

Political Science 420  
American Political Development

M-W 3:00-4:50  
135 North Kedzie Hall  
Professor Jeffery A. Jenkins  
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Course Description

This course will focus on American political development, from the late 18th Century (beginning with the Articles of Confederation) to the late 19th Century (ending with Reconstruction). Over the semester, we will cover a myriad of topics: for example, (a) why the Articles of Confederation failed and why the Constitutional system of government was more successful, (b) why political parties formed, both within Congress and at the mass level, and (c) how and why slavery tore apart the nation.

In addition, rather than simply document historical events, we will study American political development from a particular theoretical focus, referred to as the New Institutionalism (NI). In short, New Institutionalists contend that political outcomes do not just “happen.” Rather, to understand the basis for political outcomes, we must first understand what political actors (the individuals who produce political outcomes) want, that is, their preferences. The NI holds that political actors are goal-oriented, and political outcomes must be studied with that in mind. However, the NI also holds that political actors cannot always achieve their most preferred outcomes, because they make decisions within a particular political context. The political system has rules, and rules matter. Only those political outcomes that fall within the rules of the political game can be achieved. Thus, at any particular point in time, by understanding (a) the preferences of the political actors and (b) the set of rules in place, we can better understand *why* certain political outcomes occurred.

Course Materials

We will use two books and a coursepack, which will be available at *Ned's* sometime during the second week of class. The two books are:

John H. Aldrich. 1995. *Why Parties?: The Origin and Transformation of Party Politics in America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

David M. Potter. 1976. *The Impending Crisis, 1848-1861*. New York: Harper Torchbooks.

## Course Requirements

Students should finish each week's reading in advance of our scheduled meeting time. The course will follow a lecture/discussion format, and students are expected to participate in class discussion. I will not count participation toward the final grade, however, and class attendance is not mandatory. That having been said, lecture/discussion during class is fair game for exams, and students who miss class are responsible for "catching up" on their own.

There will be two exams, one term paper, and one set of mathematical problems. Each exam will be in two parts: a take-home portion and an in-class portion. Each part will be worth 15% of the final grade. No make-up exams will be given without (a) prior notification and (b) a suitable *medical* excuse. The term paper will be worth 30% of the final grade, and a detailed description of requirements will be provided by the fifth week of class. The problem set will be worth 10% of the final grade.

## Academic Dishonesty

Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated. Students who plagiarize or cheat will be held accountable to the full-extent of university guidelines.

## Readings

An \* next to a piece indicates that it can found in the coursepack.

### Week 1 --- 1/11 & 1/13

Focus: Introduction to the course

### Week 2 --- 1/20 (1/18 is a university holiday — MLK Day)

Focus: Why take a political science class to study political history? Why not just take a history class? We will examine how the tools of social science can help us better understand political events.

#### Readings:

Robert Lowery Clinton. 1994. "Game Theory, Legal History, and the Origins of Judicial Review: A Revisionist Analysis of Marbury v. Madison." *American Journal of Political Science* 38:285-302.\*

Jeffery A. Jenkins and Brian R. Sala. 1998. "The Spatial Theory of Voting and the Presidential Election of 1824." *American Journal of Political Science* 42:1157-79.\*

### Week 3 --- 1/25 & 1/27

Focus: In last week's readings, you were introduced to some of the tools (like spatial voting theory and game theory) that we will be using to understand historical phenomena in this course. This week, we develop a working knowledge of those tools, both by themselves as well as within the context of the broad theoretical framework known as the *New Institutionalism*, which we will be using to study American political development. In addition, a problem set will be distributed, which will be due the following week.

#### Readings:

Kenneth A. Shepsle. 1989. "Studying Institutions: Some Lessons from the Rational Choice Approach." *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 1:131-147.\*

Charles Stewart III. 1999. "Chapter One: An (Unusual) Introduction to the Study of Congress." *Analyzing Congress*.\*

### Week 4 --- 2/1 & 2/3

Focus: Very likely, we will spend part of Monday finishing the "primer" material from Week 3. Once the primer material has been completed, we will move beyond learning the tools of social science and begin applying our knowledge, through historical applications. For our first application, we examine why our first national legislature, the Continental (Confederation) Congress, failed, and how that failure helped shape the way that the Constitutional (Federal) Congress was constructed.

