Course Lecture Topics

1. America’s Democratic Republic
2. Partisanship & Political Profiling
3. Party Competition
4. America’s Two Party System
5. Power Of The Vote / Power Of Money
6. Elections As Symbolic
7. Candidate Image / Political Campaign Rhetoric
8. Interest Groups Protecting Elite Values
9. Lobbyists / Political Action Committees (PACs)
10. Capitalism & Democracy
1. A successful democracy is based on the consent of the governed along with widespread support.

2. Democratic governments allow its citizens the right to speak freely and elect its leaders. A formal democracy is a political system that possesses four factors:
   a. regular and fair elections;
   b. universal suffrage;
   c. accountability of government policies to elected representatives; and
   d. guaranteeing right to free expression, association and reasonable protections against capricious government action.
3. Elites agree that power and power sharing influence all democracies.

4. Pluralists would argue that the subordinate classes unite as evidenced in associations, unions, and parties.
   • This gives them power although all do not necessarily possess property, high social status, or command over cultural hegemony.
   • Elites show favor towards formal democracies, for they do not see subordinates as posing much of a threat, as their organizational power base is weak.
5. The United States hosts a republican form of democracy.
6. True democracies can only be realized when every citizen participates in all decisions concerning public policy.
7. Pluralism stresses the need for citizens to hold leaders accountable through elections.
8. Masses elect leaders who make decisions for their citizens. America’s two-party system is more stable than a multiparty system that requires coalitions to achieve a majority.
9. Countries with two-party systems enjoy the stability that it affords. Multi-party countries like Italy, France, and even single-party systems functioning in some emerging countries have suffered instability from time to time.
10. Pluralists would argue that America’s two parties agree on most issues that face the nation with their primary disagreements relating to the means more than ends.

11. The ends are those policies that serve the interests of economic and political elites. Stability is a result of the two-party system and the way elites and the parties narrow the issues, which then progress to the public stage.
1. Social factors that include race, religion and occupation influence partisanship.

2. Partisanship is a better predictor of vote choice than social factors.

3. Party identification does not automatically determine how one is to vote.

4. People may keep their party registration the same for the rest of their life.
5. What is susceptible to change is voting behavior.

6. Changes in attitudes toward public policy and political candidates is open gain, thus affording greater significance to understanding whether religious orthodoxy will have a long-term effect on voter behavior and whether it will ever affect partisanship.

7. Party identification is a “psychological commitment or attachment to a political party that normally predisposes us to evaluate their party and its candidates in a favorable light.”

8. Party identifications help to encourage citizens to vote for those candidates or support those issues that their self-identified party supports.
9. Identifying key variables also assists researchers in determining the influence primary groups have on a potential voter.

10. These groups are those “face – to – face” groups with which one associates. Identifiers are shared interests or goals that are not determined by personal contact.

11. Social classes are broad groupings based on positions held in society.

12. These social classes can also include the amount of money one earns or job that one holds.
10. Variables can help determine partisanship like the religion, social status and place of residence of the individual.

- For example, Catholics tend to be Democrats and Protestants tend to be Republicans. Those individuals having a low social status tended to associate with the Democrats and those holding high social status tended to be Republican. They have also inferred that rural citizens tend to be more closely associated with the Republican Party and those residing in the urban areas tended to lean towards the Democratic Party.
11. A conglomeration of variables or even a particular characteristic can assist us in determining individual behavior.

12. Though this is true, it is the degree of partisanship one holds that remains the best predictor for determining how one's vote.
System In Decay

Party Competition Reflects Elite Competition

1. There is partisan agreement on democratic values, freedom and property, and major policy directions.
2. Both major parties present unclear ideological choices.
3. Social groups have mass attachment to both major parties.
4. There is ideological detachment to both parties because they draw disproportionate support from certain groups.
5. Parties are oligarchies (elite organizations) dominated by small groups of activists.
6. Party identification is still stable, but dealignment is ever present.
Health Of Two-Party System

1. Presidential primaries contribute to the demise of party organizations.

2. Voter dealignment from the parties helps Independents and third parties.
   - Ross Perot’s candidacy helped increase voter turnout and made Bill Clinton win a plurality of the popular vote.
   - Theodore Lowi supports a three-party system to excite politics and inspire a revival of issue debates in the American party system.
Elections, Money And Myths

Voting is the most popular political activity.
1. Pluralist theory assumes voters influence public policy.
2. Elitist theory assumes that uninformed voters cannot influence public policy.
3. Rational choice theory assumes that voters who identify with groups seek benefits when they vote.
4. There are economic and foreign policy bases for supporting a political candidate.
5. Candidate image is important for media-oriented voters.
6. Low presidential election turnout shows voters are not efficacious.
Money sustains politics and elections.
1. PACs are pipelines for interest group contributions.
2. Campaign finance reform empowers organized interests.

