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Contact: Ronald C. Den Otter
Cal Poly Political Science Department
805-756-6147; rdenotte@calpoly.edu or

Political Party Position Change To Be Topic of Nov. 26 Talk at Cal Poly

SAN LUIS OBISPO – David Karol, assistant professor of political science at UC Berkeley, will present “Coalition Management and the Art of the Flip-Flop: Explaining Party Position Change in American Politics” at Cal Poly on Monday, Nov. 26. The talk, from 10:30 a.m. to noon in Room 220 in the University Union, is free and open to the public.

Karol will talk about how “The Party of Lincoln” became the party of the Confederate flag, tax cuts, national defense and free trade. Today, these causes are recognizably “Republican,” but as recently as the 1960s, they defined the Democratic Party, according to Karol. These shifts are examples of party position change.

In this talk, Karol will discuss how and why such shifts occur, using cases such as trade, abortion, gun control, civil rights, defense spending and taxes. He focuses on the relative importance of conversion versus turnover among party elites, the speed of change, and the stability of new positions.

Karol is a specialist in American politics with interests in political parties, presidential elections, interest groups/social movements and American political development. He was a visiting scholar at the Center for the Study of Democratic Politics at the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University in 2002-2003.

His presentation is sponsored by the Political Science Department. For more information, contact Ronald C. Den Otter at rdenotte@calpoly.edu or 756-6147.

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Cal Poly Public Affairs
California Polytechnic State University
San Luis Obispo, CA 93407
805.756.7266
polynews@calpoly.edu