

**Political Parties**  
**Political Science 3316F**  
**Department of Political Science, University of Western Ontario**  
**Fall Term 2025**

Dr. Bruce Morrison  
SSC 7225; 519 661-2111 ext. 84937  
[bmorris2@uwo.ca](mailto:bmorris2@uwo.ca)  
Office hours: Thursday 3-4:30 pm, or by appointment

**Course Description:**

E.E. Schattschneider famously wrote that “modern democracy is unthinkable save in terms of parties.” However, if democracy and parties are intertwined, the relationship is far from unproblematic. Parties are broadly unpopular, and arguably in crisis or even decline. One set of responses has, however, involved the emergence of new parties, or the reworking of existing parties, in ways that have created space for populist or anti-system politics and much more polarized party systems.

This course provides a comparative survey of the literature on political parties, with a strong emphasis on the Canadian case, as well as others, and with a view to developing an understanding of what parties are, what roles they play within democratic regimes, and what shape parties are in at this point. The course also places great stress on the concept of party systems, examining in detail the development of national party systems, the changes they have undergone in recent decades, as well as the effects of party systems. Can we imagine representative democracy without parties? If not, what kinds of parties will inhabit and help define our political regimes throughout the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

**Learning Outcomes:**

Students in this course will learn to: (a) define political parties; (b) explain their historical emergence and relationship to democratic politics; (c) identify and evaluate the adaptations of political parties to various challenges to party-based democracy; and (d) set the Canadian experience securely within the broader comparative context in these and other respects.

**Course Format:**

We will meet in person on a weekly basis. Our class meetings will combine significant lecture segments with plenty of opportunities for questions and discussion. So, please do show up having read and absorbed the assigned readings, and ready to engage with the material in vigorous and critical fashion. All assigned readings will be made available on the OWL site, at the Course Readings tab.

**\*\*Attendance is required for success in this course.**

**\*\*Electronic devices will be permissible only for the purpose of note-taking and any other class-related activities. Disruptive use of these devices will not be permitted.**

**\*\*In all assignments, students are expected to submit their own original work for evaluation. All assignments are subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software, Turnitin. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Academic offenses such as plagiarism will be taken very**

seriously. The use of AI tools such as ChatGPT in submissions for this course will also be considered an academic offence.

**Course Requirements and Evaluation:**

- (a) Two weekly discussion questions: 5%
- (b) Participation: 10%
- (c) Mid-term exam (90 minutes): 25%
- (d) Political party profile: 30%
- (e) Final exam, with advance preparation: 30%

**Weekly Discussion Questions:** Students will be expected to submit two discussion questions each week based on the assigned readings for that week. Read the material, reflect on it, and then raise two questions that point to areas of confusion or difficulty in your view. Please submit on OWL in advance of the Thursday class, no later than 10 am. I will count ten sets of questions, beginning week 2 and excluding week 6, which means that you may skip one week without penalty.

**Participation:** Students will be expected to come to class prepared, and to participate regularly and constructively in our weekly meetings. Participation will be evaluated based on the following considerations: relevance, responsiveness to the material laid out in assigned readings and lecture segments, and insightfulness. Keep in mind that a well-informed and helpful question can be an important element in course participation.

**Mid-Term Exam:** The aim will be to examine students on the early weeks of the course, but with added preparation based on student absorption of at least three high-quality sources (e.g., articles, book chapters) covering the relevant details of a political party the student wishes to subject to analysis. The main exam essay will therefore cover both the assigned materials and the additional, non-syllabus student coverage. This will allow the student to address questions like the following: What type of party is it? Does it fit easily or with difficulty into its category? What are the indicators that help you to determine this? What are the strengths and weaknesses associated with its character and organization? In what ways is its performance affected by these features? The exam will feature 30 minutes of identification questions on course content, followed by a 60-minute essay applying the key typological material as discussed above. The exam will take place in class on October 9. This assignment is not eligible for absence without formal accommodation. Students receiving formal accommodation will have the opportunity to write the exam on October 17 at 10 am.

**Case Analysis: Political Party Profile:** Students will be expected to pick a political party other than the one emphasized in their mid-term preparation, either from the same national context or a different one, and respond to the following questions in a written and submitted paper: How successful has the party been over the course of its existence? On what basis do you draw this conclusion? How do you explain the degree of success or failure experienced by the party? The key is to consider the various tools developed in the course to explain the party's performance: party type and organization including the extent to which it is internally democratic, party financing, the party system within which it operates, the influence of populism and polarization, and so on. Length: 7-8 pages, double-spaced, one-inch margins. In addition to syllabus materials, please use at least six non-syllabus sources. A fuller assignment description is available on the course website.

