In recent years, political parties have acquired very low reputations among the American public. Even among self-identified Democrats or Republicans, it is common to hear complaints about excessive partisanship. However, parties likely serve important and perhaps even under-appreciated functions in American democracy.

This is your chance to demonstrate you have attained both a knowledge outcome of the course (understanding factual information about political parties) as well as a skill outcome (that you can analyze data presented by James Wilson). Your paper should answer two questions:

1. What evidence is there that Americans view political parties in a negative light?
2. What evidence is there that political parties are a necessary and beneficial element of the American political system?

Your paper will require you to draw heavily from the readings in Wilson’s American Government text, but should also take great inspiration and direction from E.E. Schattschneider. In choosing how to use these readings, be careful to link the appropriate reading with the appropriate function in your paper. Successful paper will not rely upon material beyond Wilson and Schattschneider.

Other requirements for your paper:

1. The text of the paper must be no longer than three pages. A fourth page for your required bibliography is allowed.
2. It must be in Microsoft Word formatted attachment (.doc or .docx) and emailed to me. Papers not in this format will not be graded and receive a zero. Please name the file with your last name (e.g.,
“dell.docx”). **Papers not using this naming scheme will not be downloaded by me.**

3. Use the short paper grading rubric to review and edit your paper.

4. Make good and impressive use of quoting from your sources; also make sure direct quotes are in quotation marks and have footnotes for citing the original source. **Papers without direct quotations from the texts above will not be graded and receive a zero.**

5. **Absolutely no late papers will be accepted.** If your Guilford email is down at the time, use any email account to get the paper to me before the deadline.

6. Make strong points with strong evidence. Don’t waste your time with small observations.

7. Proofread mercilessly and over multiple days. Be sure to thoroughly proofread your papers for small mistakes and typos.

8. Be sure to use Chicago Manual of Style footnotes. **Papers not using this citation guide will not be graded and receive a zero.**

9. Set aside time over many days to work on your paper. Writing is not an episode, but a process.

10. Avoid surprises from me with final grades by consulting with me throughout your writing process. I enjoy meeting with students and a happy professor is good for everyone.

11. Please include an honor statement at the end of your paper. I consider that you have “signed” this when you email it from your email account.