



# Political Parties and Elections

POLS 125  
University of Vermont  
Spring 2020  
MWF 2:30-3:10 PM  
Lafayette Hall, Room 302

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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*Office hours:* Mondays and Wednesdays from 1:00-2:00 PM, 3:30-4:30 PM, and by appointment.

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

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This course examines U.S. national elections and political parties. Topics to be discussed (among others) include electoral realignments throughout history, voting for President and Congress, party competition, voter turnout, incumbency advantage, and the electoral foundations of divided party control of government.

The course has several objectives—

- 1) To introduce students to important literature in the field, developing familiarity with basic theories of party organization, election mechanics, and voting behavior;
- 2) To apply these concepts to recent electoral strategies in both presidential and congressional campaigns;
- 3) To assess the current state of American electoral politics by probing deeper questions surrounding electoral systems and policy response, democratic accountability, and collective responsibility for political outcomes.

## REQUIRED READING

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The following books are required and may be purchased at the college bookstore:

- Marjorie Randon Hersey, *Party Politics in America*, 17th edition. Routledge (2107). ISBN: 9781138683686.

- Paul S. Herrnson, Congressional Elections: Campaigning at Home and in Washington, 7th edition. Sage (2011). ISBN: 9781483392608.
- Stephen J. Wayne, The Road to the White House 2020, 11th edition. Cengage Learning (2020). ISBN: 9780357136027.

A large number of articles are also required reading in this class. The full-text of each is provided online through Blackboard and can be found under the “Class Schedule” link on the course navigation bar.

In addition to these formal assignments, I also expect students to stay informed of political events throughout the semester. You should scan at least one major newspaper daily (such as *The New York Times* or *The Washington Post*) and follow at least one serious political blog (such as Five Thirty Eight, The Monkey Cage, or Real Clear Politics).

## **CLASS REQUIREMENTS**

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Our emphasis throughout the semester will be on critical thinking and the development of strong, analytical writing skills. Graded assignments are designed to evaluate your growth in these areas. Assignments are also designed to give you several opportunities, using different skills, to build a strong grade in this course.

- A large part of your final grade (30%) will be determined by a take-home paper due at the end of term. This work must be submitted no later than Tuesday, May 5 at 4:30 PM.
- Two essay-based exams will be administered in class, each worth 30% of your final grade. The dates for these are Monday, March 2 and Wednesday, April 22.
- Finally, your active participation and attendance is essential to the effectiveness of this class. It will account for the remaining 10% of your grade.

## **IMPORTANT POLICIES**

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In fairness to others, students are not permitted to do “extra credit,” either to compensate for a poor grade or a missed class. Since a total of four grades cumulate to determine your final grade (and no one assignment dominates), there are plenty of opportunities to improve your standing.

If a student misses an exam for reasons that are both serious and outside of their control, they may make up that work, but only on a set day and time at the end of the semester. During the Spring 202 term, make-up work is scheduled for Friday, May 1 from 1:00-2:00 PM. Please note that makeup exams are administered at my discretion and may use a different format than that described above.

Please note that forgetting about the time and place of an exam is NOT an adequate excuse for missing it!

Due dates on final papers are set by the Registrar's Office at the beginning of the term and will not be rescheduled, except under the conditions described in the course catalog. Written documentation of need must be provided. Furthermore, all late papers will be penalized.

## GRADING STANDARDS

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The grades I assign are based on the following criteria:

