

POLITICAL PARTIES AND INTEREST GROUPS (PSC 381)

Fall 2021, Concordia College

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This syllabus is the most important document you'll receive in PSC 381. It represents a contract between student and instructor. By taking this course, you are agreeing to the terms of the syllabus. You should review the syllabus carefully, and refer to it often during the semester.

Below, I describe what you should expect during our class meetings, and what I expect from you. I specify which chapters from the assigned readings we'll be covering each week. I discuss exactly how your final grade will be calculated. And I outline some important course and College-wide policies.

As the semester proceeds, I encourage you to stop by my office hours. To make an appointment during my office hours (either in-person or virtual), click on the following link: <https://concordia.campus.eab.com/pal/UGe9GygII5>.

Outside office hours, email (eschmid4@cord.edu) is the best way to reach me. Note that I don't answer emails after 7:30pm, but I will respond to student emails within 36 hours.

–Dr. Schmidt

Course Overview and Introduction

In 1942, the political scientist E.E. Schattschneider wrote that “**The political parties created democracy and modern democracy is unthinkable save in terms of the parties.**” People have said similar things about interest groups – that is, organizations that advocate specific policies, and mobilize public and governmental support for these policies. To paraphrase Schattschneider, modern democracy is unthinkable without both political parties and interest groups.

If this sounds surprising to you, you're not alone. While most U.S. citizens call themselves Republicans and Democrats, few people like political parties – and many believe that democracy would be better if parties either did not exist or had less control over the political process. For example, people often complain that the parties don't listen to ordinary voters, and that party leaders are selfish, aloof, arrogant, or corrupt. And while few voters support third parties on Election Day, polls suggest that the two-party system (i.e. near-exclusive competition between Republicans and Democrats)

Portions of this syllabus (the Written Assignments and weekly topic headings) first appeared on Professor Marjorie Hershey's syllabus for POLS-301 (*Political Parties and Interest Groups*, Indiana University) – taught, most recently, in fall 2020. Dr. Schmidt thanks Professor Hershey for permission to use them here.

is deeply unpopular. What is “democratic” about a system where only two parties are represented in government – and where third parties have virtually no opportunities to become more competitive?

Similarly, people accuse interest groups of subverting democracy. If you’re like most people, the term “interest group” probably elicits a negative reaction. People often believe that interest groups are shady and corrupt – wining-and-dining elected officials, buying support through campaign contributions, and pushing policies opposed by the majority of Americans. Or you might have noticed (correctly) that some interest groups, such as labor unions and large corporations, have far more resources than others. Why should these resources – whether financial or otherwise – determine which groups receive a fair hearing? After all, *people* vote; interest groups do not.

Political power does not fall from the sky – so it’s never wrong to question whether political organizations are legitimate. Representative government demands healthy skepticism, not blind trust. Nevertheless, **this course challenges you to take a nuanced perspective on political parties and interest groups.** After taking this class, you may or may not be convinced that political parties and interest groups are “good things.” But you *will* still have policies that you’d like to see government enact. Without parties, it would be more difficult for you (and most political scientists!) to determine which candidates support the same things you do. And without interest groups to keep your priorities on the policy agenda, very few of your preferred policies would ever become law.

With this in mind, we’ll consider Schattsneider’s argument: that democracy *requires* the very organizations that most voters wish would just disappear. But at the same time, we’ll discuss how political parties and interest groups fall short. For example, we’ll talk about the unequal resources that interest groups draw upon. You’ll learn why the most successful interest groups are often the least representative of the electorate – and why, depending on the issue, this isn’t necessarily a bad thing. Time and again, we’ll reflect on the differences between the parties-in-government, the party organizations, and citizens that support these parties on Election Day. Finally, we’ll consider the (increasingly) unhealthy levels of polarization between Republicans and Democrats – both in government and among the mass public. By the end of this course, you’ll be able to explain:

- **What political parties are – and why parties in the U.S. are so different from parties in other democracies.** What are the differences between the *parties-in-government*, the *party organizations*, and the *parties-in-the-electorate* – and why do these differences matter? And why does the U.S. only have two competitive parties?
- **What interest groups are – and how they fit into the governmental process.** How do interest groups form? Why do some interest groups succeed and not others? What strategies do interest groups use to influence lawmakers? How are interest groups different from other kinds of voluntary associations – such as broadly defined movements for social justice?
- **The practical benefits of political parties and interest groups.** If parties and interest groups did not exist, could representative government function? What do scholars mean when they say that parties “solve collective action problems?” And how might interest groups strengthen the connection between voters’ policy attitudes and the behavior of elected officials?
- **Why partisan polarization undermines the good things that parties do.** Why are the Republican and Democratic parties so polarized, and how does this polarization threaten civil discourse and democratic norms? Why do Republican and Democratic identifiers increasingly *hate* the opposing party, and why are modern parties so good at fostering this hatred?

