

PSC 229: Presidential Nominations

Winter, 2016

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Office Hours: TTh 1:00-2:00 & by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course examines presidential nominations in the United States. The U.S. Constitution has no provision for the nomination of candidates who are to be selected in the Electoral College. The Constitution leaves it to the various states to send electors to the Electoral College, which elects the president. But there is no constitutional mechanism for coordinating across the states. Political parties emerged in part to nominate and elect candidates. Presidential nominations thus are fundamentally a decision made by the parties. Understanding presidential nominations is mainly about understanding how and why the major political parties nominate candidates to stand for election on the party's label. That process has evolved and likely will continue to evolve as political parties adapt and change to the political environment in which they compete for power in elections.

Since nominations are a creature of political parties, this course will begin with the theoretical debate over what political parties are and why they exist. Political parties and presidential nominations have evolved in tandem throughout history, so this part of the course will also include a brief review of the history of the presidential nomination process.

The second part of the course will focus on the major actors in the nominations: political parties, candidates, elites & groups aligned with the political parties, donors and fund-raising, the media (print, broadcast, and online), voters in caucuses and primaries. Temporally, the nomination process includes the “invisible primary”—the period of time before the caucuses and primaries, the caucuses and primaries in which partisan voters select delegates to the convention, and the nominating conventions themselves.

The third part of the class will focus on specialized topics—the role of political party elites in the nomination process, the role of the first two states to hold nominating elections – Iowa and New Hampshire, the role and accuracy of public opinion polling (as an indicator of mass partisan preferences),

The class will examine the 2016 presidential election in depth because the class coincides with the critical stage of the nomination process—the presidential caucuses and primaries. Reading the news on a daily basis will be critical to class discussions.

Part of this examination will focus on the differences between the “systematic” and the “transient” factors affecting voter turnout and voter choice. Systematic factors are the more important from a theoretical standpoint. Systematic factors are those that transcend a single election cycle. Transient factors are those that matter in a particular election or are common in a given election year but which do not have much explanatory power beyond that election.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Attendance & Participation	1	10%	Always (or as close as possible to that)
Candidate Profile Paper:		10%	Tuesday, Jan. 12
Iowa Caucus paper:		25%	Thursday, Feb. 4
New Hampshire Primary: paper		25%	Tuesday, Feb. 16.
Final Exam:		30%	Tuesday, Mar. 15 2:30-4:45

Paper guidelines and directions are attached at the end of this syllabus

REQUIRED READINGS:

Barbara Norrander. *The Imperfect Primary*. Routledge. 2010 (or second edition 2015)
David Moore and Andrew Smith. 2015. *The First Primary* University of New Hampshire Press.
David Redlawsk, Caroline Tolbert, & Todd Donovan. 2010. *Why Iowa? How Caucuses and Sequential Elections Improve the Presidential Nominating Process*. University of Chicago Press.
Wayne Steger. 2015. *A Citizen's Guide to Presidential Nominations*. Routledge

Additional readings are posted to D2L. These are listed below by author and title.

WARNINGS

Do not rely on your current knowledge of politics. Most people—especially partisans—have highly biased perceptions and understanding of politics as a result of our beliefs. These biases are magnified by the selective reading of incomplete and biased information from the internet and the media. I've seen too many students in a class like this try to get by using their existing knowledge. Read the course materials. It's an important part of critical thinking—learning how to think about what we know in a critical manner so that you can better distinguish between what is fact and fallacy.

Do not text or surf the web during class. If I catch you texting during a class, you will automatically lose one letter grade for the course. I reserve the right to have laptop users turn around their computers at anytime. If a laptop is open to something other than class-related sites, then you will lose one letter grade for the course (1/3 of participation points). Texting and surfing the web indicate that you are not engaged in a class and lack the self-discipline to focus on the task at hand.

OTHER CONCERNS:

Deadlines: I am going to be strict and insist that you turn in assignments on time. There are few valid excuses (e.g., medical reasons) for missing deadlines. Aside from excused delays, I will deduct 10% from your paper grade per class day an assignment is late.