*Deadline: **December 5, 11:59 pm.** Flexibility: No late penalties on submissions received by **December 7, 11:59 pm.** Late penalties will then be 2% per day.*

**Final Exam:** Students will write a two-hour formal exam. The exam will take place as determined by the registrar. Details on the structure of the exam will be provided ahead of time.

**Prerequisite:** Political Science 2230E or 2530F/G or 2234E or 2244E or 2245E or 2545F/G.

Unless you have either the prerequisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

### **Course Meetings and Assigned Readings**

#### **Week One: Introduction** (September 4)

No required readings.

#### **Week Two: Political Parties – What, When, and Why?** (September 11)

John Kenneth White, 2006. “What is a Political Party?” In Richard S. Katz and William Crotty, eds., *Handbook of Party Politics* (SAGE Publications).

Richard S. Katz, 2006. “Party in Democratic Theory.” In Richard S. Katz and William Crotty, eds., *Handbook of Party Politics* (SAGE Publications).

Susan E. Scarrow, 2006. “The Nineteenth-Century Origins of Modern Political Parties.” In Richard S. Katz and William Crotty, eds., *Handbook of Party Politics* (SAGE Publications).

Russell J. Dalton and Martin P. Wattenberg, 2002. “Unthinkable Democracy: Political Change in Advanced Industrial Democracies.” In Russell J. Dalton and Martin P. Wattenberg, eds., *Parties without Partisans: Political Change in Advanced Industrial Democracies* (Oxford University Press), pp. 3-14.

#### **Week Three: Party Origins – Presidential and Parliamentary** (September 18)

William Crotty, “Party Origins and Evolution in the United States.” In Richard S. Katz and William Crotty, eds., *Handbook of Party Politics* (SAGE Publications).

Gary W. Cox, 1987. *The Efficient Secret: The Cabinet and the Development of Political Parties in Victorian England* (Cambridge University Press), chapters 3, 6, and 7.

#### **Week Four: Party Types** (September 25)

Maurice Duverger, 2009. “Caucus and Branch, Cadre Parties and Mass Parties.” In Peter Mair, ed., *The West European Party System* (Oxford University Press).

Otto Kirchheimer, 2009. “The Catch-All Party.” In Peter Mair, ed., *The West European Party System* (Oxford University Press).

Richard S. Katz and Peter Mair, 1995. "Changing Models of Party Organization and Party Democracy: The Emergence of the Cartel Party." *Party Politics* 1 (1): 5-28.

Ingrid van Biezen and Thomas Poguntke, 2014. "The Decline of Membership-based Politics." *Party Politics* 20 (2): 205-216.

### **Week Five: Party Types – Canadian Innovations (October 2)**

Nelson Wiseman, 2020. *Partisan Odysseys: Canada's Political Parties* (University of Toronto Press), chapter 1.

Gordon T. Stewart, 1980. "Political Patronage under MacDonald and Laurier, 1878-1911." *American Review of Canadian Studies* 10 (1): 13-26.

R. Kenneth Carty, 2002. "The Politics of Tecumseh Corners: Canadian Political Parties as Franchise Organizations." *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 35 (4): 723-745.

R. Kenneth Carty, 2013. "Has Brokerage Politics Ended?" In Amanda Bittner and Royce Koop, *Parties, Elections, and the Future of Canadian Politics* (University of British Columbia Press).

### **Week Six: Mid-Term Exam (October 9)**

Review lecture and reading content to date, with consideration of at least three strong sources on a party of choice.

### **Week Seven: Party Systems and their Sources (October 16)**

Steven Wolinetz, 2006. "Party System and Party System Types," in Richard S. Katz and William Crotty, eds., *Handbook of Party Politics* (SAGE Publications).

Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan, 2009. "Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments," in Peter Mair, ed., *The West European Party System* (Oxford University Press).

### **Week Eight: Canadian Party System Development (October 23)**

R.K. Carty, "Three Canadian Party Systems: An Interpretation of the Development of National Parties." George Perlin, ed., *Party Democracy in Canada* (Prentice-Hall, 1988).