- **Why political inequality complicates the role of interest groups in the governmental process.** How does interest group politics magnify long-standing inequalities – whether socioeconomic, cultural, or racial/ethnic? Is there “too much money in politics?” – or is the relationship between money and influence more complicated than meets the eye?

Moodle

You should familiarize yourself with the Moodle page for this course. As needed, I'll use Moodle to make announcements and updates. You'll use Moodle to submit both of your take-home exams, your four short papers, and your discussion questions for each week. And you can use Moodle to see your current grade. From time to time, I may also post optional additional readings (e.g., news articles, essays germane to class discussion) on Moodle.

Textbooks

This course has **three required texts**, all available at the Cobber Bookstore; copies are also available through online vendors like [Amazon](#) and [Book Scouter](#).

- Marjorie Randon Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, **18th ed.** (Routledge, 2020)
- Jeffrey M. Berry and Clyde Wilcox, *The Interest Group Society*, **6th ed.** (Routledge, 2018)
- Lilliana Mason, *Uncivil Agreement: How Politics Became Our Identity* (University of Chicago Press, 2018)

You must purchase the most recent editions of both *Party Politics in America* (18th edition) and *The Interest Group Society* (6th edition). Both textbooks are updated periodically to reflect important, emerging trends in U.S. politics – so any previous editions are out-of-date. **Please talk to me as soon as possible if you have any difficulties obtaining copies of the textbooks.**

If you do not purchase your books through the Cobber Bookstore, you should refer to the correct ISBN numbers to make sure you obtain the most recent editions. (Most online vendors allow you to enter the ISBN number instead of the book title.)

Hershey, *Party Politics in America*: 978-0367472573

Berry and Wilcox, *The Interest Group Society*: 978-1138691742

Mason, *Uncivil Agreement*: 978-0226524542

Expectations

This is an advanced, upper-level political science class. For most class sessions, you are required to:

- **Read (ahead of time) selections from the textbook, as indicated in the schedule below.** Most weeks, we'll cover about 100 pages from the assigned readings. Each week will cover a distinct topic or set-of-readings; you should complete the assigned readings by the first class of the week (in most cases, Monday).

- **Come prepared to participate in class discussion, and to discuss questions you've submitted for that week.** Each week, you're required to submit an (\approx) 1-2 paragraph discussion question on that week's readings (see **Discussion Questions**, below). Because I value your perspectives, I may invite you to say more about the questions you raise – especially when your questions help us reassess the material from novel, creative perspectives. This is not intended to put you on the spot; don't worry about being perfectly articulate or 100-percent confident about your initial question. Learning demands conversation, not perfection.
- **Keep up with current events by reading a daily national newspaper.** We will have regular discussions of current events, applying what we're learning to real-time political news.
 - Authoritative newspapers include the *New York Times*, *Financial Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, or *Washington Post*. (Opinion-oriented websites (such as Daily Kos, Salon, MSNBC, Fox News, or Drudge Report) are not acceptable; neither are local newspapers or student newspapers.) The campus library provides students **free online access** to the *New York Times*; [click this link](#) to log-in with your Cobbernet username and password.
 - Note: reading a newspaper does **not** require the same attention-to-detail as the textbook. You should not be spending three hours reading the *New York Times* from front-to-back! Rather, spend about 30 minutes reading your chosen paper (by focusing on the first 3 or 4 paragraphs of each article, and skipping things that are redundant or unimportant). **As you read/skim, take special note of current events that are relevant to course materials.**
- **Complete (very) short, frequent in-class writing assignments.** Participation is a graded part of this course, **and these exercises are your chance to participate.** To assess participation, I will often require the class to complete very short (4-5 minute) in-class writing assignments on discussion questions relevant to that day's topic (which I will then collect). These will not be graded for "correct" answers. Rather, they will help facilitate discussion and give me a clear sense of students' willingness to participate. **Remember to bring writing utensils and notebook paper to each class.**

Course Structure

Each class session will meet for 70 minutes. Please keep the following format and guidelines in mind. (Depending on how the semester unfolds, I reserve the right to modify this format – but for now, this should provide a general sense of how we're going to proceed.)

- **You are expected to show up for class on time.** If you arrive late, enter the classroom as quietly as possible.
- **Generally, classes will have an "interactive lecture" format.** I encourage you to take notes and ask questions. There is no need to copy down everything on my slides; the slides are meant to guide your understanding, not to function as a substitute for completing the assigned readings. **Without exception, slides will not be posted on Moodle.** Just focus on the "big picture" points and ask about areas that are unclear.
- **We'll sometimes break off into smaller groups** to brainstorm responses to discussion questions I pose to the class (usually after an in-class writing assignment). And we'll spend a not-inconsiderable amount of time linking the course material to current events.

- **Fridays will be especially interactive.** Expect Mondays and Wednesdays to be more lecture-heavy. On Fridays, we'll review that week's material – often with an extended, active learning exercise. Of course, you should always come to class prepared to be actively engaged; and you should always feel free to ask questions as we go along.

