

University of Rochester PSQ/INTR 253/253W
Spring 2024
Meliora 218
Tuesday 2:40pm

Comparative Political Parties

Professor Meguid

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Office Hours: Mondays and Tuesdays 12:30 pm to 1:30 pm (please wear a mask)

Course Description

The purpose of this seminar is to familiarize students with the political instrument at the heart of representative democracy – the political party. We begin with the premise that most observant participants in democratic political systems have some idea about the role and functioning of the political party. But beyond this working knowledge of parties as election-time competitors, how much does one know about this political actor? What differentiates a party from other social groups? What are the different motivations for party formation? Why do certain parties emerge “naturally”, whereas other preference groups find party formation and success difficult? From this starting point, we will explore the historical development of parties and

However, no prior coursework on party politics or political systems is required to take this course.

Informed participation in class: Students are expected to attend and participate in all class meetings. This seminar places an emphasis on discussion and debate, and thus, active participation is essential and expected.

Many of the readings are challenging, and therefore, students should carefully read and take notes on the readings prior to attending class.

Please note that if you need to miss class due to illness, please notify me via email prior to the class. If you miss more than one class, this is more

Grading for the course will be determined as follows:

For 253 Students:

Participation:	25%
2 5-7 page papers:	50% total
Final Exam:	25%

For 253W Students:

Participation:	25%
2 5-7 page papers:	35% total
Final Exam	20%
13-15 page research paper	20%

Academic Honesty Policy

All assignments and activities associated with this course must be performed in accordance with the University of Rochester's Academic Honesty Policy. More information is available at: www.rochester.edu/college/honesty

In this course the following additional requirements are in effect:

You are encouraged to discuss course readings with your fellow students. However, all written work must be done independently and not in collaboration with another person, outside of Professor Meguid or Writing Fellows acting in their official capacity. For this course, AI, such as Chat GPT, may NOT be used. Use of AI at any stage in the writing process will be considered cheating. Not only does use of AI undermine the pedagogical purpose of the assignment, but be aware that AI is prone to "hallucinating" creating sources that do not exist, in addition to producing vague and unsatisfying papers.

Readings

In this course, we will read mainly book chapters and journal articles.

Journal articles and chapters in edited volumes are available through Blackboard (learn.rochester.edu, PSC/IR 253)

Part I. Foundations: Function and Form

What is a party? What differentiates it from other political actors, such as social movements and interest groups? What are the advantages and the limitations of definitions offered by different theories? What are the implications of these different conceptions for party interaction?

Week One: Introduction and Theoretical Foundations (Jan 23)

Downs, Anthony. An Economic Theory of Democracy. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957. Chapter [2](#). [LINK](#)

Schlesinger, J. "On the Theory of Party Organization." Journal of Politics 46:2 (1984): 369-400. [LINK](#)

Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels. The Communist Manifesto. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998 (1888). Parts I, II, and IV. [LINK](#) or any version you can find online.

Part II. Party Origins: Theories and Applications

How and why do parties come about? Are some types of parties more "natural" than others? Do we see a change in the reasons behind party formation or are the reasons for modern parties firmly established in the past? Are Western theories of party formation valid across non-Western cases? How do we rectify recently emerged parties with the

Bates, Robert H. "Modernization, Ethnic Competition and the Rationality of Politics in Contemporary Africa." In State versus Ethnic Claims: African Policy Dilemmas. Donald Rothchild and Victor Olorunsola. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1983. 71-152-
[LINK](#)

Part III. Parameters of Political Debate

Which issues get debated in the political arena? How does the ideological content of the political agenda change? Why do parties choose certain ideological positions over others? What drives their positioning: vote

No Class, April 9 – 2nd paper due by 5pm

IV. Recent Developments: Temporary Shifts or a True Transformation?

Do recent claims about changes in party systems and party organizations signify temporary shifts or the rearrangement of party politics? Are these trends restricted to advanced industrial democracies or are they occurring in other regions? Does party professionalization spell the end of representative political systems? Do empirical facts support these theoretical conclusions?

Week Ten Changes in Party System (April 16)

Rose, Richard and Derek Urwin, "Persistence and Change in Western Party Systems, 1945-69." In Peter Mair (ed), The West European Party System. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1990: 185-194.

Dalton, Russell and Martin Wattenberg (eds) Parties without Partisans. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000. Chapters 2, and 4 [LINK](#)

Abramowitz, Alan I. and Kyle L. Saunders. "Is Polarization a Myth?" *Journal of Politics* 70.2 (2008): 542-55. [LINK](#)

Week Twelve: (April 23) Changing Models of Party Organizations

Katz, Richard S. and Peter Mair. "Changing Models of Party Organization and Party Democracy." *Party Politics* 1.1 (1995): 528. [LINK](#)

Cross, William and Lisa Young. 2005. "Factors Influencing the Decision of the Young Politically Engaged To Join a Political Party: An Investigation of the Canadian Case." *Party Politics* 14(3): [LINK](#)

Scarrow, Susan E. 2019. "The Changing Nature of Political Party Membership." *Oxford Research Encyclopedias, Politics* 1:20. [LINK](#)

Week Thirteen: Political Party Challenges for Democracy and Representation and Course Wrap-up (April 30)

Levitsky, Steven and Daniel Ziblatt. 2018. How Democracies Die. New York: Crown. Chapters 1 and 2 [LINK](#)

Taub, Amanda and Max Fisher. "Facebook fueled anti-refugee attacks in Germany, new research suggests." *New York Times* 8/21/2018 [LINK](#)

***Research papers for the W students due April 2 by 5pm

*****Cumulative final exam for all students May 9 starting at 4 pm.**