Richard Johnston, 2010. "Political Parties and the Electoral System." In John C. Courtney and David E. Smith, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Canadian Politics* (Oxford University Press).

Royce Koop and Amanda Bittner, 2013. "Parties and Elections After 2011: The Fifth Canadian Party System?" Royce Koop and Amanda Bittner, eds., *Parties, Elections, and the Future of Canadian Politics* (UBC Press).

Scott Pruyers, Anthony Sayers, and Lucas Czarnecki, 2020. "Nationalization and Regionalization in the Canadian Party System, 1867-2015." *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 53 (1): 151-169.

### **Week Nine: Ideology, Strategy, and Electoral Competition (October 30)**

Éric Bélanger and Jean-François Godbout, 2010. "Why Do Parties Merge? The Case of the Conservative Party of Canada." *Parliamentary Affairs* 63 (1): 41-65.

Russell J. Dalton and Ian McAllister, 2015. "Random Walk or Planned Excursion? Continuity and Change in the Left-Right Positions of Political Parties." *Comparative Political Studies* 48 (6): 759-787.

Robert Ford and Will Jennings, 2020. "The Changing Cleavage Politics of Western Europe." *Annual Review of Political Science* 23: 295-314.

**\*\*Break Week (no class on November 6)**

**Week Ten: Partisanship, Polarization, and Populism (November 13)**

Mike Medeiros and Alain Noel, 2014. "The Forgotten Side of Partisanship: Negative Party Identification in Four Anglo-American Democracies." *Comparative Political Studies* 47, 7: 1022-46.

Paul Pierson and Eric Schickler, 2020. "Madison's Constitution Under Stress: A Developmental Analysis of Political Polarization." *Annual Review of Political Science* 23: 37-58.

Frances E. Lee, 2020. "Populism and the American Party System: Opportunities and Constraints." *American Political Science Review* 18 (2): 370-388.

Zsolt Enyedi, 2016. "Populist Polarization and Party System Institutionalization: The Role of Party Politics in De-Democratization." *Problems of Post-Communism* 63 (4): 210-220.

**Week Eleven: Parties from Private to Public Entities (November 20)**

Ingrid van Biezen, 2004. "Political Parties as Public Utilities." *Party Politics* 10 (6): 701-722.

John C. Courtney, 2015. "Canada's National Parties: From Private to Public Institutions." In Campbell Sharman and Richard Johnston, eds., *Parties and Party Systems: Structure and Context* (UBC Press).

P. (Pepijn) Corduener, 2020. "Democracy and the Entanglement of Political Parties and the State: Party-State Relations in 20<sup>th</sup>-Century France, Italy, and Germany." *Comparative Political Studies* 53 (1): 40-70.

**Week Twelve: Party Funding (November 27)**

Ingrid van Biezen and Petr Kovecký, 2017. "The Paradox of Party Funding: The Limited Impact of State Subsidies on Party Membership." in Susan E. Scarrow, Paul D. Webb, and Thomas Poguntke, eds., *Organizing Political Parties* (Oxford University Press).

Eugenio Pizzimenti, 2017. "The Evolution of Party Funding in Italy: A Case of Inclusive Cartelisation?" *Modern Italy* 22 (1): 71-85.

Peter Aucoin and Herman Bakvis, 2015. "Canadian Public Funding of Parties and the End of Per-Vote Subsidies: Parties, Strategic Interests, and Decartelization." In Campbell Sharman and Richard Johnston, eds., *Parties and Party Systems: Structure and Context* (UBC Press).

**Week Thirteen: Intra-Party Democracy (December 4)**

Ofer Kenig and Scott Pruyers, 2018. "The Challenges of Inclusive Intra-party Selection Methods," in Guillermo Cordero and Xavier Collier, eds., *Democratizing Candidate Selection: New Methods, Old Receipts?* (Palgrave Macmillan).

Scott Pruyzers and Anthony Sayers, 2018. "Party Primaries in Canada," in Robert G. Boatright, ed., *Routledge Handbook of Primary Elections* (Routledge).

Piero Ignazi (2020). "The Four Knights of Intra-party Democracy: A Rescue for Party Delegation." *Party Politics* 26 (1): 9-20.

Wolfgang Rüdiger and Javier Sajuria, 2020. "Green Party Members and Grass-roots Democracy: A Comparative Analysis." *Party Politics* 26 (1): 21-31.

**\*\*Party Profile Due** (December 5, with flexibility to December 7)