Written Assignments

Four short research papers will be required; papers should be 2-3 pages (double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12-point font). **Papers must be submitted on Moodle (in .doc or .docx) format, by 7:30pm CST on the respective due dates.** Sources for the papers include readings for this course, websites, media coverage, and any other relevant information you can find. **Any** sources you use in your papers must be cited appropriately. For more information on Concordia College's Academic Integrity policies, see <https://cobbernet.cord.edu/handbooks/student-handbook/academic-policies/>.

Paper #1: How do the two major parties' stands compare on an issue that matters to you? (Due Friday, September 17, 7:30pm CST)

- Pick an issue that interests you (e.g., tax cuts, a border wall, gun rights, private prisons, transgender rights, or any other question government deals with). Don't choose an issue at random! Pick something you truly care about, because **the issue you pick will be the basis for all subsequent written assignments too.**
- Read through the two parties' websites and their 2020 platforms. Identify the two parties' stances on the issue you've chosen.
- Cover these three questions in your short paper.
 - **First**, describe the national Democratic Party's and the national Republican Party's *specific* stand on this issue. (We know they both want national security, for instance; focus on what specific policies or actions each party proposes to accomplish its goal!)
 - **Second**, in what ways are the two parties' plans or positions on this issue substantially different from one another, and in what ways do their specific stands on this issue resemble one another (if any)?
 - **Third**, give an example or two to show whether each party's stand is specific and detailed or broad and general.
- **Party platforms:**
 - Democratic Party: <https://democrats.org/where-we-stand/party-platform/>
 - Republican Party (links to a PDF document): <https://gop.com/platform/>

Paper #2: How do minor parties feel about this issue – and do these parties provide a viable alternative? (Due Friday, October 1, 7:30pm CST)

- Choose a minor party (you'll find them listed below). Check out its website and platform.

- **First**, what is this minor party's *specific* stand on the issue you examined in your first paper?
- **Second**, in what ways does the minor party's stand resemble that of the Democratic Party's position or that of the Republican Party? Or does it offer a real alternative — a position different from that of both major parties?
- **Third**, do you see evidence that this particular minor party has run candidates in recent elections (whether national, state, or local)? In other words, does this minor party offer you a viable alternative to voting Democratic or Republican? Why or why not?

- **Minor Parties:**

- Libertarian Party: www.lp.org
- Green Party: www.gp.org
- Constitution Party: www.constitutionparty.com
- Working Families Party: www.workingfamiliesparty.org
- Communist Party: www.cpusa.org
- Prohibition Party: www.prohibitionparty.org
- Democratic Socialists of America: www.dsusa.org/
- American Reform Party: www.americanreformparty.net/
- American Independent Party: <http://aipca.org/>
- America's Party (a break-away from the American Independent Party): www.selfgovernment.us/
- U.S. Marijuana Party: www.usmjparty.com/
- Modern Whig Party: www.modernwhig.org/
- Veterans Party of America: <http://veteranspartyofamerica.org/>

Paper #3: How does an interest group feel about this issue – and which party/parties does this group support? (Due Friday, November 5, 7:30pm CST)

- Find an interest group that's concerned with the issue you researched for your first two papers. (Use a search engine to find media articles about your issue, and look for any groups mentioned in these articles as taking a stand on the issue.)
 - **First**, what *specific* stand does this group take on the issue?
 - **Second**, on the basis of the group's stand on this issue, create a hypothesis (an educated guess) as to whether this group would give campaign contributions or support mainly to Democratic candidates or to Republican candidates. Explain why you made this guess: in what ways does the group's stand resemble that of the Republicans or the Democrats?
 - **Third**, look up the group's political contributions or endorsements. You can find groups' political contributions listed on the website of the Center for Responsive Politics (<https://www.opensecrets.org/industries/index.php>; click on "or jump to an interest group.") If your group doesn't make campaign contributions, use a search engine to see if it makes independent expenditures or endorses candidates. If so, does it support mainly Republicans or Democrats? So was your hypothesis supported or not?

- **Examples of Interest Groups:**

- Federation for American Immigration Reform: www.fairus.org/home
- National Immigration Forum: www.immigrationforum.org/
- Americans for Prosperity: <http://americansforprosperity.org>
- National Federation of Independent Businesses: www.nfib.com/
- AFL-CIO: <https://aflcio.org/>
- American Federation of Teachers: <https://www.aft.org/>
- AARP (American Association for Retired Persons): www.aarp.org/politics-society/
- National Rifle Association: www.nra.org
- Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence: www.bradycampaign.org/
- Human Rights Campaign: <https://www.hrc.org>
- Family Research Council: <https://www.frc.org/>
- Sierra Club: <https://www.sierraclub.org/>
- ALEC (American Legislative Exchange Council): <https://www.alec.org/>
- National Organization to Reform Marijuana Laws: www.norml.org
- Citizens Against Legalizing Marijuana: <http://calmusa.org/>
- Fair Test: <http://www.fairtest.org/k-12>
- Education Post: <http://educationpost.org/about/>

Paper #4: Which type of organization – political parties or interest groups – can best ensure that your views are represented and prioritized? (Due Friday, December 3, 7:30pm CST)

- Re-read your first three papers.
- Then write an argument in response to this question: **If you wanted Congress or the state legislature to pay attention to your views on this issue, in what ways would political parties do a more effective job of representing your position, and in what ways would interest groups do a more effective job?** (Write about parties and organized interests in general, rather than choosing one specific party or group.)

