

The Graduate School of Political Management

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

M.P.S. in Legislative Affairs

Spring 2019

January 14 – May 1

Political Parties and Elections

LGAF 6222.LH

3 credits

Mondays 6:00pm to 8:00pm

Hall of the States at 444 North Capitol
Street, NW (check with front desk each
week for room number for that week)

BASIC INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Instructor

This Course is taught by Martin Frost, a former Congressman from Texas who served 26 years in the U.S. House of Representatives (1979-2005) and who held major leadership positions for House Democrats (two terms as Chair of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee and two terms as Chair of the House Democratic Caucus). Congressman Frost was one of the founding members of the Democratic Leadership Council, a group of moderate Democrats that helped pave the way for the election of Bill Clinton as President in 1992. He chaired America Votes, a major turnout organization for Democrats during the 2008 election. He has co-authored a book on the future of Congress with former Republican Congressman Tom Davis of Virginia.

Contact Information

Phone Number: (703) 577-1897

Email Address: martinfrost@comcast.net

Communication

Please use the above email to communicate with me. I check it often. Do not use the GW email because I check that only once a week or so.

Blackboard Site

A Blackboard course site has been set up for this course. Each student is expected to check the site throughout the semester, as Blackboard will be the primary venue for outside classroom communications between the instructors and the students. Students can access the course site at <https://blackboard.gwu.edu>. Support for Blackboard is available at 202-994-4948 or helpdesk.gwu.edu.

Academic Integrity (cont. on next page)

All members of the university community are expected to exhibit honesty and competence in their academic work. Students have a special responsibility to acquaint themselves with, and make use of, all proper procedures for doing research, writing papers, and taking exams. Members of the community will be presumed to be familiar with the proper academic procedures and will be held responsible for applying them. Deliberate failure to act in accordance with such procedures will be considered academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty is defined as “cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one’s own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and

without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information.” Acts of academic dishonesty are a legal, moral, and intellectual offense against the community and will be prosecuted through the proper university channels. The University Code of Academic Integrity can be found at <https://studentconduct.gwu.edu/academic-integrity>.

Support for Students with Disabilities

GW’s Disability Support Services (DSS) provides and coordinates accommodations and other services for students with a wide variety of disabilities, as well as those temporarily disabled by injury or illness. Accommodations are available through DSS to facilitate academic access for students with disabilities. Please notify your instructor if you require accommodations. Additional information is available at <https://disabilitysupport.gwu.edu/>.

In the Event of an Emergency or Crisis during Class

If we experience some an emergency during class time, we will try to stay at this location until we hear that we can move about safely. If we have to leave here, we will meet outside the Hall of States in order to account for everyone and to make certain that everyone is safe. Please refer to Campus Advisories for the latest information on the University’s operating status: <http://www.campusadvisories.gwu.edu/>.

Attendance Policy

You are expected to attend all of the classes. If you are unable to make a class, please email me at martinfrost@comcast.net.

Course Evaluation

At the end of the semester, students will be given the opportunity to evaluate the course through GW’s online course evaluation system. It is very important that you take the time to complete an evaluation. Students are also encouraged to provide feedback throughout the course of the semester by contacting any/all of the following:

Dr. Steven Billet
Director, Legislative Affairs Program
sbillet@gwu.edu | 202-994-1149

Dr. Jack Prostko
Associate Dean for Learning and Faculty Development
College of Professional Studies
jackp@gwu.edu | 202-994-3592

Suzanne Farrand
Director of Academic Administration, GSPM
sfarrand@gwu.edu | 202-994-9309

THE COURSE

Legislative Affairs Program Objectives

Upon completion of the Master's degree in Legislative Affairs, students will:

1. Learn about the history and development of political parties in the U.S. and gain knowledge about recent developments in U.S. elections such as the effect of social media and changes in campaign finance laws.
2. Hone their oral and written communication skills in both theoretical and technical aspects of legislative affairs;
3. Be able to conduct cutting-edge research and engage in effective problem solving by learning critical thinking skills;
4. Learn how to work effectively with others, the value of collaborative work, and will understand ethical issues involved in the legislative arena.