Attendance and participation: Participation means active involvement in class discussions. Showing up but not contributing to discussion will earn you only six of the ten points possible for this part of your grade. If you MUST miss class, you are responsible for the material covered that

day. You will be granted 2 absences—excused or unexcused. After that, absences negatively impact your grade by one-third of your participation grade per absence.

Academic Dishonesty: Work done for this course must adhere to the University Academic Integrity Policy, which you can review in the Student Handbook or by visiting Academic Integrity at DePaul University (<http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu>). The short and simple of it is this. If I catch you cheating, I will lower your grade. The extent to which your grade is lowered will depend on the magnitude of the offense. Pursuant to University policy, I will forward the action to the Academic Integrity Board, which may consider various actions up to and sometimes including suspension or dismissal from the university.

Copying material from another source (e.g., a book, other student, or webpage) without proper acknowledgment is cheating. *Cutting and splicing from sources culled from the internet is also cheating.* So be warned--JUST DON'T DO IT. See me if you have any questions about proper acknowledgment for your written work.

Learning Disabilities: Students who may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss their specific needs. All discussions will remain confidential.

- The Office for Students with Disabilities (for all other disabilities) at 773-325-1677

The Dean of Students Office (DOS) helps students in navigating the university, particularly during difficult situations, such as personal, financial, medical, and/or family crises. Absence Notifications to faculty, Late Withdrawals, and Community Resource Referrals, support students both in and outside of the classroom. Additionally we have resources and programs to support health and wellness, violence prevention, substance abuse and drug prevention, and LGBTQ student services. Please feel free to contact us at <http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/dos/>.

STANDARDS FOR GRADING

Written work will be evaluated according to the following criteria.

A: designates work of *extra-ordinarily high quality*; reflects *thorough and comprehensive understanding* of the issues at hand; presents a clearly identifiable thesis and the arguments are clearly organized with supporting ideas and/or evidence.

B: designates work of *high quality*; reflects a clearly organized and *good understanding* of the issues at hand; presents a substantive thesis and argument with development and support of ideas.

C: Designates work which meets the requirements of the assignment; reflects some organization and development of ideas, reflecting an *adequate understanding* of the issues/concepts at hand, and/or tends to develop arguments in simplistic manner.

D: Designates work of *poor quality* that meets the minimum requirements of the assignment; but which demonstrates poor organization of ideas and/or inattention to development of ideas, grammar, and spelling; *treatment of material is superficial and/or simplistic* with evidence that the student *lacks understanding* of some concepts or ideas; may indicate that the student has not read assignments.

F: Designates work of poor quality that *does not* meet the requirements of the assignment; fails to reflect an understanding of the issues at hand; fails to present organized arguments *or* fails to adequately support arguments with ideas; or which is not handed in on time.

Your **class participation** will be evaluated according to the following criteria.

A: Student has read the assignments and asks questions, expresses judgments and/or poses questions at each class session. Student is prepared at *all times* if asked to summarize assigned readings.

B: Student participates as above *most of the time*, and attends all class periods.

C: Student does not volunteer, responds only to direct questions, frequently remains silent during class discussions, and often is unable to summarize readings if called upon. Student may have absences but participation is adequate when in attendance.

D: Student does not volunteer, cannot respond to direct questions, keeps silent during class discussions, and is unable to summarize readings if called upon. Student may be frequently absent, but participation is often inadequate when in attendance.

F: Student sits silently in class, and fails to participate even minimally in class or group discussions. Student may be frequently absent even if participation is inadequate (silent) when student attends.

LECTURE TOPICS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

Jan. 5 – Introduction: The state of the 2012 nomination race

Jan. 7 – no class (**paper 1—candidate profiles**). **Due in Class, Tuesday, Jan. 12**

Jan. 12 – Theories of political parties & their role in democracy

- Gilens & Page “Testing theories of American Politics”
- Bawn, Cohen, Karol, Maskin, Noel & Zaller “A Theory of Political Parties”
- Strom “A Behavioral Theory of Competitive Political Parties”

Jan. 14 – partisanship as a potent force influencing perceptions and evaluations

- Bullock, Gerber, Hill, and Huber “Partisan Bias in Factual Beliefs”