Take-Home Exams

You are required to complete two (2) take-home exams. These exams will not be cumulative. Each exam will be posted on Moodle; you have **three days** to write and submit your exams (see **Course Schedule**, below). Exams should be uploaded to Moodle as a .doc or .docx (Microsoft Word) file.

During the exam period, you are not allowed to discuss the exam with your classmates. When you submit your exams, you will be required to digitally sign an Academic Integrity statement – affirming that the exam reflects your own work, and that you did not discuss or otherwise

collaborate on the exam with anyone else.

Each exam will contain three (3) essay questions. The questions are written to assess how well you understand the course material – and in particular, whether you understand the relationship between different concepts and their implications for contemporary U.S. politics. In general, you should aim for (\approx) 2-3 double-spaced pages per essay.

Exams will be graded on how completely and accurately you answered the essay questions. You should answer the questions as-written, rather than demonstrate your knowledge of unrelated course material. Responses will not be graded on your writing quality, grammar, spelling, or punctuation. However, remember that if your writing is difficult to follow or contains many typographical errors, it might be more difficult to assess whether you understand the course material.

Discussion Questions

Each week, you must submit **one discussion question** on that week's assigned readings. **You should email me your discussion question no later than 7:30pm CST on Sunday evening before the week begins.** Before Monday's class, I'll post everyone's questions (in a single PDF) on Moodle.

Discussion questions should be about 1-2 paragraphs. They are an opportunity for *you* to dialogue directly with your instructor and classmates, and to help steer class discussion in interesting (and unexpected!) directions. As such, your discussion questions should contain creative, interesting comments about the assigned readings. **I take students seriously as intellectuals.** This means that in class, I will often refer to students' questions – and invite you to comment further on the insights you raise.

Discussion questions compose 10 percent of your final grade; each question will receive a maximum of ten points (6 = needs improvement; 8 = adequate; 10 = excellent). Examples are shown below:

NEEDS IMPROVEMENT: “What kinds of people become party activists?”

- This question is worth asking. But in the context of this assignment, it needs improvement. The student asks a basic question about the course material, with no insight about the assigned readings. (Indeed, the question implies that the student may have not read the assigned readings in the first place!)

ADEQUATE: “According to *Party Politics in America*, party activists have stronger policy views than voters that aren't involved with the party organization. However, the parties haven't always been as polarized as they are now. What were party activists like before the parties polarized?”

- This question is adequate; the student has read the assigned readings, and raises an important subject. However, the question isn't terribly creative. Given the nature of the course, it's likely that the instructor already plans to address this question in lecture. This question would be more appropriate as a “clarifying question” in-class, or during exam review. As a general rule-of-thumb, ask questions that will make your instructor (and classmates) *think*; avoid questions that you could probably answer by reading the textbook more carefully.

EXCELLENT: “Party activists have enormous influence over the policies that the parties endorse. But ordinary voters, not just activists, decide which candidates the parties nominate. Hypothetically, voters could nominate candidates that disagree with most of the party platform, and actively work against party activists’ stated goals. Are party activists comfortable with primary elections – or would they prefer that nominees be chosen using an alternative arrangement?”

- This question is excellent. It’s clear that the student has thought critically about the course readings. The student introduces a *puzzle* for the class to solve, and explains why that puzzle is important for our knowledge of the course material. Moreover, the question addresses (and dialogues with) one of the central concepts of this course – that is, the relative power of the parties-in-government, the party organizations, and the parties-in-the-electorate.

Course Schedule

Week 1 (Friday, August 27): Course introduction and overview.

- **Read:** Course syllabus. (Remember that **syllabi are contracts** between the student and instructor; you are responsible for **carefully** reading this syllabus, reviewing the course requirements, and asking your instructor to clarify anything that is unclear.)

Week 2 (Monday, August 30 - Friday, September 3): What are political parties and interest groups? What purpose do they serve? Why are political parties in the United States so different from parties in other democracies – and what difference does this make?

- **Discussion question due at 7:30pm CST on Sunday, August 29.**
- **Read:** Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, Chapters 1-2

Week 3 (Monday, September 6 - Friday, September 10): The overwhelming majority of Americans are partisans (i.e., they have a party ID, and thus are part of the *party-in-the-electorate*). How has the American party system *changed* over time – and why are we so polarized right now?

- **Discussion question due at 7:30pm CST on Sunday, September 5.**
- **Read:** Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, Chapters 6-7

Week 4 (Monday, September 13 - Friday, September 17): *Party organizations* exist at the state, national, and local levels. What do they do? What drives people to become party activists – and what type(s) of people are they?

