Summary Statement

I have (at least) two strong convictions about the study of political parties. The first is that parties offer a particularly good vehicle for studying the politics of democratic society. The reason, simply, is that parties are the principal linkage between citizens and elites in the struggle to decide who will control the formal institutions of government. For the citizens, parties are an organized expression of collective interests--sometimes coherent, sometimes disjointed. At elections these grievances and aspirations are presented for public inspection and it is then that observers can discover what matters and what is ignored in a polity. At the elite end of the linkage, parties are the institutions through which elites coordinate their activities as they attempt to appeal to and satisfy the interests and grievances of their support base. Observing how the elites articulate grievances, mobilize the concerned, and craft public policy alternatives offers one of the best ways to learn about the politics of a society. In short, the study of political parties is in many ways the study of democratic governance.

The second conviction is that, having said all of the above, the study of political parties is exceedingly broad and very difficult to boil down into a nice, neat, semester-long package. Decisions must therefore be made on what is more or less important, a value judgement about which I am somewhat uncomfortable. The syllabus reflects these convictions; it focuses upon parties as linkage institutions in a representative setting (some would disapprove) and it touches some topics while leaving others out, with no justification beyond the time limit imposed by the length of the semester. Anyone interested in topics that are not covered here should feel free to come talk to me.

Student Responsibilities

As with all graduate seminars, this one will be premised on extensive reading and preparation, participation in seminar discussions, and writing and research.

Participation (20% of final grade)

It is my strong feeling that seminars should be more about what you think of the readings and less about what I think of them. In other words, the quality of the seminar will depend largely upon the level of participation of the students. Everyone is expected to prepare the assigned readings by the day of the seminar and be willing and able to participate meaningfully in discussions. Note that it is my experience that waiting until the day before the seminar to begin the readings is not a very good way to facilitate this goal. Our objective is to emerge from each meeting with a solid understanding of each article/chapter, not only individually but also how they might be integrated. In my opinion, one of the major differences between graduate and undergraduate training is that you are now expected to do more than merely summarize readings and other people's opinions. Rather, you are expected to analyze the readings--for both their strengths and weaknesses--and evaluate them with your own insights.

Agenda Papers (25% of final grade)
Each class member will choose one seminar meeting at which to present a brief paper on the assigned readings. The paper should be an overview and critical analysis of the week's readings in which you develop and support a line of argument concerning the material. Importantly, this paper should be more than a mere summary of the readings. It should be a coherent, analytical treatment of the topic intended to stimulate discussion. Thus, a good agenda paper will contain the following: (1) a brief summary of each article; (2) an analysis/critique of the material; and most importantly, (3) a well-developed line of argument that attempts to draw the readings together. As discussion leader, you will be expected to summarize the most important theoretical arguments in the required readings for your week as well as to lead class discussion of those readings. The discussion leader is encouraged to use instructional aides such as handouts.

The paper should be roughly 8-10 typewritten pages. In order to give your classmates adequate time to prepare their critiques (see below) of your work, papers should be distributed to them (and me) by Monday afternoon prior to the next day's class meeting. In the seminar, paper presenters should be prepared to give an oral summary of their papers and help lead the discussion. [Note: except under extreme circumstances (to be defined by me), agenda papers that are not turned in on time for the class to prepare critiques will not be accepted.

Critiques (20% of final grade)
To encourage timely reading of each week's material as well as to develop your analytical skills, each class member will submit a series of critiques of the weekly agenda papers. These critiques should offer opinions and thoughts about the summary, analysis, and line of reasoning offered in the agenda paper for that week, as well as your own brief analyses of the week's readings. These will be due on the day of the seminar and should be roughly 3-4 typewritten pages.

Research Design (35% of final grade)
One goal of any graduate seminar should be to engage in the research enterprise. Each week our meetings will be about honing your skills in analyzing other peoples' research. One of the most important aspects of the class will be how you put these insights to work in your own research. As such, each student will be responsible for producing a research design. Note that we are not talking about annotated bibliographies or literature reviews here, but a research project in which you study a body of literature, develop a well-reasoned argument, and then set about to design a test of your ideas in an empirical fashion. What I am looking for here is a sophisticated treatment of a problem of interest to you in any area of party politics. My goal here is to get you positioned to produce a manuscript that will result in a conference paper or publication. We will take the first step here – the generation of a topic and design of the study. Anybody interested in addressing the next stages – data gathering and analysis – is encouraged to do so.