Course Description and Overview

This course is designed to provide an in depth view of the two major parties and how they engage in electoral politics in the second decade of the 21st century. While there will be some discussion of the historical evolution of the parties, the primary focus will be on what's happening right now.

One major focus of this course will involve how the parties function under the rapidly changing rules governing campaign finance. We will also deal with such contemporary subjects as the evolving role of social media and the nationalization of the two parties which is making them more like their European parliamentary cousins rather than parties functioning under the traditional U.S. separation of powers system. We will examine the changing demographic makeup of the U.S. electorate and how this is influencing strategies adopted by the parties. And we will look at how Congressional gerrymandering has created numerous safe one-party districts with the accompanying effect of eliminating many moderates from office, making it more difficult both houses of Congress to reach bi-partisan solutions to the problems facing the country.

The course will include some guest lecturers who will help us better understand the impact of the new world of campaign finance and efforts to use the courts to restrict the electorate through voter-ID laws. This course is not for the faint at heart. Some weeks students will be asked to do a significant amount of reading on the growth of social media, on campaign finance and other topics. Class participation will be an important part of your final grade and this will require full preparation for each

Students will be asked to write two relatively short papers and a longer paper with an oral presentation during the final week of the course. The shorter papers will not exceed 2,000 words. Students should submit two copies so that one can be returned during the course with comments. Papers should be double-spaced and documented with footnotes. For the longer paper and oral presentation, students will be divided into teams of three which each team being allocated 30 minutes of class time for its oral presentation.

The objective of this course is to prepare students for the world of contemporary U.S. politics with the hope that many of you will want to be a part of the electoral process – either as candidates, campaign organizers or informed citizens.

Grading is based on three factors:

- Class participation, 20%
- Two small papers, 20% each
- Research paper with oral presentation, 40%

There are four required texts:

Parties and Elections in America: The Electoral Process, by Mark D. Brewer and L. Sandy Maisel (Rowman & Littlefield, 8th Edition, 2019),
The Partisan Divide – Congress in Crisis by Tom Davis, Martin Frost and Richard Cohen (Premiere, 2014),
Overload: Finding the Truth in Today's Deluge of News by Bob Schieffer (Rowman & Littlefield, 2017),
Messing with the Enemy, Surviving in a Social Media World of Hackers, Terrorists, Russians and Fake News, by Clint Watts (Harper Collins, 2018)

Articles from various national magazines and newspapers also will be cited in the syllabus and likewise will be made available to students either through links on Blackboard or in hard copy prior to the week when they will be discussed.

Course Learning Objectives

1. By the end of this course, students will have an understanding of the history of the major modern political parties in the United States and the factors that shaped them into the contemporary parties we know today.
2. By the end of this course, students will have learned about the ever evolving role of political parties in the United States federal elections process.
3. By the end of this course, students will have an appreciation for what it means to work on a political campaign.
4. By the end of this course, students will have sharpened their written and oral communications skills, especially with regards to political and policy matters.

Document Citations and Presentation Accuracy

There will be two short essays and one more lengthy final project which will include an oral presentation. Please print out and bring a hard copy of assignments to give to me at the beginning of class on the day they are due. I will keep these for my records. If you would like comments, please hand in two copies of the assignments paper clipped together.

We will use the Chicago Manual of Style for essays, citations and bibliographies. A sample of the style can be found at <http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/>.

PLEASE NOTE: You can lose points for failure to footnote accurately or for grammatical and spelling errors. This is a graduate course, and graduate level work requires that your work is proofread and presented in an acceptable manner. Spellcheck is not necessarily your friend – it will approve a word that is an actual word but which may be the wrong one for the context under discussion. The best policy is to have a friend or fellow classmate read through your paper for mistakes before submitting it.