- **Discussion question due at 7:30pm CST on Sunday, September 12.**
- **Read:** Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, Chapters 3, 4, and 5

Paper #1 is due on Friday, September 17 at 7:30pm CST. You must submit your paper on Moodle in .doc or .docx format.

Week 5 (Monday, September 20 - Friday, September 24): The parties-in-government include the Democratic and Republican parties in Congress, the presidency, and even (some) judges and bureaucrats. How do the *parties-in-government* differ from the *parties-in-the-electorate* and *party organizations*?

- **Discussion question due at 7:30pm CST on Sunday, September 19.**
- **Read:** Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, Chapters 13, 14
- **Note:** due to the campus-wide Symposium, **we will not hold class on Wednesday, September 22.**

Week 6 (Monday, September 27 - Friday, October 1): How do the parties structure the system of selecting a president? What role(s) do the three types of parties have in this process?

- **Discussion question due at 7:30pm CST on Sunday, September 26.**
- **Read:** Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, Chapters 9, 10

Paper #2 is due on Friday, October 1 at 7:30pm CST. You must submit your paper on Moodle in .doc or .docx format.

Week 7 (Monday, October 4 - Friday, October 8): *Yes*, the major parties differ (dramatically) on virtually all major issues. How did we get to this point? Why (and when) did the parties become “*service parties*” rather than “political machines?” And why can’t third parties win in the United States?

- **Discussion question due at 7:30pm CST on Sunday, October 3.**
- **Read:** Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, Chapters 11, 15

Week 8 (Monday, October 11 - Friday, October 15): What *are* interest groups (a.k.a. organized interests, special interests, pressure groups)? What do they do to get their aims adopted by government? How are organized interests *like* political parties – and how are they *different*?

- **Discussion question due at 7:30pm CST on Sunday, October 10.**
- **Read:** Berry and Wilcox, *The Interest Group Society*, Chapters 1, 3

Week 9 (Monday, October 18 - Friday, October 22): How and why do organized interests form? How is this different from the formation of political parties?

- Discussion question due at 7:30pm CST on Sunday, October 17.
- Read: Berry and Wilcox, *The Interest Group Society*, Chapters 2, 4

EXAM 1 will be posted on Moodle on Tuesday, October 19 at 12:00pm CST. The exam will cover all the material through Week 8.

Exams are due on Friday, October 22 at 7:30pm CST. You must submit your complete exam on Moodle in .doc or .docx format.

Week 10 (Monday, October 25 - Friday, October 29): Fall Interim; no class.

Week 11 (Monday, November 1 - Friday, November 5): Some interest groups engage in *direct* (*Washington*) lobbying. Others use *grassroots* (*indirect*) lobbying – trying to affect public policy by lobbying the public. How do these strategies work? What determines interest groups' preferred form of lobbying? And what are some misconceptions about how lobbying works?

- Discussion question due at 7:30pm CST on Sunday, October 31.
- Read: Berry and Wilcox, *The Interest Group Society*, Chapters 6, 7, 8

Paper #3 is due on Friday, November 5 at 7:30pm CST. You must submit your paper on Moodle in .doc or .docx format.

REMINDER: Your last day to drop PSC 381 is Monday, November 8. If you believe you must withdraw from PSC 381 (or that you are in danger of failing the course), I **strongly** encourage you to consult myself, your academic advisor, and (if applicable) your first-year mentor **in advance** of this deadline.

Week 12 (Monday, November 8 - Friday, November 12): How does money get into politics? How have the rules governing campaign finance changed – from FECA to BCRA to *Citizens United*, *SpeechNOW*, and *McCutcheon*? What are the differences among PACs, super PACs, and 501(c) (“dark money”) groups, and what is their impact on elections? And why does money not necessarily buy political influence?

- Discussion question due at 7:30pm CST on Sunday, November 7.
- Read: Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, Chapter 12 (pp. 273-302); Berry and Wilcox, *The Interest Group Society*, Chapters 5 and 9

Week 13 (Monday, November 15 - Friday, November 19): What is “single-issue” politics – and why *isn't* it what you'd expect? And how have social movements (e.g. the Civil Rights Movement, the Religious Right) impacted American politics? Do successful social movements have anything in common?

- **Discussion question due at 7:30pm CST on Sunday, November 14.**
- **Read:** No reading. Use this week to catch up before Thanksgiving break.

Week 14 (Monday, November 22; shortened week): Why do citizens have such negative opinions of political parties – and why does this matter?

- **Note: due to the shortened week, you do not need to submit a Discussion Question;** however, you'll still receive a participation score based on Monday's class.
- **Read:** Mason, *Uncivil Agreement*, Chapter 1. I'll give a brief overview of Mason's work (and the debates it has inspired). And I've give some “active reading” tips to help you engage with her argument and empirical evidence.
- **Thanksgiving break runs from November 23 (end of the academic day) through November 28. We will not have scheduled classes on Wednesday and Friday.**

Week 15 (Monday, November 29 - Friday, December 3): Why do the parties-in-the-electorate dislike (or even hate) each other, even when their *issue positions* are quite moderate? What makes *affective polarization* particularly dangerous – and how is it different from organized interests? How do political parties and interest groups benefit from affective polarization?

