

**Political Science 3443**  
**Political Parties**  
**Dr. Todd Makse**  
**Spring 2025**

Class Meetings: Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:00pm-3:15pm in PC 214  
Office Hours: Mondays 1:00-2:30pm (on Zoom\*) and Thursdays 12:00-1:30pm (in person)  
Office: SIPA 405; Phone: 305-348-8451; Email: [tmakse@fiu.edu](mailto:tmakse@fiu.edu)

TA Information: Mr. Andrew Trabazo; Email: [atrab004@fiu.edu](mailto:atrab004@fiu.edu)  
Office Hours: Wednesdays 2:00-3:00pm (on Zoom\*)

\*Please email 30 minutes in advance to set up a meeting in case we're with another student.

**Course Description**

The purpose of the course is to understand the workings of American political parties. Parties are often said to have three aspects: the party organization, the party in the electorate, and the party in government. We will examine each of these three meanings of the word "party" and consider how these institutions play an enduring, yet constantly evolving role in American politics. The class will encourage students both to consider the source of our knowledge about parties and to apply that knowledge to analyze events in American politics.

In each section of the course, class sessions will involve large amounts of discussion and active learning. Your mastery of class material will be demonstrated through reading quizzes, several short writing assignments, participation, and two exams. It is essential that you complete readings on time and come to class prepared to discuss them. You are expected to have an introductory-level knowledge of American politics (POS 2041). If you have concerns over whether you are sufficiently prepared for this class, please speak to me.

**Textbook**

The required textbook for this course is:

*\*Party Politics in America*, 18<sup>th</sup> Edition, by Marjorie R. Hershey

**Grading options:**

There are two grading options for taking this course. If you select "Option A," you will be graded on attendance and participation in class discussions and activities. If you select "Option B," attendance and participation will not be graded, but you will complete a larger number of writing assignments outside of class. However, regular attendance is still necessary to succeed in the class, as nearly all exam questions are based on material covered in class.

You will select one of these options during the first week of class; except under extenuating circumstances, you won't be able to switch options mid-semester, and any such changes must be made prior to the midterm. Depending on which option you select, the grading components will be as follows:

## Grading Options

	Option A	Option B
Quizzes	15% (Two lowest scores dropped)	10% (Four lowest scores dropped)
Writing Assignments	20% (4 assignments X 5% each)	30% (6 assignments X 5% each)
Participation	15%	N/A
Article Memo	N/A	10%
Midterm	25%	25%
Final exam	25%	25%

For both grading options, the grading scale for final grades will be as follows:

93-100 A	90-92 A-	87-89 B+	83-86 B	80-82 B-
77-79 C+	70-76 C	60-69 D	59 and below F	

## Grading criteria:

*Reading Quizzes:* There will be eight reading quizzes completed during the first five minutes of class on the dates indicated in the syllabus. A list of ten key topics for each quiz is provided on Canvas—the six multiple-choice questions will be on these topics and will focus on major concepts, not on specific facts, dates, and names. Five correct answers will earn you full credit. **There will be no makeup quizzes for late or absent students**, but you get to drop the two lowest grades. The quizzes are closed book, but you may bring one 4x6 index card of hand-written notes. (I'll provide the index cards if needed). Students who score a 5 or 6 on the quiz will also be able to use that index card on the midterm or final exam.

*Writing Assignments:* There will be six assignments associated with in-class activities, typically involving problem solving, light research, and application of class concepts. These assignments are due, via Canvas submission, prior to class on the dates listed on Canvas. Option A students will be assigned four of six assignments (on the second week of class), while Option B students will complete all six. One assignment may be turned in up to a week late without penalty. Additional late submissions will receive half credit. More details can be found on the last page of the syllabus.

*Participation (Option A students only):* Option A students must participate in class discussions and group activities on a regular basis. Quality of participation will be assessed holistically and graded on a letter scale. Any student who does not receive at least a B-minus participation grade will receive a three-point deduction from their final grade (i.e., a B- is worth 12/15, while a C+ is worth 9/15).

*Attendance (Option A students only):* You have three “free” absences, no questions asked. Each additional absence (unless documented; see below) will result in a one-point deduction (out of 15) from your participation grade.

*Article Review (Option B students only):* Option B students will write a short paper (3 pages) analyzing an academic journal article about polarization and partisanship. This assignment will be due on April 3. Full assignment instructions will be posted on Canvas.

*Exams:* The midterm and final exams will be closed-book and will draw mostly on material covered in class lectures, discussions, and activities. Study guides will be posted on Canvas and review sessions will be held prior to each exam.

The grading scale for exams (which is different from the scale for final grades), is as follows:

90-100 A	85-89 A-	80-84 B+	75-79 B	70-74 B-	65-69 C+
60-64 C	55-59 C-	50-54 D+	45-49 D	40-44 D-	39 and below F

## **Class Policies**

*Absences:* Absences are only considered documented if you provide documentation (within one week of the absence) of either: (a) obligations such as athletic, military, or university-sponsored program obligations; (b) medical reasons for your absence. I understand that you may have to miss the occasional class session for other legitimate reasons (i.e., family issues, job interviews), but you have three non-documented absences without penalty, so you are responsible to manage these situations accordingly. Absences for religious holidays will also be deemed documented absences; please inform me if you plan to miss any classes for this reason.