Following is the grade scale for all GSPM classes:

| Grade* | | Grading Standard |
|--------|------------------------------|--|
| A | 94-100 | Your work is outstanding and ready for submission in a professional environment. Your material, effort, research, and writing demonstrate superior work. |
| A- | 90-93 | Represents solid work with minor errors. Overall, excellent work. |
| B+ | 87-89 | Very good. Represents well-written material, research, and presentation, but needs some minor work. |
| B | 83-86 | Satisfactory work, but needs reworking and more effort. Note that although not a failing grade, at the graduate level, anything below a “B” is viewed as unacceptable. |
| B- | 80-82 | You’ve completed the assignment, but you are not meeting all of the requirements. |
| C+ | 77-79 | Needs improvement in content and in effort. Shows some motivation and concern. |
| C | 73-76 | Needs reworking, improved effort, and additional research. Shows minimal motivation and concern. |
| C- | 70-72 (lowest grade to pass) | Poor performance. Major errors, too many misspellings, problems with accuracy, etc. |
| F | Below 70 | Unacceptable performance, or inability to submit the assignment. |

*Please note that you may be penalized for late submission of assignment(s).

Tentative Course Calendar*

*The instructor reserves the right to alter course content and/or adjust the pace to accommodate class progress. Students are responsible for keeping up with all adjustments to the course calendar.

NOTE: This syllabus was completed before the 2018 Midterm elections. Additional readings will be added after the Midterms.

Class 1. January 14 – Introduction and History of Political Parties in the U.S.

The objective of this class is to discuss course expectations, assignments and format, to examine the history of political parties in our country from the earliest times to the present.

Guest Speaker: Dan Balz, National Correspondent, Washington Post

Reading Assignment for this class:

Brewer and Maisel, chapters 2 and 12

Class 2. January 28 – The Future of Political Parties in the U.S.

The objective of this class is to consider the future of the Democratic and Republican parties in the U.S. and to project their paths based on recent election trends.

Guest Speakers: Jonathan Martin, political reporter, New York Times and Bill Galston, senior fellow, Brookings Institution.

Reading Assignments:

“In the Trump era the U.S. needs parliamentary politics more than ever,” by Ishaan Thadood, Washington Post, Sept. 12, 2017;

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2017/09/12/in-the-trump-era-the-u-s-needs-parliamentary-politics-more-than-ever/>

Class 3. February 4 – The role of the traditional media (print and broadcast) in Politics Today

First short paper assigned which is due February 25th

Guest Speakers: Reid Wilson, National Correspondent, The Hill; Don Graham, former publisher, the Washington Post

Reading Assignments for this class:

Schieffer, chapters 1, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 14, 20 and 21

Brewer and Maisel, chapter 10

Class 4. February 11 – The Role of Social Media in Politics Today

The objective of this class is to understand the dramatic effect that various forms of social media are having in U.S. politics and to consider what limits, if any, could be placed on social media as a form of political expression.

Guest Speaker: Dante Chinni, Director American Communities Project, Research Professor, George Washington University

Reading Assignments for this class:

Watts, chapters 4, 6, 7, 9 and 10

“Disinformation: A Primer in Russian Active Measures And Influence Campaigns,” Clint Watts, Senior Fellow, Center for Cyber and Homeland Security, the George Washington University,

Statement Prepared for the U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence hearing; 30 March 2017; <https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/sites/default/files/documents/os-cwatts-033017.pdf>

“Can Democracy Survive the Internet,” by Nathaniel Persily, Journal of Democracy, April 2017; https://www.journalofdemocracy.org/sites/default/files/07_28.2_Persily%20%28web%29.pdf

H.R. 4077: To enhance transparency and accountability for online political advertisements by requiring those who purchase and publish such ads to disclose information about the advertisements to the public, and for other purposes. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/4077/text>

“How Twitter Killed the First Amendment,” by Tim Wu, New York Times, Oct. 27, 2017; https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/27/opinion/twitter-first-amendment.html?_r=0

“Russian ads, now publicly released, show sophistication of influence campaign,” by Craig Timberg, Elizabeth Dwoskin, Adam Entous and Karen Demirjian, Washington Post, Nov. 1, 2017; https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/technology/russian-ads-now-publicly-released-show-sophistication-of-influence-campaign/2017/11/01/d26aead2-bf1b-11e7-8444-a0d4f04b89eb_story.html?utm_term=.a1e493215080

“The Plot to Subvert an Election,” special section of New York Times on Sept. 20, 2018 (to be distributed students in week before this class).

