

# Research Paper Assignment Sheet

## Assignment

Looking at the Democratic Party's presidential nomination contest in the 2020 election cycle, rigorously research and analyze the role of the political party in the invisible primary (endorsements, campaign resources, media attention, etc.). How, and to what extent, did the various leaders, activists, and interest groups leaders that make up the party throw their weight behind a candidate to shape the nomination? Were things different in this election when compared to the past? **Did the party decide?**

Your paper should lean heavily upon scholarly work related to presidential nominations, widely trusted websites and data sources, and high-quality journalistic accounts of the election.

## Due Date and Time

Monday, April 6, 2020

- A hard copy of the paper needs to be submitted in class at 10am.
- An electronic copy of the paper needs to be uploaded to TurnItIn (via our course's Canvas site; <http://canvas.fiu.edu>) by 9am.

## General Paper Requirements

- 5-7 pages (excluding title page and references), double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font, and 1" margins.
- No fewer than 7 references.
- Students will use the Chicago Manual of Style's "author-date" system for their in-text citations and references.  
([https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide/citation-guide-2.html](https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-2.html))

## Three Helpful Quotes from *The Party Decides* (on reserve at the library)

"We argue in this book that the demise of parties has been exaggerated. Candidate-centered efforts are tremendously important, and the McGovern-Fraser reforms have certainly made it more difficult for parties to get their way. But parties remain major players in presidential nominations. They scrutinize and winnow the field before voters get involved, attempt to build coalitions behind a single preferred candidate, and sway voters to ratify their choice. In the past quarter century, the Democratic and Republican parties have always influenced and often controlled the choice of their presidential nominees" (Cohen et al. 2008, 3).

"...our claim in this book is larger. It is that the various leaders, activists, and interest group leaders who seek to influence presidential nominations are more than a collection of individual actors; they meet the standard definition of political parties" (Cohen et al. 2008, 6).

"The reformers of the 1970s tried to wrest the presidential nomination away from insiders and to bestow it on rank-and-file partisans, but the people who are regularly active in

party politics have regained much of the control that was lost. Control rests on their ability to reach early agreement on whom to support and to exploit two kinds of advantage—control of campaign resources (money, knowledge, labor) and the persuasive power of a united front of inside players. Insider control is not unshakable, but it has usually been sufficient to the task at hand for some two decades” (Cohen et al. 2008, 7).

### **Some Useful Sources Related to the Assignment**

Bawn, Kathleen, Martin Cohen, David Karol, Seth Masket, Hans Noel, and John Zaller. 2012. “A Theory of Political Parties: Groups, Policy Demands and Nominations in American Politics.” *Perspectives on Politics* 10(3): 571-597.

Cohen, Marty, David Karol, Hans Noel, and John Zaller. 2016. “Party Versus Faction in the Reformed Presidential Nominating System.” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 49(4): 701-708.

Cohen, Marty, David Karol, Hans Noel, and John Zaller. 2008. *The Party Decides*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. (On reserve at the library).

*FiveThirtyEight*, “The 2020 Endorsement Primary.”

<https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/2020-endorsements/democratic-primary/>

Rothschild, Anna and Galen Druke. 2020. “Do Parties Or Voters Choose Presidential Nominees?” *FiveThirtyEight*. <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/do-parties-or-voters-choose-presidential-nominees/>

Shor, Boris. 2020. “January 2020 Update on State Legislative Endorsements of 2020 Democratic Presidential Candidates.” <https://research.bshor.com/2020/01/23/january-2020-update-on-state-legislative-endorsements-of-2020-democratic-presidential-candidates/>

Skelley, Geoffrey. 2020. “Democratic Party Leaders Are Mostly Sitting Out The Endorsement Race So Far.” *FiveThirtyEight*. <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/democratic-party-leaders-are-mostly-sitting-out-the-endorsement-race-so-far/>

Steger, Wayne P. 2016. “Conditional Arbiters: The Limits of Political Party Influence in Presidential Nominations.” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 49(4): 709-715.

### **Academic Integrity**

Make yourself familiar with FIU’s rules about academic misconduct as described in the Student Handbook (available here: <https://studentaffairs.fiu.edu/about/student-handbook/index.php>). Cheating and other forms of misconduct can result in severe penalties, which can include a failing grade and/or expulsion from the university.

The library website also has some interactive tools to help you understand how to avoid plagiarism (<http://libguides.fiu.edu/plagiarism>). Any time that you are using someone else's ideas – whether in a direct quotation or paraphrase – you need to cite and reference them properly. All direct quotations must be placed in quotation marks.

### **Late Paper Policy**

You can turn in the paper late, but it will be subject to a late penalty of one letter grade per day (10 points). For example, a paper that would have received an “A-” (say 90/100) would receive “B-” (80/100) if turned in one day late. Days are calculated as 24-hour periods that begin at the start of the class period when the essay is due (0-24 hours = 1 day late penalty, 24-48 hours = 2 day late penalty, etc.). This penalty will only be removed in the case of *documented* illness or serious extenuating circumstances. Papers will be considered late until both hard and electronic copies (Turnitin through Canvas) are submitted.