

**Parties and Legislative Strategy PSC 286  
George Washington University  
Legislative Affairs Program, Spring 2004**

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Hall of the States  
Thursday 6-8 p.m.

**Course Description**

This course will examine party management of the Congress, including inter-party and intra-party relations and polarization. Topics include redistricting and campaign considerations. By no means, will it offer only heuristic academic instruction. It will examine specific pieces of legislation, current, and historical, concentrating on the profound influences of political parties and their leaders in shaping the legislation and shepherding it through the legislative process. It will concentrate not only on the methodology used by the parties and their respective leaders; in addition, it will emphasize the interpersonal relationships of individual House and Senate leaders and assess their ability to “get things done.” These interactions include formal and informal contact among legislators, within their own party and across party lines.

Daily news events will serve as case studies. For example, ten days after Labor Day, 2003, the Senate, ignoring a Presidential veto threat, prevented the Bush administration, in a 54 to 45 vote, from issuing new overtime pay rules. Reflecting the steady decrease in jobs, this vote represented a rare victory for the Democrats and their colleagues in organized labor.

We will also examine and explain, in detail, the myriad roles of party in the United States Senate. Is the “world’s greatest deliberative body,” through its formal and informal rules and procedures, more collegial than in the “peoples’ house?” What effect does the filibuster have in terms of the majority party’s ability to muster 60 senators to put a stop to it?

This course offers a unique opportunity to advanced students to learn not only about the complex interrelationships of political parties in orchestrating what gets accomplished, or doesn’t get done, in the United States Congress, but also the juxtaposition and balancing act members of the House and Senate must maintain to be reelected to Congress and continue serving the public.

## **Required Readings**

*American Political Parties: Decline or Resurgence?* Jeffrey E. Cohen, Richard Fleisher and Paul Kantor, editors, (CQ Press, 2001)

*Congressional Procedures and the Policy Process*, Walter Oleszek (CQ Press, 2001) Fifth Edition.

*Parties, Politics and Public Policy in America*, William Keefe and Marc Hetherington (CQ Press, 2003) 10<sup>th</sup> Edition.

*Party Politics in America*, Paul Allen Beck, (Longman, 1996) eighth edition.

*Polarized Politics*, John R. Bond, Richard Fleisher, editors, (CQ Press, 2000).

## **Grading**

Midterm examination will count 20% of the grade. A research paper, which should be 15 to 20 pages long, will count 20%. The final examination will count 40%. Class participation will be worth 20%. All examinations will consist of essay questions, requiring well-reasoned analyses that are based on the reading materials, class lectures and discussions. Students are expected to attend all classes, have read all of the assigned materials and be prepared to discuss them.

## **Class Schedule, Lectures and Reading Assignments**

- January 15 Political Parties: Roles in American Politics  
Hershey, Beck, chapters 1 and 2
- January 22 Parties: Continuity and Change  
Hershey, Beck, chapters 16  
Cohen, Fleisher, and Kantor, Introduction  
Keefe, Hetherington, pages 178-181
- January 29 Parties and Congress  
Cohen, Fleisher and Kantor, chapter 9  
Hershey and Beck, chapter 13
- February 5 Party Leadership in Congress  
Bond, Fleisher, chapters 3 and 5
- February 12 Parties in Congress: Governance or Gridlock?  
Cohen, Fleisher and Kantor, chapter 10
- February 19 Congressional Parties and Public Policy  
Keefe, Hetherington, chapter 5 and pages 200,203-206, 224
- February 26 Mid-Term Examination
- March 4 Congress, Parties and the Presidency  
Bond, Fleisher, chapters 1, 4 and 6
- March 11 Presidential Influence in Congress – Part II  
Bond, Fleisher, chapters 7, 8
- March 18 Spring Vacation
- March 25 PAPER DUE  
Party Identification in the 90s  
Cohen, Fleisher and Kantor, chapter 2
- April 1 Party Polarization- Reflections on Citizens' Preferences  
Cohen, Fleisher and Kantor, chapter 3  
Bond, Fleisher, chapter 2
- April 8 Parties and Their Roles Today  
Cohen, Fleisher and Kantor, chapters 5 and 8
- April 15 Parties and Their Roles in the Future  
Cohen, Fleisher and Kantor, Chapter 11 and 12  
Bond, Fleisher, chapter 9
- April 22 FINAL EXAMINATION