92-100	A	<b>Excellent (A range):</b> Grades in the "A" range are reserved for work that is superior in quality. "A" papers are lively, interesting, and intellectually sophisticated. The writer develops a clear and creative thesis, and supports their argument with solid and persuasive evidence. The paper itself is polished and beautifully written, free of grammatical and typographical errors. Above all, "A" papers reflect originality. The writer's own voice and logic are present on the page.
90-91	A-	
88-89	B+	<b>Good (B range):</b> Grades in the "B" range reflect work that is good to very good in quality. The paper completes all of the requirements of the assignment at hand. It may have minor errors and flaws, but the foundation of the work is solid, clear, and reasonably well-organized. "B" papers address topics in a thoughtful way, but offer less insight and originality than "A" papers.
82-87	B	
80-81	B-	
78-79	C+	<b>Fair (C range):</b> A "C" paper represents work that is satisfactory. The writer offers a thesis, but it is usually too broad, or too vague. The paper tends to make assertions without offering specific examples or supporting evidence from class lectures, discussions, and reading assignments. The overall impression of the paper is that of a rough draft. More effort at revision is encouraged and spelling and grammatical errors often require correction.
72-77	C	
70-71	C-	
68-69	D+	<b>Poor (D range):</b> A "D" paper is an unsatisfactory paper. It is sloppy, incoherent and poorly written, marred by mechanical faults (e.g., errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling), and/or factual errors. The writer has difficulty developing an idea, and holding a paragraph together. The thesis of the paper—that is, what the paper is arguing—is usually absent or incomplete.
62-67	D	
60-61	D-	
≤ 59	F	<b>Failing (F):</b> A failing grade is given for work that is exceedingly poor, cannot be understood, or has little relevance to the course.
0		<b>No Credit (0):</b> A grade of "zero" is given for any work that is not completed.

## CLASS ATTENDANCE

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Attendance accounts for 10% of your final grade in this class. It is recorded by your signature on the attendance sheets passed around in class each day. All students receive two excused absences to cover minor illnesses and family emergencies, but 10 points will be deducted from your attendance grade for every class

you miss after the first two. In other words, if you miss class frequently it is possible for your score to fall into negative numbers.

Please note that you may NOT use excused absences for frivolous events (e.g., oversleeping, skiing, a shopping trip to Montreal, etc.) and then request more later when serious circumstances develop.

You need also to be aware of the following:

- You are solely responsible for making sure you sign the attendance sheet before leaving class. If you do not, your name *cannot* be added at a later point.
- Any student involved in the forgery of signatures—either on the “giving” or “receiving” end—will receive an automatic zero for that entire portion of their grade, and will in addition be subject to the university’s policy on academic honesty.
- Beyond the two “free” absences described above, I *do not* grant excused absences unless the circumstances are exceptional, or you travel out of town as a member of a UVM club or sports team. If you are a member of a sports team, please be sure to forward a copy of your schedule to me in writing as soon as it becomes available, so that attendance sheets can be marked accordingly on those days when your team travels out of town.

In addition to daily attendance, you are also encouraged to participate actively in class discussions. Thoughtful and frequent participation in class is typically rewarded as a “tie-breaker,” in the event that your final score is close to the next higher grade.

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

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Students are expected to be familiar with the UVM “Code of Academic Integrity” and with its standards, in particular. For instance:

1. Students may not plagiarize. All ideas, arguments, and phrases, submitted without attribution to other sources must be the creative product of the student. Thus, all text passages taken from the works of other authors (published or unpublished) must be properly cited. The same applies to paraphrased text, opinions, data, examples, illustrations, and all other creative work. Violations of this standard constitute plagiarism.
2. Students may not fabricate. All experimental data, observations, interviews, statistical surveys, and other information collected and reported as part of academic work must be authentic. Any alteration, e.g., the removal of statistical outliers, must be clearly documented. Data must not be falsified in any way. Violations of this standard constitute fabrication.
3. Students may work cooperatively, but not collude. Students are encouraged to collaborate on academic work within any limits that may be prescribed by their instructors. Students may only provide, seek or accept information about any academic work that will be submitted for a grade, to or from another student, with the authorization of the instructor. Violations of this standard constitute collusion.
4. Students may not cheat. Students must adhere to the guidelines provided by their instructors for completing academic work. Students may not claim as their own work any portion of academic work that was completed by another student. Students may only use materials approved by their instructor when

completing an assignment or exam. Students may not present the same (or substantially the same) work for more than one course or within the same course without obtaining approval from the instructor of each course. Students must adhere to all course reserves regulations. Students may not act dishonestly or convey information that the student knows or should know to be false, by actions such as lying, forging or altering any document or record in order to gain an unfair academic advantage. Violations of this standard constitute cheating.