#### Readings:

Calvin Jillson and Rick K. Wilson. 1994. "Conclusion: Congressional Dynamics and the Demise of the Continental Congress." *Congressional Dynamics: Structure, Coordination & Choice in the First American Congress, 1774-1789*.\*

Charles Stewart III. 1999. "Chapter Two: The Constitutional Origins of Congress." *Analyzing Congress*.\*

John H. Aldrich, Calvin Jillson, and Rick K. Wilson. 1998. "Why Congress?: What the Failure of the Continental and the Survival of the Federal Congress Tell Us about the New Institutionalism." Manuscript.\*

## Week 5 --- 2/8 & 2/10

Focus: This week, we concentrate on how and why political parties developed at the *institutional* level in the United States. Specifically, we will explore partisan emergence within the U.S. Congress. Before we focus on the historical details, however, we first examine a New-Institutionalist theory of party formation.

John H. Aldrich. 1995. "Chapter 2 -- Why Parties Form" and "Chapter 3 -- Founding the First Parties: Institutions and Social Choice." *Why Parties?: The Origin and Transformation of Party Politics in America*.

John H. Aldrich and Ruth W. Grant. 1993. "The Antifederalists, the First Congress, and the First Parties." *Journal of Politics* 55:295-326.\*

John F. Hoadley. 1980. "The Emergence of Political Parties in Congress, 1789-1803." *American Political Science Review* 74:757-79.\*

Robert Allen Rutland. 1995. "Chapter One: The Jeffersonian Genesis." *The Democrats: From Jefferson to Clinton*.\*

## Week 6 --- 2/15 & 2/17

Focus: Last week, we analyzed the emergence of political parties in Congress. This week, we examine how partisan (and factional) dynamics helped shape the structure and process of Congressional institutions in the first two decades of the 19th Century.

### Readings:

Robert Allen Rutland. 1995. "Chapter Two: An Era of Feelings—Good and Bad." *The Democrats: From Jefferson to Clinton*.\*

Evelyn C. Fink, "Institutional Change as a Sophisticated Strategy: The Bill of Rights as a Political Solution." *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 7:477-510.\*

Sarah A. Binder. 1995. "Partisanship and Procedural Choice: Institutional Change in the Early Congress, 1789-1823." *Journal of Politics* 57:1093-1118.\*

Gerald Gamm and Kenneth Shepsle. 1989. "Emergence of Legislative Institutions: Standing Committees in the House and Senate, 1810-1825." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 14:39-66.\*

Jeffery A. Jenkins and Charles Stewart III. 1998. "Order from Chaos: The Transformation of the Committee System in the House, 1816-1822." Manuscript.\*

Week 7 --- 2/22 & 2/24

Focus: In week 5, we studied the origins of *institutional* parties. This week, we study the origins of *mass* parties. Two major questions will be examined: (1) how and why did citizens develop partisan identifications and (2) how and why did party leaders begin to mobilize their partisans?

Richard P. McCormick. 1960. "New Perspectives on Jacksonian Politics." *The American Historical Review* 65:288-301.\*

John H. Aldrich. 1995. "Chapter 4 --- Jacksonian Democracy: The Mass Party and Collective Action." *Why Parties?: The Origin and Transformation of Party Politics in America*.