*Lateness:* If you arrive late but within the first 15 minutes of class, it will be treated as 1/2 of an absence. If you arrive more than 15 minutes late for class, it will be treated as an absence.

*Classroom conduct:* I'm pretty lenient about the classroom. You don't need to ask permission to eat, use the restroom, get a drink, or use a laptop. I do ask that you refrain from doing anything that is rude or clearly distracting to me or your classmates (e.g., excessive texting, sleeping, watching videos on a laptop, incessant chatting, and especially packing up before class is over) and if you flagrantly disregard this request, you will be marked absent for the day.

*Makeup Exams:* I do not offer makeup exams without prior notice, except in emergency situations. If you have non-emergency reasons for missing the final exam, please notify me at least one week ahead of time. If you have an emergency, please inform me as soon as you can afterwards. Also, note that the format of makeup exams may differ from the format of the regular exam.

*Academic Misconduct:* Florida International University is a community dedicated to generating and imparting knowledge through excellent teaching and research, the rigorous and respectful exchange of ideas, and community service. All students should respect the right of others to have an equitable opportunity to learn and to honestly demonstrate the quality of their learning. Therefore, all students are expected to adhere to a standard of academic conduct, which demonstrates respect for themselves, their fellow students, and the educational mission of the University. All students are deemed by the University to understand that if they are found responsible for academic misconduct, they will be subject to the Academic Misconduct procedures and sanctions, as outlined in the Student Handbook. Violations include cheating, plagiarism, the use of AI to produce writing assignments, academic negligence or dishonesty. Plagiarism includes failure to acknowledge in footnotes, endnotes or other forms of documentation their use of the words and ideas of others. If you have questions about what constitutes proper citation, please speak to me.

*Disability Accommodations:* Students with disabilities, as defined by law, have the right to receive appropriate accommodations if their disabilities make it difficult to perform academic tasks in the usual way or in the allotted time frame. However, in order to receive accommodation, students with disabilities must register with the Disability Resource Center. This office will keep the student's written request, notify faculty who have a student with a disability enrolled in his or her class, and indicate what kinds of arrangements should be made. Please contact the DRC at the beginning of the semester.

*Availability:* Feel free to contact me by email with any concerns about the class or course material. I will make every effort to respond to all messages within 24 hours. Please send emails through your FIU email and check both your FIU email and Canvas daily.

## **Schedule for Class Topics, Readings and Quizzes**

**January 7-16: Class Introduction (Quiz #1 on January 14)**

\*Hershey, Ch. 1 and 2

**January 21-23: Party Organizations I (Quiz #2 on January 21)**

\*Hershey, Ch. 3 and 12

**January 28-30: Party Organizations II (Quiz #3 on January 28)**

\*Hershey, Ch. 4 and 5

**February 4-6: Party Identification (Quiz #4 on February 4)**

\*Hershey, Ch. 6 and 7

**February 11-18: Theories of Voting Behavior**

\*No new readings

**February 20: No Class**

**March 4: Midterm Review Session**

**March 6: Midterm**

**March 11-18: Participation and Voter Turnout (Quiz #5 on March 13)**

\*Hershey, Ch. 8

**March 20-25: Primaries (Quiz #6 on March 20)**

\*Hershey, Ch. 9 and 10

**March 27-April 3: General Elections and Presidential Campaigns (Quiz #7 on March 27)**

\*Hershey, Ch. 11

**April 8: Third Parties**

\*No new readings

**April 10-15: Polarization (Quiz #8 on November 20)**

\*Shanto Iyengar, et al. 2019. "The Origins and Consequences of Affective Polarization in the United States." *Annual Review of Political Science* 22: 129-46.

**April 17: Final Exam Review Session**

**April 24: Final Exam (12pm)**

## Writing Assignment Grading Standards

Specific instructions for each writing assignment can be found on Canvas, and all assignments should be submitted there. You should also bring a copy to class (either printed or on a laptop). Submit the assignment on Canvas as a .doc or .pdf file in the appropriate submission location.

Writing Assignments will be graded as follows:

**A (5 points):** All questions are addressed in sufficient detail, indicate thoughtful reflection on the activity, and accurately apply relevant class concepts.

**A- (4.5 points):** All questions are addressed fully and thoughtfully, but minor departures from instructions affect small parts of the assignment.

**B (4 points):** Most questions are addressed fully but one or two questions are partially incomplete, inaccurately reflect class concepts, and/or do not follow assignment instructions.

**C (3.5 points):** The assignment is nominally complete, but several questions are answered cursorily, inaccurately reflect class concepts, and/or do not follow assignment instructions.

**Incomplete (no credit):** Memos are so incomplete they do not meet the “C” standard. Such memos will be returned for resubmission. Upon resubmission, lateness penalties will apply.

Writing assignments will not be graded based on grammar or style as long as the writing is reasonably clear and the submission is organized enough to locate answers to questions. Do not feel the need to write answers in essay form—you can just answer the questions without introduction, thesis statement, conclusion, etc.

If you have any questions as you are completing the assignments, please post your question on the relevant discussion thread on the Canvas discussion board.

**Do not use ChatGPT or other AI programs to complete any aspect of these assignments.**

One assignment may be turned in late without penalty. Additional late submissions will receive half credit.