Description: Political parties are endogenous to democracy. This is true despite great misgivings of political theorists about the effects of parties, and despite the fact that parties are rarely the product of formal arrangements. Constitutions, for example, are generally silent on the topic of political parties. Parties also form the basis of dominance of many authoritarian regimes. Because of their pervasiveness and influence, parties are among the most widely studied phenomena in politics. Theorists have reflected on them, and analysts studied them, since their origins in the 17th century.

Given the long history of writings on parties, it is surprising that, four centuries later, many controversies remain unsettled. Why do parties arise? Why do some political systems have many parties and others just two, and what difference does this make for the quality of governance and representation? What factors shape the ideological character of parties? What is the relative weight of social cleavages versus strategic action in shaping party systems? Are parties good for citizens in democracy? Are they good for the populations of authoritarian states? Why do some parties appeal to voters by promising particular programs, whereas others use clientelist methods to mobilize electoral support? These are the kinds of questions we will address.

Assignments: You will be asked to complete three sets of assignments for this course:

1. Attendance and participation (25% of final grade): Come prepared and actively take part in class discussions.

2. Two review papers (25% of final grade): You will write reviews of two readings from two different weeks, due at the beginning of the session in which that paper is assigned. These reviews should critically assess the reading. Your review should be 2-3 pages long, double-spaced. You will also be expected to lead the discussion of that reading.

3. Comparative research paper (50% of final grade): You will write a research paper due at the end of the semester. The paper should compare and contrast two political parties (from different countries) or two party systems. Your paper should be no longer than 25 pages, double spaced. I must approve your topic and cases in advance.

Readings: Assigned readings are available on the course website on Learn@UW.
Course outline

Introduction: January 22

Social Cleavages and Ideology

January 27

January 29

Parties within Institutions

February 3

February 5

Electoral Rules and Parties

February 10

February 12
Party Organizations

February 17

February 19

Party Competition

February 24

February 26

Party System Institutionalization

March 3

March 5
Ideology

March 10

March 12

Partisanship

March 24

March 26

Parties in New Democracies

March 31

April 2
**Clientelism**

*April 7*

*April 9*

**Ethnicity and Valence**

*April 14*

*April 16*

**Party Change**

*April 21*

*April 23*
Party System Change

April 28

April 30

Parties in Non-Democracies

May 5

May 7