Offenses against this code are deemed serious and insult the integrity of the entire academic community. Suspected violations will be reported immediately to the Center for Student Ethics & Standards for further investigation and may result in sanctions as serious as an automatic "F" in the course, or even expulsion from the university.

## **RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS**

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Students have the right to practice the religion of their choice. Please submit your documented religious holiday schedule for the semester to me by the end of the second full week of classes. Students who miss work for the purpose of religious observance will be permitted either a make-up exam or a penalty-free extension.

## **ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

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In keeping with University policy, any student with a documented disability interested in utilizing accommodations should contact office of Student Accessibility Services on campus. SAS works with students and faculty in an interactive process to explore reasonable and appropriate accommodations via an accommodation letter to faculty with recommended accommodations as early as possible each semester.

*Location:* A-170 Living/Learning Center  
*Telephone:* (802) 656-7753  
*E-mail:* access@uvm.edu  
*Website:* [https://www.uvm.edu/academicsuccess/student\\_accessibility\\_services-](https://www.uvm.edu/academicsuccess/student_accessibility_services-)

## **CLASSROOM PROTOCOL**

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In coordination with the Department of Political Science, I have adopted the following protocol for classroom behavior:

1. Students are expected to attend and be prepared for *all* regularly scheduled classes.
2. Students are expected to arrive on time and remain in class until the class period ends. If a student knows in advance that he or she will need to leave early, he or she must notify the instructor before the class period begins.
3. Students are expected to treat faculty and fellow students with respect. For example, students must not disrupt class by leaving the room and reentering during class, must not distract class by making noise, and must be attentive to comments being made by the instructors and by peers.

4. Students must turn off and stow *all* electronic devices (e.g., laptops, iPads, cell phones, etc.) before class begins. Why don't I allow such devices for taking notes? This post from BuzzFeed says it all: "11 Things You're Actually Doing on Your Laptop During a Lecture" (<http://tinyurl.com/kqpdmbh>).
5. Students *may not* record, share, or disseminate classroom lectures or discussions in any way (e.g., through capturing audio, video, etc.).

Students in serious violation of any of these rules may be subject to whatever grade penalty I deem appropriate.

## ASKING FOR HELP

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Please be sure to ask questions whenever you need to. Here is how:

- I am generally available to answer quick questions after class.
- I hold office hours on a first-come, first-serve basis every Monday and Wednesday from 1:00-2:00 PM and again from 3:30-4:30 PM. If those hours are not compatible with your schedule, please do not hesitate to ask for an appointment. My office is located on the 5th floor of Old Mill, room 519.
- While you can reach me by telephone at (802) 656-4062, e-mail is generally faster. I check e-mail on a regular basis, but please know that I only respond during normal business hours (e.g., not during the evening or on weekends). My e-mail address is: [Deborah.Guber@uvm.edu](mailto:Deborah.Guber@uvm.edu)

# CLASS CALENDAR

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*Note: The reading assignments listed below should be completed prior to class on that day, in order to facilitate discussion and improve comprehension of the material presented.*

## I. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

**Monday, January 13:** *How Did We Get Here?*

Jonathan Rauch, "How American Politics Went Insane," [The Atlantic](#) (July/August 2016).

## II. POLITICAL PARTIES IN THEORY AND PRACTICE

**Wednesday, January 15:** *The Function of Political Parties*

Marjorie Randon Hershey, [Party Politics in America](#) (2017): Chapter 1.

APSA, "Toward a More Responsible Two-Party System" (1950): Part 1.

**Friday, January 17:** *The American Two-Party System*

Marjorie Randon Hershey, Party Politics in America (2017): Chapters 2-5.

Mickey Edwards, "How to Turn Republicans and Democrats into Americans," The Atlantic (July/August 2011).

 **MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY HOLIDAY: Monday, January 20**

**Wednesday, January 22:** *Understanding Ideology*

"The Split," The New Republic (June 14, 2016).

Mark Lilla, "The End of Identity Liberalism," The New York Times (November 18, 2016).