- **Discussion question due at 7:30pm CST on Sunday, November 28.**
- **Read:** Mason, *Uncivil Agreement: How Politics Became Our Identity* (complete book)

Paper #4 is due on Friday, December 3 at 7:30pm CST. You must submit your paper on Moodle in .doc or .docx format.

Week 16 (Monday, December 6 - Friday, December 10): How could we reform the influence of political parties and organized interests, and what would be the likely result? Does our democratic system *require* both strong parties and strong interest groups?

- **Discussion question due at 7:30pm CST on Sunday, December 5.**
- **Read:** Mason, *Uncivil Agreement* (review); Berry and Wilcox, *The Interest Group Society*, Chapter 10

Finals Week (Tuesday, December 14: 11:00am-1:00pm): Where do we go from here? How can *you* be more critical, conscientious democratic participants?

- **No discussion question assigned;** you will still be assigned a participation grade.
- **Reading:** None. Come prepared for our final substantive discussion of the semester.

EXAM 2 will be posted on Moodle on Sunday, December 12 at 12:00pm CST. The exam will cover all the material from Weeks 9-16.

Exams are due on Wednesday, December 15 at 7:30pm CST. You must submit your complete exam on Moodle in .doc or .docx format.

Course Policies

Grading

Your final grade will be weighted as follows:

- **Exam 1**, 25 percent
- **Exam 2**, 25 percent
- **Short Papers**, 32 percent (8 percent each × 4 short papers).
- **Participation**, 8 percent. Students will receive a participation score for each substantive week of classes (10 points maximum: 0-6 = needs improvement; 8 = good; 10 = outstanding).
 - I will recognize good-faith efforts to participate in class discussions. **Moreover, I will encourage participation with structured opportunities for students to collect their thoughts.** Frequent in-class writing exercises will help me gauge students' level of preparation for class. Just as important, these impromptu exercises will give *you* ideas for comments, insights, and questions. And we'll often discuss the questions that you (and your classmates) submit for each week. (If you have questions about the quality of your class participation, please see me during my office hours.)
- **Discussion Questions**, 10 percent. Student can receive up to 10 points for each discussion question (6 = needs improvement; 8 = adequate; 10 = excellent); see **Discussion Questions**, above, for examples.

Please note that **there will not be opportunities to earn extra credit** in this course.

Office Hours

Regardless of your performance in this class, I encourage you to stop by my office hours. During my office hours, I will certainly help students that might be struggling in PSC 381 – or who need clarification about the course material. However, I am also interested in your professional and intellectual development. Please see me as a *resource* (and ally) as you progress through your academic careers.

My office hours are from **1:00-3:00pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays, in Old Main 311**. Priority will be given to students with scheduled appointments. To make either an in-person or virtual appointment, click the following link: <https://concordia.campus.eab.com/pal/UGe9GygII5>. Remember to wear a mask to any in-person appointments; for virtual appointments, you'll receive the Zoom link after you sign up.

Attendance Policy

Concordia College requires students to attend all classes as scheduled; I will take attendance at each class session. Note that while you won't be graded on attendance (*per se*), it is difficult to obtain participation credit if you aren't in class.

Students will be excused from class in cases of illness, family emergency, or religious observance. Generally, students should provide documentation of illness (e.g., a valid doctor's note) to be excused from the participation requirement for missed classes. **However, I recognize that due to COVID-19 mitigation measures, it is not always practical (or safe) to obtain a doctor's note;** in these cases, please keep open communication with your instructor to ensure you are not penalized for health circumstances beyond your control.

In addition, **Concordia students will not be penalized for missing class due to participation in a co-curricular activity.** Students should notify their instructors of scheduled absences at the beginning of the semester, or as soon as that information is available to them.

Remote Attendance (Isolation and Quarantine Only)

If you must self-isolate or quarantine due to COVID-19 mitigation measures, you may "listen in" to live-streamed class sessions. In these cases, you are not expected to participate virtually – and you will not be penalized for failing to "attend" the virtual class. Rather, this is an (admittedly imperfect) back-up option for students that cannot attend class because of COVID-19 infection or exposure. Students attending in-person will be unable to see identifying information (e.g., name, audio, video) about students logged into the Zoom meeting room. Without exception, classes will not be recorded.

To remotely listen-in, go to the following Zoom link during our regularly scheduled class period: <https://cord.zoom.us/j/93466071489>. (This link will also be available from the course Moodle page.)

Deadlines

Students must complete both take-home exams during the allotted time periods. Make-up exams will only be permitted in cases of illness, family emergency, or religious observance; once again, students must provide a valid doctor's note (if applicable). Please note that if you qualify for a make-up exam, you will receive an "alternate" version of the exam. This exam will not be more difficult than the missed exam, but it will have different essay questions. **If you miss an exam without a valid excuse, you will receive zero (0) percent for the exam – and will not have the opportunity to complete a make-up exam.** Similarly, if you do not submit a Discussion Question on time (and don't have a valid excuse), you will receive zero (0) points for that question.

