

**POLITICAL SCIENCE 875**  
**Research on American Political Parties and Interest Groups**

**Professor Paul Allen Beck**  
**Office Hours: T, Th 3-4:30, other times by appointment**

**2140 Derby Hall (292-2880)**  
**Spring, 2001**

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This course is a research seminar on political parties and interest groups. It has two basic goals: (1) to familiarize students with the different kinds of data and research designs commonly employed in this research area; and (2) to facilitate the design and execution of student projects on a research question involving political parties or interest groups.

**Alternative Data and Research Designs.** The accumulation of scholarly knowledge on political parties and interest groups has been the product of a rich variety of research designs and the data they have yielded. The designs range from true experiments and quasi-experiments through cross-sectional surveys of masses and elites and “thick description” case studies to the analyses of archival sources of official documents and reports. In fact, it would be fair to say that the parties and groups area of political science makes more effective use of the full range of research designs and qualitative and quantitative data known to the discipline than any other research area. Class meetings will focus on 10 examples from the literature in parties and groups to exemplify the opportunities provided by this plurality of data and designs for the study of interest groups and parties. Particular attention should be paid to the nature of the design and the data in each reading.

**Individual Research Projects.** Each student in the class will be required to develop a research project using one (or more) of these designs, to report on this project to the class, and to write a term paper on the project of at least 15 pages in length. The term papers should be written in *APSR* style. (A copy of the American Political Science Association's *Style Manual for Political Science* will be made available in class, but students can also consult any recent issue of the journal). The paper should contain all the standard sections, if relevant: (1) an introduction setting out the research question(s), (2) a review of the relevant literature, (3) the theory underlying the study, (4) a description of the data, (5) the analysis and results, and (6) a conclusion. Their focus should be upon parties and groups in the United States, alone or in comparison with other nations. The projects should be identified in the first few weeks of the course in consultation with the instructor. They may involve secondary analyses of existing data bases, collection and analysis of primary data, and/or a formal theory. Students will be expected to make three presentations to the full class: The project topic on April 10/12 (covered point 1 above), the project design on May 1/3 (additionally covering points 2-4), and the full paper at a class symposium during finals week, June 4-7. Completed papers are due on the last day of classes, Friday, June 1.

**Expectations.** Because this is a research seminar, all participants will be expected to attend sessions regularly; contribute to seminar discussions; make presentations of the research question, design, and paper to the class; and produce a data-based or theoretical research paper by the end of the term. The class will meet at least once each week to discuss readings and for the purpose of class presentations. Grades for the course will be based on the quality of participation in class (1/3) and of the term paper (2/3). Incompletes are strongly discouraged.

**Academic Honesty.** All of the work that students do in this course is expected to be their own. Cheating or plagiarism (using someone else's words or ideas, including material from web sites, without proper citation) will not be tolerated. Any case of possible academic misconduct in the form of cheating or plagiarism will be reported automatically to the University Committee on Academic Misconduct and handled according to University policy.

**Arrangements for Students with Disabilities.** Students with disabilities are responsible for making their needs known to the instructor and seeking available assistance in a timely manner. It is best to do this during the first week of the course. Course materials can be made available in alternative formats upon request.

**Course Syllabus.** The following pages contain a topical outline for the course, the reading assignments for each topic, and the schedule of class sessions and paper deadlines.

## DATA AND DESIGNS IN THE STUDY OF PARTIES AND INTEREST GROUPS

**MARCH 27**    **Course Introduction**

**MARCH 29**    **Taking Treatments and Controls Beyond the Laboratory: Field Experiments**

Alan S. Gerber and Donald P. Green. 2000. "The Effects of Canvassing, Telephone Calls and Direct Mail on Voter Turnout: A Field Experiment." *American Political Science Review* 94: 653-63.

**APRIL 3**        **Accepting the Variation Nature Gives Us: Quasi-Experiments**

Jerrold G. Rusk. 1970. "The Effect of the Australian Ballot Reform on Split Ticket Voting: 1876-1908." *American Political Science Review* 64: 1220-38.

**APRIL 5**        **No class**

**APRIL 10**    **Presentations of Student Paper Topics, I**

**APRIL 12**    **Presentations of Student Paper Topics, II**

**APRIL 17**    **Reconstructing the Event: Qualitative Case Studies**

Byron E. Shafer. 1983. "The Hidden Struggle: Reform Politics, Institutional Change, and the Circulation of Elites, 1968-1972," and "The Content of the Mandate: A Final Meeting and a Reform Text." In *Quiet Revolution: The Struggle for the Democratic Party and the Shaping of Post-Reform Politics*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 3-9, 161-193, 555, and 569-571.

**APRIL 19**    **No class**

**APRIL 24**    **Following the Money: Contribution Reports**

Wendy Hansen and Neil J. Mitchell. 2000. "Disaggregating and Explaining Corporate Political Activity: Domestic and Foreign Corporations in National Politics," *American Political Science Review* 94: 891-903.

**APRIL 26**    **Mining the Historical Record: Official Archives**

Scott C. James and Brian L. Lawson. 1999. "The Political Economy of Voting Rights Enforcement in America's Gilded Age: Electoral College Competition, Partisan Commitment, and the Federal Election Law." *American Political Science Review* 93: 115-131.

**MAY 1**         **Presentations of Student Study Designs, I**

- MAY 3**            **Presentations of Student Study Designs, II**
- MAY 8**            **Opening the Window on Organizational Activities: Party Leaders as Sources**
- Paul Allen Beck, Russell J. Dalton, Audrey Haynes, and Robert Huckfeldt. 1999. "Local Party Organizations and Presidential Politics." In *Comparative Political Parties and Party Elites*, ed. Birol A. Yesilada. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 55-79.
- MAY 10**          **Opening the Window on Organizational Activities: Surveying Interest Groups**
- Gregory A. Caldeira, Marie Hojnacki, and John R. Wright. 2000. "The Lobbying Activities of Organized Interests in Federal Judicial Nominations." *Journal of Politics* 62: 51-69.
- MAY 15**          **Using Official Voting Records: Election Returns**
- V. O. Key, Jr. 1956. "Atrophy of Party Organization: A Study of Legislative Nominations." In *American State Politics: An Introduction*. New York: Knopf, 169-196.
- MAY 17**          **No class**
- MAY 22**          **Using Official Voting Records: Legislative Roll Calls**
- James M. Snyder, Jr., and Tim Groseclose. 2000. "Estimating Party Influence in Congressional Roll-Call Voting." *American Journal of Political Science* 44: 187-205.
- MAY 24**          **No class**
- MAY 29**          **Standing on the Shoulders of Others: Secondary Data Sources**
- John J. Coleman. 1999. "Unified Government, Divided Government, and Policy Responsiveness." *American Political Science Review* 93: 821-835.
- MAY 31**          **No class**
- JUNE 1**            ***Student Papers Due by 5 pm***
- JUNE 4-7**        ***Presentations of Student Papers***