Amanda Taub, "After Trump: How Authoritarian Voters Will Change American Politics," Vox (April 28, 2016).

Uri Friedman, "What is a Populist? And is Donald Trump One?" The Atlantic (February 27, 2017).

Christopher Caldwell, "What the Alt-Right Really Means," The New York Times (December 2, 2016).

**Friday, January 24:** *Party Polarization*

Michael Barone, "The 49 Percent Nation," National Journal (June 9, 2001): 1710.

Morris P. Fiorina, Samuel J. Abrams, and Jeremy C. Pope, Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America (2004): Chapters 1-2.

Marc J. Hetherington and Jonathan D. Weiler, Authoritarianism and Polarization in American Politics (2009): Excerpt.

**Monday, January 27:** *Third Party Insurgents*

Steven J. Rosenstone, Roy L. Behr, and Edward H. Lazarus, Third Parties in America: Citizen Response to Major Party Failure (1996): Chapters 2 and 5.

Ezra Klein, "A Third Party Won't Fix What's Broken in American Politics," Vox (December 8, 2014).

**Wednesday, January 29:** *Electoral Realignments and Party Systems*

David R. Mayhew, Electoral Realignment: A Critique of an American Genre (2004): Chapters 2-3.

**Friday, January 31:** *Realignment Today*

Michael Lind, "This Is What the Future of American Politics Looks Like," Politico (May 22, 2016).

Andrew Prokop, "How Republicans Went from the Party of Lincoln to the Party of Trump, in 13 Maps," Vox (November 10, 2016).

### III. THE CITIZEN AS VOTER

#### **Monday, February 3:** *Voter Turnout in Comparative Perspective*

Marjorie Randon Hershey, Party Politics in America (2017): Chapter 7.

#### **Wednesday, February 5:** *The Vanishing (or Resurgent) Voter?*

Thomas Patterson, "The Vanishing Voter: Why Are the Voting Booths So Empty?" National Civic Review (Winter 2002): 367-378.

#### **Friday, February 7:** *Motorize or Mobilize?*

Marshall Ganz, "Motor Voter or Motivated Voter?" The American Prospect, 28 (1996): 41-48.  
Alexis C. Madrigal, "When the Nerds Go Marching In," The Atlantic (November 16, 2012).  
Sasha Issenberg, "How Obama's Team Used Big Data to Rally Voters," MIT Technology Review (December 19, 2012).

#### **Monday, February 10:** *The Politics of Voter Turnout: Fraud and Suppression*

Spencer Overton, Stealing Democracy: The New Politics of Voter Suppression (2006): Chapter 6.  
Jim Rutenberg, "A Dream Undone," The New York Times Magazine (July 29, 2015).

#### **Wednesday, February 12:** *How We Vote, Part I: Identity Politics*

Marjorie Randon Hershey, Party Politics in America (2017): Chapters 6-7.  
Donald R. Kinder and Cindy D. Kam, Us Against Them: Ethnocentric Foundations of American Opinion (2010): Excerpt.

#### **Friday, February 14:** *How We Vote, Part II: Class and the Culture Wars*

Ronald Brownstein, "The Class Inversion of American Politics Accelerates," The Atlantic (July 26, 2016).  
Thomas Frank, "Millions of Ordinary Americans Support Donald Trump. Here's Why," The Guardian (March 7, 2016).  
Margaret Talbot, "The Populist Prophet: Bernie Sanders has Spent Decades Attacking Inequality. Now the Country is Listening," The New Yorker (October 12, 2015).

### **PRESIDENTS DAY RECESS: Monday, February 17**

#### **Wednesday, February 19:** *How We Vote, Part III: Generational Politics*

Martin P. Wattenberg, Is Voting for Young People? (2007): Introduction and Chapters 6-7.  
Nathan Heller, "Feeling the Bern With the Youth Vote," The New Yorker (August 25, 2015).



**Friday, February 21:** *How We Vote, Part IV: Reason and Emotion*

Donald Green, Bradley Palmquist, and Eric Schickler, Partisan Hearts and Minds: Political Parties and the Social Identities of Voters (2004): Chapters 1-2.