Elections are symbols of democratic policy choices.
1. Elections symbolize the masses’ relationship with government.
2. Elections holds government elites accountable.
3. Electoral College offers elite control over mass decision making.
4. Bush versus Gore was the Supreme Court’s winning vote for President.
Following one of the greatest battles in our election system, Al Gore concedes to George W. Bush on December 13, 2000. Al Gore became the third presidential candidate to receive the largest share of the popular vote while losing the electoral vote. Grover Cleveland in 1888, Samuel Tilden in 1876 and Andrew Jackson in 1824 also lost the presidency. Both Cleveland and Jackson went on to win the presidency four years after.
Political Action Committees

Political Action Committees (PACs) advocate policy recommendations to policymakers for interest groups. Private companies, corporations, unions, and other various Public Interest Groups (PIGs) and Single Interest Groups (SIGs). PACs provide policymakers campaign donations, information, and may coordinate issue based campaigns. Enjoy this campaign example from People For The Ethical Treatment Of Animals (PETA).
We have examined how our system allows interest groups to openly compete for market share. What motivates these groups to act in the manner that they do? What about our own individual behavior? This is the result of variables. Enjoy the video.
Religion

Religion is one sphere of great interest as it definitely influences public policy. This video examines the link between the Christian Coalition, Friends Of Israel and the Israeli Government. This special report from “Nightline” aired on November 26, 2002.
911 introduced the world to “Asymmetrical Warfare” - Using the resources of a nation state to attack its institutions. This is a compilation of clips during September 11, 2001. What caused the nation to come together? How were we able to acquire international support? Did we overspend the goodwill bestowed by our international peers?
Candidate image has become more important with the advent of television. Its influence over elections has become even greater as partisanship identity declines. This video is the famous debate between John Kennedy and Richard Nixon. Radio listeners claimed Nixon won, while television viewers favored Kennedy.
Candidate image depicts situations in which voters decide whether to support a candidate depending on the image they portray and whether they are appealing or unappealing. This image can be a combination of a candidate’s physical appearance, intelligence, schooling, family background, or speech. Enjoy the example video.
In this 1952 ad, Adlai Stevenson responded to Eisenhower with some pretty creative ones of his own, such as this musical tribute to his political skills.
Dwight D. Eisenhower, the all-American hero from the heartland! A classic from the 1952 campaign.
Another memorable ad from the 1988 race, in which George HW Bush alleges that Michael Dukakis would be inept at leading the military.
John F. Kennedy relied on President Dwight Eisenhower, to do the talking for him. Asked to name one original idea proposed by his vice president, Eisenhower was at a loss for words.
Herbert Humphrey’s campaign criticizes Richard Nixon’s running mate with just one sound and one image: as the name Spiro Agnew appears on a TV screen, we hear a man break into gales of laughter.
Images of a cute little girl counting daisy petals give way to those of a nuclear blast countdown in this commercial from Lyndon Johnson.
Official Campaign Rhetoric is being challenged due to advances in technology allowing for cheap distribution via the Internet. It has also become cheaper to produce material due to the ability to produce high quality video at a greatly reduced cost. Enjoy this example of “Obama Girl”.
1. For freedom to rein it is required for the market place to determine the fate of all products, services and ideas. No interference can burden this process.

2. Oversight is not necessarily detrimental as is the policy of the United States to regulate various industries. The death kneel comes when powerful spheres of influence serve to squash competition.

3. John Locke argues it best when he suggests that liberalism can never exist without capitalism. This is the philosophy of Adam Smith’s “invisible hand” where he explains how markets determine the fate of all competing interests seeking society’s acceptance.
3. We are today living in a time of unprecedented technological innovation that is helping to propel humanity further the ladder of evolution. This would not be possible if vested interests were prevented from pursuing market acceptance.

4. John Locke and Adam Smith would agree that there is no fundamental difference between a marketed product, service or even political idea. All interest groups competing in the marketplace are engaged in the same pursuit: acceptance.
5. Companies competing for market dollars strive to offer the most cost efficient product or service that is also the most innovative. This in turn encourages competing peers to further maximize efficiency while also stretching the bounds of innovation in order to offer the best value.

6. Marketing ideas is in essence the same we have witnessed with political campaigns striving for societal acceptance. Political organizations seeking for example the election of a particular individual to office must secure a majority of the market within a certain region.
7. Competing campaigns offer different ideas to the market that seek to offer a better value. This constant battle allows all individuals to decide for themselves what “product” “service” or even “idea” is best. We all benefit from conflict.

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10. Cellular services are a good example.
  
  - Prior to 1996, there existed in Southern California like most other regions in the United States, two cellular telephone companies.
  
  - Southern California was home to Airtouch and LA Cellular. The average consumer was unable to afford cellular phone service.
  
  - 1996 Telecommunications Act allowed companies to compete.
  
  - Prices collapsed & services improved.
11. The nightmare is the elimination of debate.
12. It is not debate that threatens society, but the lack of contesting ideas.
13. Policies enacted to prevent overly powerful monopolies help to maintain open competition.
14. To have one overly powerful sphere of interest prevent debate is destructive to the system itself.
15. Pluralism emphasizes conflict and compromise with interest groups engaged in a constant pursuit of power that naturally results in established alliances to compete with peer spheres that are doing the same, resulting in the formation of two major spheres.
COLA (Cost Of Living Adjustments) and wages are two major issues of concern. National economy, as national security are the two top issues of debate every year. How do national elites seek to manipulate mass beliefs about why wages just barely keep pace with daily expenses? “Why Play Leapfrog” is a Cold War-era cartoon aimed at convincing workers that increased productivity brings about greater purchasing power.