

CONTACT INFORMATION

Office: 260 Leutze Hall
Phone: (910) 962-3225
E-mail: lowery@uncw.edu
Personal web page: <http://www.uncw.edu/people/lowery>
Course web page: <http://www.uncw.edu/people/lowery/pls405>
Office Hours: http://people.uncw.edu/lowery/Weekly_schedule_Spring_2007.pdf

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- This course investigates change over time in the two-party system in the United States. The principal focus is upon the past realignments and current decline in party loyalties of U.S. voters as well as the potential for partisan regeneration and renewal in future American politics. Additional topics include: party organization, control of nominations, role of money and mass media in electoral contests, and party discipline in Congress and the executive branch.
- As part of this course, you will use email and the World Wide Web. First, I will introduce you to various web sites that summarize and interpret both survey and aggregate data pertaining to partisan attitudes and behavior. Second, I will also point you towards web sites of various party organizations. Third, we will all use email as a communication tool to share information throughout the course.
- Class meetings are intended to blend lecture and discussion. In order for the latter to prove valuable, you will need to complete the assigned readings on time and to come to class with questions and observations in mind.

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS

- Hershey, Marjorie Randon. 2007. *Party Politics in America*. [12th edition]. New York: Longman.
- Brewer, Mark D. And Jeffrey M. Stonecash. 2007. *Split: Class and Cultural Divides in American Politics*. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.
- *CPS, 2nd Generation Student-Response Keypad for Higher Education*. 2007. Denton, TX: eInstruction Corporation Classroom Performance System. **[Make sure that you buy a new – not a used – white and blue colored keypad; do not buy the older blue and orange keypad]**

TESTS AND GRADING

Your course grade will be based on a total of 300 points divided in equal thirds between 13 quizzes, a midterm examination, and a final examination.

- A series of 13 quizzes keyed to the assigned readings will contribute a possible 100 points toward your course grade. Your total quiz score will be computed by first deleting the lowest quiz score and then averaging the remaining quiz scores and multiplying that quiz average times 10.
- The 100-point midterm and 100-point final examinations will be half objective and half (optional) essay in format and based on assigned readings and class discussions. The final exam will not be cumulative. Prior to each exam, a list of essay topics will be provided. Prior to each assigned reading and class discussion, a chapter outline will be provided that includes material that relates to one of the essay topics. For each exam, I will select two of the (optional) essay topics and you can choose to write on either one of the two. You will not know ahead of time which two essay topics I have selected.

- Bonus points can be added to your course average, if you are the first to report (by email) any typographical or substantive errors in either of your textbooks or in any course materials available on the course web site or discussed or handed out in class. If you are the first to report it, each *typographical error* (spelling, grammar, punctuation, syntax, etc.) adds 1 % to your final course average. Each report of a *substantive error* of fact or interpretation adds 3 % to your final course average. Any misstatements by me in class are fair game for a bonus-point award (if you are the first to question the validity of the misstatement). **The purpose of these bonus points is to encourage and reward critical listening, reading, and thinking – three of the most important skills that you can acquire in your undergraduate career.** A basic tenant of the founding fathers of the United States was to question authority. Those in authority (whether political leaders or professors) are not always right in what they think or do.

Grading will be on a 10 point scale -- i.e., 90-100% = A, 80-89% = B, etc. Scores below 60% are failing. ***Any form of cheating on any exam or plagiarism on the research report will result in an automatic grade of F for the course, no matter what the quality of all other course work.***

REQUIRED ATTENDANCE

If you are a full-time, in-state student, the tuition and fees that you pay account for *about one-fourth* of the annual cost of your education at UNCW. The taxpayers of North Carolina, the federal government, and donors to the university pay much of the difference. **This public and private assistance amounts to over \$10,000 per year (think of it as tuition stamps) for each in-state, full-time student.** Out-of-state students pay more per year in tuition and fees, so even they are paying closer to 90% of the annual cost of their education at UNCW. **NC and federal taxpayers (over three-fourths of whom are *not* college graduates) have a right to expect that you attend classes -- *their* money pays for most of your public-university education.**

PENALIZED ABSENCES

- In the real (job) world, unforeseen circumstances (alarm clock doesn't go off, car trouble) are accepted as legitimate excuses for *short and infrequent* absences from work. ***Similarly, in this course two un-penalized absences will be allowed. For each additional absence, your final course grade will be reduced by one letter grade.***
- ***No makeup quizzes or exams will be given for un-excused absences. An un-excused absence will result in a grade of zero for any quiz or exam.***
- If late to class, it is your responsibility to ensure (*immediately after class*) that you are recorded present on the class attendance roll. Should you fail to ask to be marked present after class, you will have used up one of any remaining unpenalized absences. Your being late to class is not a problem *as long as this happens infrequently*. ***If you are tardy, see me immediately after class to make sure that your name was counted on the roll -- otherwise, you will be marked absent.***
- Once in class, it is expected that you will stay until dismissed or unless some foreseen or unforeseen emergency occurs. In the former case, please advise me ahead of class; in the latter case, leave class as quietly as possible and inform me as soon as possible of the circumstances that led to your unexpected departure. ***Otherwise, you will be marked absent for that day.***

EXCUSED ABSENCES

- In the real (job) world, frequent or lengthy absences are excused only in cases of serious illness or injury, death in the immediate family, or other catastrophic events. ***Similarly, in this course, truly extraordinary circumstances that rarely occur may warrant special arrangements that will be made on a case-by-case basis. Requests for excused absences must be submitted in writing with supporting documentation.***
- ***The following circumstances do not constitute an excused absence: job conflicts, car trouble, or an alarm clock that doesn't go off; save your two "free cuts" for situations like these.***

THESE ARE THE TERMS OF THIS COURSE.

YOUR CONTINUED ENROLLMENT WILL SIGNIFY THAT YOU UNDERSTAND AND ACCEPT THEM.

I WISH YOU SUCCESS AND WILL PROVIDE EVERY REASONABLE EFFORT TO ASSIST YOU.