Joel H. Silbey. 1991. "Chapter 2 --- The Country Demands the Existence of Parties," "Chapter 3 --- Organize! ORGANIZE! ORGANIZE!," and "Chapter 4 --- The Connecting Tissue: Ideas, Principles, and Policies in American Politics." *The American Political Nation, 1838-1893*.\*

Week 8 --- 3/1 & 3/3

Exam #1 --- take-home portion due 3/1; in-class portion on 3/3

Week 9 --- 3/8 & 3/10 (No Classes: Spring Break)

Week 10 --- 3/15 & 3/17

Focus: This week, we will analyze the how the political status-quo in the antebellum United States, in which the Democrats and Whigs vied for power, began to crumble. Our focus will be on the rise of slavery as the defining issue of the early 1850s and its impact on party politics and the political system as a whole.

Readings:

Roger L. Ransom. "Chapter 4: The Politics of Slavery." *Conflict and Compromise*.\*

David M. Potter. 1976. "Chapters 1 to 6." *The Impending Crisis, 1848-1861*.

Sean M. Theriault and Barry R. Weingast. 1999. "Agenda Manipulation, Strategic Voting, and Legislative Details in the Compromise of 1850." Manuscript.\*

Week 11 --- 3/22 & 3/24 (No class on 3/24 --- WPSA conference) & Week 12 --- 3/29 & 3/31

Focus: We continue our analysis of the political chaos of the 1850s, by examining how the slavery issue led to the formation of a new party system, in which the Republicans succeeded the Whigs at the national level.

Roger L. Ransom. "Chapter 5: The Politics of Compromise." *Conflict and Compromise*.\*

David M. Potter. 1976. "Chapters 7 to 10." *The Impending Crisis, 1848-1861*.

John H. Aldrich. 1995. "Chapter 5 --- Whigs and Republicans: Institutions, Issue Agendas, and Ambition." *Why Parties?: The Origin and Transformation of Party Politics in America*.

Jeffery A. Jenkins and Timothy P. Nokken. 1998. "The Institutional Origins of the Republican Party: A Spatial Voting Analysis of the House Speakership Election of 1855-56." Manuscript.\*

Barry R. Weingast. 1998. "Political Stability and Civil War: Institutions, Commitment, and American Democracy." *Analytic Narratives*.\*

Week 13 --- 4/5 & 4/7 & Week 14 --- 4/12 & 4/14 (No class on 4/14 --- MPSA conference)

Focus: We finish our examination of the troubled era of the 1850s, delve into the South's secession in 1860-61 and the political formation of the Confederate system, and analyze the political aspects of the Civil War.

Readings:

David M. Potter. 1976. "Chapters 11 to 20." *The Impending Crisis, 1848-1861*.

William H. Riker. 1986. "Lincoln at Freeport." *The Art of Political Manipulation*.\*

Roger L. Ransom. "Chapter 6: Slavery and the War." *Conflict and Compromise*.\*

Marshall L DeRosa. 1991. "Chapter 5 --- Institutional Innovations." *The Confederate Constitution of 1861*.\*

Eric L. McKittrick. 1967. "Party Politics and the Union and Confederate War Efforts." *The American Party Systems: Stages of Political Development*.\*

Week 15 --- 4/19 & 4/21

Focus: In the aftermath of the Civil War, Republican leaders faced the challenge of rebuilding the nation. This period of American history has been labeled the Reconstruction Era.

Readings:

Robert Allen Rutland. 1995. "Chapter 5: Waving the Bloody Shirt." *The Democrats: From Jefferson to Clinton*.\*

Robert Allen Rutland. 1996. "Chapter 5: The Party Predominant." *The Republicans: From Lincoln to Bush*.\*

Richard Franklin Bense. 1990. "Chapter 6: State Structure and Reconstruction: The Political Legacy of the Civil War." *Yankee Leviathan: The Origins of Central State Authority in America, 1859-1877*.\*

Charles Stewart III and Barry R. Weingast. 1992. "Stacking the Senate, Changing the Nation: Republican Rotten Boroughs, Statehood Politics, and American Political Development." *Studies in American Political Development* 6:223-271.\*

Week 16 --- 4/26 & 4/28

Exam #2 --- take-home portion due 4/26; in-class portion on 4/28

Week 17 --- 5/3 & 5/7 (Final Exams)

Terms Papers Due