

The Graduate School of Political Management

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

M.P.S. in Legislative Affairs

Spring 2016

January 11 – April 27

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 recently co-authored a book on the future of Congress with former Republican Congressman Tom Davis of Virginia.

Contact Information

Phone Number: (202) 626-8314 or (703) 577-1897

Email Address: mfrost@polsinelli.com

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

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 <http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html>.

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 www.gwu.edu/~dss.

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 mfrost@polsinelli.com.

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
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THE COURSE

Legislative Affairs Program Objectives

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

1. Gain both theoretical and practical knowledge related to the U.S. Congress, general issues in the legislative arena, and how to effectively advance legislation;
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.

The first assigned reading for this course is chapter 1 of Theodore H. White's classic book, "The Making of the President 1960." This is the book that first kindled my interest in national politics. It is somewhat dated but compelling none-the-less. It will be interesting to hear how each of you was first drawn to politics.

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 which will include key decisions by the federal courts 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 class.

This course will also deal with developments in the 2016 presidential race. The nominating process for both parties will be occurring during the months this course is taught and we will discuss developments at the beginning of almost all classes until winners are determined.

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, with one being due on Feb. 22nd (discuss the effect the issue of immigration reform will have on both parties) and the other being due on March 28th (topic to be announced later). 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, 25%
- Two small papers, 20% each
- Research paper with oral presentation, 35%

There are two required texts: Parties and Elections in America: the Electoral Process, by L. Sandy Maisel and Mark D. Brewer (Rowan & Littlefield, 7th Edition, 2016) and The Partisan Divide – Congress in Crisis by Tom Davis, Martin Frost and Richard Cohen (Premiere, 2014).

Chapters also are cited from another book: The Making of the President 1960 by Theodore H. White (HarperPerennial Political Classics (2009). These chapters will be made available to students, either by links in this syllabus, by posting links on Blackboard or in hard copy prior to the week when they will be discussed.

Articles from various national magazines and newspapers also are 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. Federal court cases to be discussed also will be made available prior to their scheduled discussion.

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.

Class 1. January 11

The objective of this class is to:

Introduce students to each other, discuss course expectations, assignments and format

Reading Assignment for this class:

The Partisan Divide, chapter 1, pp. 7-24;

Making of the President 1960, chapter 1 on Blackboard

Class 2. January 25 – History of Political Parties in the U.S.

The objective of this class is to: Examine the History of Political Parties in the U.S. from the earliest days to present times, including the emergence of movements such as the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC) and the Tea Party.

Reading Assignment for this class:

Maisel and Brewer, chapters 2 and 12;

“Democrats are in denial. Their party is actually in deep trouble.” Vox, October 19, 2015:

<http://www.vox.com/2015/10/19/9565119/democrats-in-deep-trouble>

“Where the Similarities End Between House Republican’ 2015, 1947 Majoritism” Bloomberg Politics, January 14, 2015; <http://www.bloomberg.com/politics/articles/2015-01-14/where-the-similarities-end-between-house-republicans-2015-1947-majorities>.

Class 3. February 1 – Off to the Races – The Presidential Race in 2016

The Objective of this class is to discuss the dynamics of recent presidential elections and 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. We will discuss the 2016 nomination process as it unfolds.

First short paper assigned – Subject: the effect of the issue of immigration reform on both political parties in the 2016 election

Reading Assignment for this class:

Maisel and Brewer, chapters 8 and 9.

Excerpt from *Primary Colors* by Anonymous posted on Blackboard

“Democrats in Them Thar Hills,” The Economist, October 24, 2015,

<http://www.economist.com/news/united-states/21676531-thank-retired-baby-boomers-rural-america-becoming-more-diverse-politically>

Class 4. February 8 --The New Normal (Subtext – All Politics is No Longer Local)

The objective of this class is to examine the current state of U.S. politics which has often led to a split in government, with one party controlling at least one house of Congress and the other party controlling the Presidency. A secondary objective is to trace how the two American political parties now function as parliamentary parties rather than parties that historically operated under our traditional separation of powers system and how this has resulted in candidates no longer being able to win re-election by stressing what they have done for their district or state.

Reading Assignment for this class (continued next page):

The Partisan Divide, chapters 3, 7, 8 and 9,

“Who Turned My Blue State Red?” by Alec MacGillis, New York Times, Nov. 20, 2015,
http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/22/opinion/sunday/who-turned-my-blue-state-red.html?_r=0

“Delusions of the Democrats,” by Kevin Baker, the New York Times, Nov. 16, 2014,
http://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/16/opinion/sunday/delusions-of-the-democrats.html?_r=0

“Will the Obama Coalition Survive,” The Hill, Nov. 17, 2014.
<http://thehill.com/homenews/administration/224329-will-the-obama-coalition-survive>

“The Emerging Republican Advantage,” *National Journal*, January 31, 2015;
<http://www.nationaljournal.com/magazine/the-emerging-republican-advantage-20150130>

Class 5. February 22 – Campaign Finance – The Rise of Super PACs

First short paper due at the beginning of class

The Objective of this class is to understand how changes in the campaign finance system during the past 40 years have come to dominate American politics, significantly altering the role of political parties.

Guest Lecturer: Ken Gross, Partner, Skadden, Arps law firm, former Associate General Counsel, Federal Election Commission.