A final note on grading: It is my strong belief that as political scientists we must be held accountable not only for the quality of our ideas and analyses, but for our ability to express them. Unfortunately, as you will soon discover in your readings, many in the profession fall woefully short in this latter area. I do not expect you to be among this group. As such, I will be taking grammar and spelling into account on all written assignments. As I hand back your weekly assignments they will be marked for grammatical errors. I expect you to pay attention to these markings and use them to help you avoid habitual mistakes and improve your writing skills.

Ground Rules
Attendance: Assumed

Incompletes: In general, I do not have a philosophical problem with incompletes, so long as they are taken for the right purpose. In my mind, this means for someone who is well along in a research project and needs a little more time to bring it to fruition; it does not mean a student who hasn't gotten around to doing the work and is in a panic at the end of the semester. Based on these criteria incompletes may be given if necessary and at my discretion.

Required Readings: Readings will be taken from a variety of academic journals and texts and will be provided in the form of xerox copies when not available on JSTOR. In addition, you may wish to purchase the following:

Note: I reserve the right to modify the weekly readings detailed below as new materials come to my attention.

Part I: Foundations of Parties and Party Systems

Week 1 (Jan 14): Introduction

Madison, James. Federalist #10
Schattschneider, E. Party Government
   -Chapter 1: In Defense of Political Parties
   -Chapter 2: The Scholarly Commitment to Parties.
   -Chapter 1: A Theory of Political Parties
   -Chapter 7: Elections and Political Parties
   -Chapter 8: The Social Bases of Party Support
Week 2 (Jan 21):  The U.S. Party System

Schattschneider, E. *Party Government*
- Chapter 1: In Defense of Political Parties

- Chapter 2: The Scholarly Commitment to Parties.


- Chapter 1: "State Political Systems in a National Setting."

Additional

- Chapter 1: Introduction
- Chapter 2: Party Motivation and the Function of Government in Society
- Chapter 7: The Development of Political Ideologies as Means of Getting Votes


Lowi, T. "Party, Policy, and Constitution in America," also in Chambers and Burnham.


- Chapter 1: The Case For Parties


Part II: Parties as Organizations

Week 3 (Jan 28): National and State Organizations

National


State and Local (Not Required)


Week 4 (Feb. 4) Party Activists


- Chapter 6: Party Activists and Partisan Cleavages in Contemporary Elections


**Part III: The Party in the Electorate**

Week 5: (February 11): Mass Partisanship

Angus Campbell, et. al. *The American Voter*. Chapters 6 and 7


Additional


Week 6 (February 18): Aggregate Partisanship


Week 7 (Feb. 25): Party Change and Realignment I -- Critical Elections


Additional

Week 8 (March 4): Party Change and Realignment II -- Secular Realignment and Issue Evolution


Additional

Week 9 (March 11): Spring Break
Week 10 (March 18): No Class – meetings to develop and confirm paper topics
Week 11 (March 25) No Class – continued work on papers
Part IV: Parties and the Politics of Elections

Week 10 (March April 1)  Nominations and Campaigns


Additional


Note: for those of you interested in the politics of campaign finance, here are a few readings to check out.


Gierzynsky, Anthony. 1999. Money Rules

Week 11 (April 8)  Party Platforms and Candidate Positioning


Part V: The Party in Government

Week 12 (April 15) Parties in Congress


Week 13 (April 22)  Political Parties and the Politics of Divided Government: Causes


Additional


Week 14: (April 22)  Political Parties and the Politics of Divided Government: Causes


Sarah Binder, "The Dynamics of Legislative Gridlock, 1947-96," American Political Science Review, vol. 93, n. 3 (September 1999)


Additional


Week 15 (April 29): Paper Presentations