Finally, late papers will be penalized ten (10) percentage points for each calendar day late. For example, if you turned in Paper #2 on October 4 (rather than October 1), your maximum possible grade for Paper #2 would be 70 percent. (These penalties will not apply if legitimate

extenuating circumstances prevent you from submitting an assignment on time; once again, you are responsible for notifying your instructor to ensure that you are not penalized.)

Expectations Regarding Academic and Personal Integrity

All students are expected to make a personal pledge to uphold Concordia's and general professional standards on academic honesty and integrity. For more information, see the College's [Student Handbook and Academic Policies](#).

As the instructor-of-record for this course, **I am required to report academic integrity violations to the Office of Academic Affairs.** Depending on the severity or deliberateness of the offense, penalties for academic misconduct may include: an automatic zero (0) percent on the assignment in question, an automatic failing grade (F) for the course, or (at the administrative level) suspension from the College.

Avoiding plagiarism is essential for anyone at any stage of their academic career. **In my experience, however, most cases of plagiarism are not deliberate;** rather, students are not aware that what they are doing constitutes plagiarism. On your take-home exams, for example, plagiarism would include cases where:

- Students quote (without citation) a verbatim definition from the textbook in one of their essay responses, rather than putting the definition into their own words.
- Groups of students prepare for the exams together, and write identical (or very similar) responses to the essay questions.

There are multiple ways to plagiarize, but here's a good rule-of-thumb: plagiarism means that you have copied from another text – without appropriate citation – **any intellectually unique sequence of three or more words.** There are obvious exceptions to this rule; proper nouns (e.g., “National Republican Convention,” “Senator Amy Klobuchar”), technical terms (e.g., “party in the electorate”) need not appear in quotations – nor do phrases likely to appear in most academic writing on your topic (e.g., “In the United States”). But if you keep the “three words” rule in mind, it will be *extremely* hard to accidentally plagiarize. If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism, feel free to ask me and/or refer to the College's guidelines on academic integrity (see above).

COVID-19

As campus “re-opens,” keep the following considerations and policies in mind:

- **Concordia College strongly encourages students to get vaccinated against COVID-19 – and mandates vaccinations for student athletes and others that travel as part of co-curricular activities.** Vaccines remain the best way to keep yourself and others safe. To find walk-in sites, make an appointment, or find sites that offer a specific vaccine (e.g., Johnson and Johnson, Moderna, Pfizer), you can visit the following link: <https://vaccineconnector.mn.gov/en-US/>. For more information about the College's (on-going) COVID-19 response, you can visit <https://www.concordiacollege.edu/about/covid-response-planning/>.

- **If you are enrolled in PSC 381, you must wear a mask during our class sessions.**
As your instructor, I have discretion to require face coverings in class for the duration of the semester; students are expected to follow individual masking expectations set by their faculty, unless an accommodation has been approved. If you come to class without a face covering or refuse to comply with this policy, I will politely ask you to leave. If you miss class because you refuse to comply with class policy on masking, your absence will count against your participation grade for that week.
- In addition, please note that **until September 17, Concordia College requires faculty, staff, and students to wear face coverings in all classes, laboratories, and studios.** Students seeking an exemption from either the campus-wide or class policies should contact Matthew Rutten in the [Counseling Center and Disability Services Office](#).
- **I expect students to stay home from class if you are ill.** If you experience COVID-19 symptoms or test positive for COVID-19, it is important that you receive prompt medical attention – and that you self-isolate to protect others from infection. In this event, **I will ensure that you are not penalized for health circumstances beyond your control.**
- **If you are unvaccinated and exposed (close contact) to someone that tests positive for COVID-19, you must quarantine according to campus mitigation measures – and contact the COVID student helpline at (701) 730-8304.** If you are vaccinated and have no symptoms after a close contact exposure, you should continue to monitor your health – but do not need to quarantine unless you develop symptoms. If you are vaccinated and develop symptoms after a COVID-19 close contact exposure, you should call the COVID student helpline and stay home until you receive further instruction. **In these circumstances, I will again ensure that you are not penalized for following the campus’s specified COVID-19 mitigation measures.**
- **Students that cannot attend class in-person for reasons related to COVID-19 may “listen in” virtually at the following link: <https://cord.zoom.us/j/93466071489>.** Note that classmates attending in-person will not be able to see which students have logged into the virtual Zoom meeting. To protect your privacy, your video and audio will be disabled; students in isolation or quarantine are not expected to participate in class. In addition, you may “rename” yourself upon logging into the Zoom meeting room; otherwise, your name will be visible only to your instructor and other classmates that might be attending virtually.
- **Campus resources are in-place to help students affected by COVID-19.** Students who find it difficult to complete course work are expected to contact the course instructor and the Center for Student Success (success@cord.edu). Students who have technology issues are expected to contact ITS (pcsupport@cord.edu). Students who miss class for an extended period should reach out to Center for Student Success (success@cord.edu).