Drew Westen, The Political Brain: The Role of Emotion in Deciding the Fate of the Nation (2007): Chapters 1-2.

Kurt Andersen, "How America Lost Its Mind," The Atlantic (August 7, 2017).

Elizabeth Kolbert, "Why Facts Don't Change Our Minds," The New Yorker (February 27).

**Monday, February 24:** *How We Vote, Part V: Issue Voting*

Robert S. Erikson, "The American Voter and the Economy, 2008," PS: Political Science and Politics, 42 (June 2009): 467-471.

**Wednesday, February 26:** *How We Vote, Part VI: Candidate Evaluations*

Henry Louis Gates, "Hating Hillary," The New Yorker (February 26, 1996).

Amanda Taub, "The Rise of American Authoritarianism," Vox (March 1, 2016).

**Friday, February 28:** *Putting It All Together*

Gerald M. Pomper, "The 2000 Presidential Election: Why Gore Lost," Political Science Quarterly, 116 (2001): 201-223.

Ryan Lizza, "Battle Plans: How Obama Won," New Yorker (November 17, 2008).

Ronald Brownstein, "How Trump Won," The Atlantic (November 9, 2016).

**□ EXAM #1: Monday, March 2**

**IV. CANDIDATES AND CAMPAIGNS**

**Wednesday, March 4:** *The Incumbency Factor in Congressional Elections*

Paul S. Herrnson, Congressional Elections (2011): Preface, Introduction, and Chapters 1-4.

**Friday, March 6:** *The Candidate-Centered Campaign*

Paul S. Herrnson, Congressional Elections (2011): Chapters 5-9.

**□ SPRING RECESS: March 9-13**

**Monday, March 16:** *Drawing District Lines*

Steven Hill, "Behind Closed Doors: The Recurring Plague of Redistricting and the Politics of Geography," National Civic Review (Winter 2002): 317-330.

Seth E. Masket, Jonathan Winburn, and Gerald C. Wright, "The Gerrymanderers are Coming! Legislative Redistricting Won't Affect Competition or Polarization Much, No Matter Who Does It," PS: Political Science & Politics (January 2012).

Matthew Yglesias, "Democrats' 2018 Gerrymandering Problem is Really Bad," Vox (August 24).

**Wednesday, March 18:** *Decoding Midterm Elections*

Paul S. Herrnson, Congressional Elections (2016): Chapters 10-11.

Robert S. Erikson, "The Puzzle of Midterm Loss," Journal of Politics, 50 (November 1988): 1011-1029.

**Friday, March 20:** *Reforming Congressional Elections*

Paul S. Herrnson, Congressional Elections (2011): Chapters 10-11.

**Monday, March 23:** *The Electoral College*

Stephen J. Wayne, The Road to the White House 2020 (2020): Chapter 1.

Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., "Not the People's Choice: How to Democratize American Democracy," The American Prospect (March 25, 2002): 23-27.

**Wednesday, March 25:** *A History of Presidential Campaigns*

Stephen J. Wayne, The Road to the White House 2020 (2020): Chapter 9.

Richard J. Ellis and Mark Dedrick, "The Presidential Candidate, Then and Now," Perspectives on Political Science, 26 (Fall 1997): 208-216.

**Friday, March 27:** *The Presidential Nomination Process: Caucuses and Primaries*

Stephen J. Wayne, The Road to the White House 2020 (2020): Chapters 3-7.

Marty Cohen, David Karol, Hans Noel, and John Zaller, The Party Decides Presidential Nominations Before and After Reform (2008): Chapter 7.

Lee Drutman, "Why are all our Presidential Candidates So Bad?" Vox (September 25, 2015).

William Saletan, "The Primaries Aren't Democratic? They're Not Supposed to Be Democratic," Slate (April 20, 2016).

**Monday, March 30:** *Party Conventions*

Marjorie Randon Hershey, Party Politics in America (2017): Chapters 9-11.