Class 5. February 25 – The Role of Race, Gender, Education and Religion in American Politics

First short paper due at the beginning of class

The objective of this class is to trace the changing racial demographics in American politics in the past 25 years and how this has influenced the approach taken by the two major parties. We will also discuss the effects on gender, education and religion on this subject

Reading Assignments for this class:

Frost PowerPoint on the role of race and gender posted on Blackboard;

Davis and Frost, chapter 4;

“Study: Political parties transformed by racial, religious changes,” by Steven Shepherd, Politico, September 6, 2017; <https://www.politico.com/story/2017/09/06/political-parties-religion-race-242322>

Class 6. March 4 – Running for the House and Senate

The objective of this class is to discuss the effects of both racial and political gerrymandering on composition of the House and recent court decisions which will affect the way House districts are drawn in the future. Further, we will explore how Senate races have become nationalized with many voters casting their ballots on the basis of party rather than the merits of individual candidates. Further we will examine the issue trend that all politics are no longer local.

Second short paper assigned which is due April 1

Guest Speakers: Dan Maffei, former Member of the U.S. House and GW fellow and A.B. Stoddard, Associate Editor, Real Clear Politics

Reading Assignments for this class:

Davis and Frost, chapters 5, 7,8, 9, 11, and 12;

Brewer and Maisel, chapter 6

Frost PowerPoint on redistricting posted on Blackboard

“Drawing the Line,” by Elizabeth Kolbert, the New Yorker, June 27, 2016;

<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/06/27/ratfcked-the-influence-ofredistricting>

Class 7. March 18 – The Role of Money in Elections

The objective of this class is to discuss the role of money in the 2018 congressional elections. We will explore the role of PACs and Super PACs and their influence on the two main parties on how they message.

Guest Speaker, Ken Gross, election law expert

Reading Assignment for this class:

Davis and Frost, chapter 6;

Brewer and Maisel, chapter 5;

“The Long-Suffering Super PAC,” by Calvin Trillin, New York Times Sunday Review, Feb. 25, 2012;

<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/26/opinion/sunday/the-long-suffering-super-pac.html>

“It’s bold, but legal: How campaigns and their super PAC backers work together,” The Washington Post, July 6, 2015. http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/here-are-the-secret-ways-super-pacs-and-campaigns-can-work-together/2015/07/06/bda78210-1539-11e5-89f3-61410da94eb1_story.html

Class 8. March 25 — Running for President

The objective of this class is to discuss the dynamics of recent presidential elections, how each party has been able to put together at least 270 electoral votes in the post-World War II period as the political geography has changed during that time and rules changes that will affect the 2020 presidential campaign.

Guest Speakers: Ann Lewis, former Clinton White House Communications Director and longtime Democratic Party strategist and Major Garrett, Chief White House correspondent, CBS News.

Reading Assignment for this class:

Brewer and Maisel, chapters 8 and 9;

Frost PowerPoint on the Electoral College on Blackboard

Class 9. April 1—Efforts to Restrict Access to the Ballot

The objective of this class is to discuss the recent trend in voter photo ID laws and by some states to limit the days and Efforts hours for in person early voting.

Second short paper due at the beginning of class

Guest Speaker: Paul Smith, professor, Georgetown Law Center and one-time Supreme Court Clerk.

Class 10. April 8th – The 2020 Elections

The objective of this class is to discuss the fight for the Democratic nomination for 2020 and President Trumps efforts to win a second term. This will form the basis for oral presentations which will occur the last two weeks of the class.

Guest Speakers: Jim Duffy, Democratic campaign consultant and Whit Ayres, a Republican campaign consultant.

Class 11. April 15 – Working on Campaigns

The objective of this class is to hear from two campaign professionals about how campaigns are conducted today on the organizational and fundraising sides and the pressures that this places on candidates for both the House and Senate.

Guest Speakers: Matt Angle, Democratic consultant and Jennifer Frost, fundraising consultant

Readings to be posted before class

Class 12. April 22 – The first day of team presentations.

Class 13. April 29– The second day of team presentations.

Class 14. May 1 – The final day of team presentations.