Gov 2473, Political Parties and Interest Groups

Fall 2011

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Course Time: Thursday, 2-4 pm
Location: CGIS N-108

Requirements: The grade for the course will be based on:

(1) Class Participation (40% of the grade). To facilitate discussion, each week each student will write a short memo based on the assigned reading. This memo should be no more than one paragraph, and it should address one or more of the following questions: (i) What was exceptionally good or bad about the readings? (ii) What issues do the readings raise but not adequately address? That is, what do the readings suggest about promising directions for further research? The memos will not be graded, but they will be circulated to all participants so everyone can read them before class. The memos will help guide the discussion each week.

(2) A Final Paper (60% of the grade). You will attempt to write a publishable-quality paper. The topic must involve political parties or interest groups, or both. The paper may be theoretical or empirical. The paper is due on or before December 2, 2011.

Readings: The readings consist mainly of journal articles, and a few book chapters. Most are available online from JSTOR or other Harvard Library E-Resources. Any readings that are unavailable online will be on the course web site.

Topics:

1. Theories of Political Parties


2. Parties as Informational Cues for Voters


3. Parties and Roll Call Voting


4. Parties and Fiscal Policy Outcomes


5. Parties and Distributive Politics


Levitt, Steven D. and James M. Snyder Jr. 1995. “Political Parties and the Distribution of


6. Effects of Interparty Competition


7. Theories of Interest Group Activity


8. Interest Groups and Policy Outcomes


9. The Value of Political Connections and Office


Querubin, Pablo and James M. Snyder Jr. 2011.


10. Interest Groups and Roll Call Voting