Reading Assignment for this class (continued next page):

The Partisan Divide, chapter 6;

Maisel and Brewer, chapter 5;

Supreme Court decisions in *Buckley vs. Valeo* and *Citizens United*;
<http://www.fec.gov/law/litigation/Buckley.pdf>;

<http://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/09pdf/08-205.pdf>

“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>

“A Decade of Mc-Cain Feingold: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly,” Campaigns and Elections, May 2014; <http://www.campaignsandelections.com/magazine/1705/a-decade-of-mccain-feingold>

“McCain-Feingold’s Devastating Legacy,” Washington Post, April 11, 2014.
http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/mccain-feingolds-devastating-legacy/2014/04/11/14a528e2-c18f-11e3-bcec-b71ee10e9bc3_story.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 6. February 29 – Running for the House in the Age of Gerrymandering.

The Objective of this class is to explore running for the House and the effects of both political and racial gerrymandering since the Supreme Court decision in Baker vs. Carr in 1962 (one-man-one vote) and the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and how parties have sought advantage in the age of computers.

Reading Assignment for this class:

The Partisan Divide, chapter 5 and 11;

“The Great Election Grab: When does gerrymandering become a threat to democracy?” by Jeffrey Toobin, the New Yorker, Dec. 8, 2003;

<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2003/12/08/the-great-election-grab>

“Governing in a Polarized America: A Bipartisan Blueprint to Strengthen our Democracy,” Commission on Political Reform, Bipartisan Policy Center, pp. 29-34 (summer 2014).

<http://bipartisanpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/default/files/files/BPC%20CPR%20Governing%20in%20a%20Polarized%20America.pdf>

Class 7. March 7 -- Efforts to Restrict Access to the Ballot

The Objective of this class is to explore how some states, controlled by Republican Legislatures, have attempted to restrict access to the ballot by passing “Voter ID” laws and limiting the time for in person early voting prior to election day and whether this serves a legitimate public purpose or is merely an effort to gain partisan advantage by one party over the other.

Guest Lecturer: Gerry Hebert, Executive Director of Campaign Legal Center.

Reading Assignment for this class (continued on next page):

Various recent federal court decisions on Blackboard;

“Texas’s voter-ID law...So, is it suppressing voters?” The Economist, Nov. 4, 2014;

<http://www.economist.com/blogs/democracyinamerica/2014/11/texas-voter-id-law>

“Voter ID Laws Scrutinized for Impact on Midterms,” by Trip Gabriel and Manny Fernandez, the New York Times, Nov. 18, 2014. <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/19/us/voter-id-laws-midterm-elections.html>

“The GOP’s stunning election advantage: How Republicans captured Congress – and how Democrats can win it back,” by Sean McElwee, Dec. 5th, 2015. <http://www.salon.com/>

[2015/12/05/the_gops_stunning_election_advantage_how_it_captured_congress_and_how_democrats_can_win_it_back/](http://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/local/2015/12/05/the-gops-stunning-election-advantage-how-it-captured-congress-and-how-democrats-can-win-it-back/)

“Meet the Non-Voters,” by T.A. Frank, Dec. 4th, 2015. http://www.nationaljournal.com/s/125441/meet-non-voters?mref=mostread_5

Class 8. March 21 – The Continuing Role of Race and Gender in American Politics

The Objective of this class is to trace the changing racial demographics in American politics in the past 20 years and how this has influenced the approach taken by the two major parties. It will also examine one of the myths of gender politics in the 21st century.

Reading Assignment for this class (continued on next page):

The Partisan Divide, chapter 4;

“What’s Up With White Women in 2012? Nothing New,” by Lynn Sanders, Carah Ong and Adam Hughes, Miller Center, University of Virginia. <http://millercenter.org/blog/whats-up-with-white-women-in-2012>

“2014: A reminder of the lasting power of racial politics in America,” The Washington Post, December 31, 2014; http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2014-a-reminder-of-the-lasting-power-of-racial-politics-in-america/2014/12/31/bd5c6c40-911c-11e4-ba53-a477d66580ed_story.html.

“On Racial Issues, America is divided both black and white and red and blue,” The Washington Post, December 27, 2014; http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/on-racial-issues-america-is-divided-both-black-and-white-and-red-and-blue/2014/12/26/3d2964c8-8d12-11e4-a085-34e9b9f09a58_story.html.

Class 9. March 28 – Running for the Senate

Second short paper due at the beginning of class

The objective of this class is explore running for the Senate and to show the similarities and differences between elections to these two houses and how each party approaches elections during a presidential year and a non-presidential.

Reading Assignment for this class:

The Partisan Divide, chapter 12

Class 10. April 4 – Old and New Media

The Objective of this class is to trace developments in the old media (which really started with the Kennedy-Nixon televised debates in 1960) and the new media which were perfected by the Obama

campaign of 2008 and which are being used widely by incumbents of both parties as they prepare for the next election.

Guest Lecturer: Nelly Decker, Director of Communications, and Paloma Perez, Staffer, for Congressman Marc Veasey (D-TX). Brad Fitch, President and CEO of the Congressional Management Foundation

Reading Assignment for this class:

The Making of the President 1960, chapter 11 on Blackboard;

Maisel and Brewer, chapter 10,

The Partisan Divide, chapter 10.

Class 11. April 11—Working in campaigns

Guest Lecturers – Matt Angle, former Executive Director of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC) and Jennifer Frost, fundraising consultant.

Class 12. April 18 – What Have We Learned from Primaries & Caucuses This Year?

Reading to be announced before class

Class 13. April 25 – Oral Presentations

Class 14. April 27—Oral Presentations