Jill Lepore, "How to Steal an Election," The New Yorker (July 4, 2016).

Jill Lepore, "A Tale of Two Conventions," The New Yorker (August 8, 2016).

**Wednesday, April 1:** *Presidential Debates*

Theodore White, The Making of the President, 1960 (1961): Chapter 11.

David Greenberg, "Torchlight Parades for the Television Age: The Presidential Debates as Political Ritual," Daedalus, Vol. 138, No. 2 (Spring 2009): 6-19.

**Friday, April 3:** *From Broadships to Broadcasts: The Changing Role of the Media*

Stephen J. Wayne, The Road to the White House 2020 (2020): Chapter 8.  
Mary E. Stuckey, "Here We Go Again: Presidential Elections and the National Media,"  
Perspectives on Political Science (Spring 2000): 99.  
Evgenia Pertez, "Going After Gore," Vanity Fair (October 2007).  
Paul Waldman, "Why the Media Treats Donald Trump Differently," The Week (August 9, 2016).

**Monday, April 6:** *"I Approve this Message:" Campaign Advertising in the Modern World*

Stephen J. Wayne, The Road to the White House 2020 (2020): Chapters 6.

**Wednesday, April 8:** *Film*

📺 "The War Room," an excellent documentary about the 1992 Clinton campaign, will be viewed in class.

**Friday, April 10: Film**

📺 "The War Room" concludes.

**Monday, April 13:** *The War Room: Campaign Organization and Strategy*

Stephen J. Wayne, The Road to the White House 2020 (2020): Chapter 7.  
Sasha Issenberg, The Victory Lab: The Secret Science of Winning Campaigns (2012): Excerpt.

**Wednesday, April 15:** *Pundits vs. Pollsters: The Art and Science of Forecasting Elections*

Stephen J. Wayne, The Road to the White House 2020 (2020): Chapter 9.  
Zeynep Tufekci, "In Defense of Nate Silver, Election Pollsters, and Statistical Predictions," Wired (November 2, 2012).  
Josh Katz and Kevin Quealy, "When Should You Start Worrying About the Polls?" The New York Times (May 25, 2016).

**Friday, April 17:** *Show Me the Money: The Politics of Campaign Finance*

Stephen J. Wayne, The Road to the White House 2020 (2020): Chapter 2.  
Marjorie Randon Hershey, Party Politics in America (2017): Chapter 12.

**Monday, April 20:** *When Pigs Fly: In Search of Real Campaign Finance Reform*

Bradley A. Smith, "Campaign Finance Regulation: Faulty Assumptions and Undemocratic Consequences," Cato Policy Analysis (1995).  
Jeffrey Toobin, "Money Unlimited: How Chief Justice John Roberts Orchestrated the Citizens United Decision," The New Yorker (May 21, 2012).

EXAM #2: Wednesday, April 22

## V. PARTIES IN GOVERNMENT

### Friday, April 24: *Gridlock and Divided Government*

Marjorie Randon Hershey, Party Politics in America (2017): Chapters 13-14.

David R. Mayhew, "Divided Party Control: Does It Make a Difference?" PS: Political Science and Politics (December 1991): 637-640.

### Monday, April 27: *Partisanship and Polarization*

Marjorie Randon Hershey, Party Politics in America (2017): Chapters 15-16.

Marc J. Hetherington and Thomas J. Rudolph (2015), Why Washington Won't Work: Chapters 1-2.

Jonathan Chait, "What's So Great about Bipartisanship?" The New Republic (January 15, 2001): 17.

### Wednesday, April 29: *Fixing Elections*

Paul S. Herrnson, Congressional Elections (2011): Chapters 10-11.

Stephen J. Wayne, The Road to the White House 2020 (2020): Chapter 10.

Andrew Sullivan, "Democracies End When They are Too Democratic," New York (May 1, 2016).

Caleb Crain, "The Case Against Democracy," The New Yorker (November 7, 2016).

### Friday, May 1: *Concluding Remarks*

No reading assignment.

**□ FINAL PAPER DUE: No later than Tuesday, May 5 by 4:30 PM**