Jan. 19 – Presidential nominations – two views

- Steger, ch. 1

Jan. 21: History of nomination process

- Steger, ch. 2
- Norrander, ch. 1, ch. 2
Norrander, ch. 3
Rules of the process (green pages)

Jan. 26: the process & critiques of the process

- The green pages-- <http://www.thegreenpapers.com/Definitions.html> (must read)
- Norrander, ch. 3

Jan. 28th: The special role of Iowa (what is a caucus and

- Redlawsk, et al: Preface, Chapter 1, 2, 3, and 4,

Feb. 2nd Iowa continued & Campaign momentum

- Redlawsk, et al: ch. 5, 6, 7

Feb. 4th Campaign Momentum

- Redlawsk, ch. 8, 9

Paper 2 “Why Iowa?” Due Feb. 9th

Feb. 9th New Hampshire Primary

- Moore & Smith, ch 1,2, 3, 4, 5, 6

Feb. 11th: New Hampshire Primary

- Moore & Smith, ch. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11

PAPER 3 “New Hampshire” Due Tuesday, Feb. 16

Week 6: Who Runs: candidate ambition and opportunism

- Steger, ch. 9
- Steger, “The Parties Decide when they have a sure thing”

Week 7: Party elites & Groups—endorsements & mass partisan support

- Steger, ch. 4
- Moore & Smith, ch. 9

Week 9: Money & Media Coverage

- Steger, ch. 4, 5

Week 9: Invisible primary, collusion or competition

- Steger, ch. 7, 8, 9

Week 10 Campaign momentum, & winning it all

- Norrander, 1993
- Norrander, ch. 4, 5
- Moore & Smith, ch. 11

Final Exam: Tuesday, Mar. 15 2:30-4:45

Guidelines for Papers:

1. Papers must be typed, double-spaced on white, unlined, 8.5" x 11" paper; with one inch margins
2. Papers must be printed in a 12 point font in Times New Roman font.
3. Papers must be stapled.
4. The number of typographical errors should be zero. Proofread!
5. Do not use contractions or otherwise abbreviate. You are not writing for your BFF.

Paper 1: Candidate Profiles (Due in class—January 12)

Task: do some research on the candidates and write a 4 - 5 page paper that profiles the presidential candidates of both political parties. This is not a tough task. It's just a little longer than your typical second day assignment because there are a bunch of candidates. I want to be sure everyone knows who the heck we are talking about in this race. For all of the “main” candidates, I want you to give me a brief description of: the candidate's background, their major positions on issues, and which candidate you think will win (no more than a page on this).

Five pages is the hard cap on this paper (12 point font, one inch margins, double-spaced, and none of the other weasel things that people do to make a paper look longer or shorter than it actually is). If you don't know where to find these things, I want to introduce you to a great little website:

www.google.com

Paper II Why Iowa? Due in Class, Tuesday, Feb 2

The purpose of this paper is to answer the question posed by this book. You should not summarize the book. Instead, I want analysis and synthesis. Synthesizing is not summarizing. Rather, synthesis involves organizing the information according to major themes or patterns across the studies. What is the main argument of the authors? Is it a “good thing” that Iowa is the first state to have a presidential nominating election (the caucuses) that select delegates to the national convention. Your paper might address supplemental questions like: what is the impact of the Iowa Caucuses? Why should/should not Iowa go first? What biases does this introduce for the selection of the two parties’ nominees.

Your paper should be 3 to 5 pages.

Paper III Why New Hampshire?

Why is the New Hampshire Primary important? What are the advantages and disadvantages of having New Hampshire hold the first primary?

If the NH primary is problematic for both parties and unfair to voters in other (later) states, why hasn't the system changed to alter the schedule of primaries? in order words, why haven't reform efforts worked? Why has New Hampshire been able to retain its glorified position despite opposition elsewhere?

Finally, why do New Hampshire polls lead the country? Even though NH voters do not always pick the winner and despite having unrepresentative voting populations, the authors argue that candidates rise and fall in polls in New Hampshire before they do so nationally. That suggests that NH voters do become aware of candidates or issues in some way that will occur nationally. Why does this happen?

Your paper should be 3 to 5 pages.