat Party No Encouragement (1948)  
Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party Agenda, 1964

Videos: PBS NewsHour “Kennedy-Nixon 1960 First Presidential Debate” (58:11)

### **WEEK 14 – 14-20 Nov – 20<sup>th</sup> Century Social Movements and Conservatism**

Lectures: Posted in Canvas

Read: Mackenzie and Weisbrot, *The Liberal Hour* (Introduction) pp. 1-11  
Critchlow pp. 120-126  
Peterson et al “*As Tough As It Gets*”: *Women in Boston Politics...* (1-4, 10-21)  
OxH Religion and American Politics pp. 287 (Culture Wars)-290

Primary Sources: Milk, “Harvey Milk for Supervisor”  
Milk, “On Gay Caucus and Gay Power”  
Reagan: First Inaugural Address, 1981

Videos: Buchanan: “On the Culture War,” 1992 (35:33) (Primary source)

### **WEEK 15 – 21-27 Nov – Populists and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Politics**

Lectures: Posted in Canvas

Read: McNall, *Cultures of Defiance and Resistance* (Intro) pp. 1-13  
Skocpol & Williamson, *The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism* (Intro), pp. 1-12  
Critchlow pp. 126-133

Primary Sources: Obama, “Speech at 2004 DNC” (18:47)

Videos: Grosshans, “The Tea Party Movement” VOA (4:57)  
Kazin, “Occupy Wall Street Political Movement?” (4:15)

**Nov 24-25: Thanksgiving Holiday – NO CLASS**

**WEEK 16 – 28-30 Nov**

Summary Review – Final Exam Posted

**Tuesday Dec 7: FINAL EXAM DUE**

## 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).**

Please review "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>. *(Specifically focus on "Patch Writing" a form of plagiarism that plagues undergraduates, starting at 4:30).*

By enrolling in this course and submitting an assignment, you as the student acknowledge your understanding and commitment to the Academic Integrity Policy on all major work for the course. Refer to the following URL:

<https://osrr.uncg.edu/academic-integrity/>.

**Accommodations:** UNCG seeks to comply fully with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students requesting accommodations based on a disability must connect with the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (OARS) in 215 Elliott University Center, (336)334-5440, <https://oars.uncg.edu>.

**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, discussion posts, and exams are due by the date posted on Canvas. 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.

**Religious Obligations:** I will make reasonable accommodations for students who have conflicts due to religious obligations. Please make arrangements with me in advance of any conflict. For more information on UNCG's Religious Obligations policy, visit:

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B3\\_J3Uix1B4UeTV4Nk1vVFJoVFE/view?resourcekey=0-zRdXEmUA6rRI2RzKqo6u3g](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B3_J3Uix1B4UeTV4Nk1vVFJoVFE/view?resourcekey=0-zRdXEmUA6rRI2RzKqo6u3g).

**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 in Canvas. **Always check Canvas first for changes and guidelines.**

### **COVID and Other Illnesses**

**Since this is an asynchronous online class, I plan to handle COVID as I would most other illnesses. Let me know if you cannot complete classwork due to COVID or any other illness, and we will arrange for you to complete your work without late penalties. The official UNCG COVID policy is stated below:**

### **Required UNCG Syllabus Language regarding COVID**

As we return for Fall 2022, all students, faculty, and staff and all visitors to campus are required to uphold UNCG's culture of care by actively engaging in behaviors that limit the spread of COVID-19. While face-coverings are optional in most areas on campus, individuals are encouraged to wear masks. All individuals and visitors to campus are asked to follow the following actions:

- Engaging in proper hand-washing hygiene.
- Self-monitoring for symptoms of COVID-19.
- Staying home when 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.
- Completing a self-report when experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, testing positive for COVID-19, or being identified as a close contact of someone who has tested positive.
- Staying informed about the University's policies and announcements via the COVID-19 website.

Students who are ill, quarantining, or isolating should not attend in-person class meetings but should instead contact their instructor(s) so alternative arrangements for learning and the submission of assignments can be made where possible.

As we continue to manage COVID-19 on our campus, we are following the lead of the local health department and we will adjust our plans to balance student success, instructional requirements, and the hallmarks of the collegiate experience with the safety and wellbeing of our campus community.

## 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](mailto:recovery@uncg.edu).