Concordia’s Diversity Statement

Concordia College aspires to be a diverse community that affirms an abundance of identities, experiences, and perspectives in order to imagine, examine, and implement possibilities for individual and communal thriving. Critical thinking grounded in the liberal arts compels us to participate in intentional dialogue, careful self-reflection, and honest interactions about difference, power, and inequity. As responsible engagement in the world calls us to recognize worlds that are familiar or

unfamiliar, visible or less visible, Concordia will act to increase and support diversity in all areas of campus life.

Value of Diverse Perspectives, Backgrounds, and Identities

As your instructor, I am committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion at Concordia. Ultimately, **inclusion is a quality-of-life issue**. Students are unlikely to succeed in (let alone enjoy) an educational environment where their contributions are neither valued nor noticed. More than ever, liberal arts education must celebrate students with under-represented racial and ethnic backgrounds, sexual orientations and gender identities, religious beliefs, and socioeconomic statuses. Students with physical or learning disabilities must be fully included in campus life. And instructors must proactively *and quickly* address discrimination in all its forms.

Just as importantly, if you feel under-valued and unnoticed in class, this is probably not your fault. Rather, it is your instructor's responsibility to promote an inclusive learning environment. During the semester, I will do my utmost to promote diverse perspectives, backgrounds, and identities in the classroom. But if I ever fall short, please let me know. Like everyone at Concordia, I am still learning; like everyone, there are "blind spots" in my cultural sensitivity and awareness. For this reason, I value *any* feedback that makes my classroom more inclusive – and would consider it a privilege to learn from you.

Pronouns and Identity

Class rosters are provided to us with the students' legal names. Because all people have the right to be addressed in accordance with their personal identity, the instructor will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please let him know how you would prefer to be addressed as soon as possible.

Concordia's Interfaith Cooperation Statement

Concordia College practices interfaith cooperation because of its Lutheran dedication to prepare thoughtful and informed global citizens who foster wholeness and hope, build peace through understanding, and serve the world together.

Religious Accommodations

Students from all faiths and religious backgrounds (and no or uncertain faiths) are welcome in this classroom. If a religious holiday precludes your class attendance, please make arrangements with the instructor in advance for retrieving information and turning in class assignments.

Concordia's Sexual Misconduct Policy

Concordia College takes sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, and sexual harassment seriously. All faculty members, including myself, are mandatory reporters, which means that if I learn about any form of sexual misconduct, I must report it to the Title IX

coordinator. For more information, I strongly encourage students to access both the [College's Title IX Resources](#) and [Sexual Misconduct Policy](#).

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Concordia College values diversity and inclusion. We are committed to providing students with access to mental health services and equitable access to learning opportunities.

The Counseling Center and Disability Services Office (Old Main 109A) is the campus office that helps students find solutions and relief through talk therapy, and reasonable accommodations. [Additional Community and Online Resources](#) are also available on Cobbernet.

- If you feel stressed, anxious, worried, or lonely, please consider contacting a staff member in the Counseling Center and Disability Services Office to learn more, or to set up an appointment with a counselor. All appointments are free and confidential and can be arranged by emailing counseling@cord.edu, or calling (218) 299-3514, or by stopping in Lower Level, Old Main, room 109A.
- If you have, or think you may have, a disability (e.g., mental health, attention, learning, autism spectrum disorders, chronic health, traumatic brain injury and concussions, vision, hearing, mobility, or speech impairments), please contact the Director of the Counseling Center and Disability Services Office to arrange a confidential discussion regarding equitable access and reasonable accommodations. Appointments can be arranged by emailing counseling@cord.edu, or calling (218) 299-3514, or by stopping in Lower Level, Old Main, room 109A.
- Accommodations can be coordinated with the staff in the Counseling Center and Disability Services Office. To receive reasonable and appropriate accommodations in your course(s), you will need to share your Letter of Accommodation (LOA) with your class instructor(s) as soon as possible so necessary arrangements can be made. Accommodations can start only after the LOA has been shared with your instructor, and accommodations are not retroactive. Your information will be kept confidential.
- For additional information on accommodations (e.g., accommodation petition process or appeal process for accommodation plans) please see the Policy for the Accommodation of Students with Disabilities in the Concordia College Course Catalog.

Please contact me if you feel there are aspects of my instruction, or design of this course, that could better support your learning.

Mental Health

It is very important that your first priority this semester be to take care of yourself. Monitor and take care of your own health and well-being. It is important to recognize stressors you may be facing, which might be personal, emotional, physical, financial, mental, or academic. Sleep, exercise, balanced nutrition and connecting with others are great strategies to help you flourish at Concordia. If you are having difficulties maintaining your well-being, feel free to contact me and/or pursue other campus resources, such as the Counseling Center. Contact the Counseling Center to learn more, at counseling@cord.edu, (218) 299-3514, or stop in Lower Level, Old Main, Room 109A. All appointments are free and confidential.