

# Legislative Process

Political Science 4600

Fall 2017

Baldwin 101D

TTR 2:00-3:15am

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## Course Description:

This course is intended as a broad survey of the legislative branch of the American government. In this course we discuss the origins and development of the U.S. Congress, congressional elections, the committee systems, legislative process, the role of political parties, and inter-branch relations. Particular attention is given to changes in Congress, as well as current political and scholarly controversies such as budgetary politics, party effects, and campaign finance reform.

## Course Goals:

The primary goal of this course is to familiarize the student with the workings of the United States Congress. The U.S. Congress is not only the oldest popularly elected legislative body, but also one of the most complex and powerful. A thorough understanding of the body requires not only a familiarity of its evolution and institutions, but a deep comprehension of the trade-offs inherent in policy-making. Throughout this course, we will attempt to get a handle on this by relating some of the basic political science literature on Congress to contemporary events.

## Books and Readings:

The following books are required and can be purchased from [amazon.com](http://amazon.com) and as a bundle at the Campus Bookstore:

Davidson, Roger, Walter J. Oleszek, Frances Lee and Eric Schickler. 2017. *Congress and Its Members*. 16th Edition. Washington, DC: CQ Press.

Sinclair, Barbara. 2017. *Unorthodox Lawmaking*. 5th Edition. Washington, DC: CQ Press.

Students will not only be expected to have done the reading assignments, but should also be aware of relevant news stories. As such, I recommend reading a daily newspaper – such as the New York Times and/or the Washington Post – or at least checking [cnn.com](http://cnn.com). Other

political blogs that students may find useful include FiveThirtyEight, Political Wire, The Monkey Cage, The Upshot, Vox, the Drudge Report and Roll Call.

Some optional books you might want to consider purchasing can be found on amazon.com:

Oleszek, Walter J., Mark J. Oleszek, Elizabeth Rybicki and Bill Heniff, Jr. 2016. *Congressional Procedures and the Policy Process*. 10th Edition. CQ Press: Washington, DC.

Mann, Robert. 1996. *The Walls of Jericho: Lyndon Johnson, Hubert Humphrey, Richard Russell, and the Struggle for Civil Rights*. New York, NY: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc.

Murray, Alan and Jeffrey Birnbaum. 1987. *Showdown at Gucci Gulch*. Random House Publishing.

Mayhew, David. 1974. *Congress: The Electoral Connection*. 2nd Edition. Yale University Press.

Draper, Robert. 2012. *Do Not Ask What Good We Do: Inside the U.S. House of Representatives*. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster.

Kaiser, Robert. 2013. *Act of Congress: How America's Essential Institution Works, and How It Doesn't*. New York, NY: Alfred Knopf.

Schickler, Eric. 2001. *Disjointed Pluralism: Institutional Innovation and the Development of the U.S. Congress*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Additional readings will be posted on the course website. Many of these readings will be highly technical in nature. As such, students are not expected to understand all aspects of each paper. However, they will be held accountable for a basic understanding of the paper's theory and applications.

## Course Grading:

Your grade in this class will be assigned according to the following:

1. **Class Attendance/Participation (10% of final grade):** One of the goals for this class is for students to become comfortable discussing congressional institutions, issues, events and research. Hence, class periods will be part lecture and part discussion. Students should be prepared to discuss the reading for the day with their classmates. Students will be given one point for attending the class, and an additional point for adequate participation. The lowest two attendance/participation grades will be dropped. A student's participation grade may also include several small quizzes or assignments.

2. Midterm Exams (**40% of final grade**): Two midterm exams will be given on Thursday, *September 28th* and Thursday, *November 9th*. These exams will consist of multiple choice and short essay questions. The midterm examinations will be non-cumulative. If a student is unable to take the exam on the scheduled date, they should contact the course instructor beforehand. A missed exam will only be excused for a documented illness (documentation must be provided by a physician) or a death in the family. If you are excused from an exam, your final exam will be weighted accordingly.
3. Research Paper (**30% of final grade**): Students will be expected to complete a research design proposal. The paper should be a maximum of 15 pages in length (typed, double-spaced, one inch margins, Times New Roman, 12 point font, Chicago style citations). Students will be allowed to choose the topic of their paper, provided it is related to Legislative Politics. The instructor will be available for consultation. The paper should feature a review of the relevant scholarly literature, a well developed theory, and a detailed discussion of a potential test of that theory. The paper is due Tuesday, *December 5th* at 5:00 pm. Papers will be docked a full letter grade for each day they are late.
4. Final Exam (**20% of final grade**): The final exam is scheduled for Thursday, *December 7th* from 3:30 to 6:30 pm and will be held in Baldwin 101D. Like the midterms, it will feature a mix of multiple choice and short essay questions. The final exam will be cumulative.

Final course grades will be assigned as follows: 100-93 = A, 90-92 = A-, 87-89 = B+, 83-86 = B, 80-82 = B-, 77-79 = C+, 73-76 = C, 70-72 = C-, 60-69 = D, and 60-0. Extra credit will not be given in this course.

### **Disabilities:**

Students with disabilities of any kind are strongly encouraged to notify the instructor and the Office for Disability Services at the beginning of the semester, so appropriate accommodations can be made.

### **Instructor Availability:**

Students seeking to contact the instructor are encouraged to stop by during scheduled office hours. Students who are unable to attend office hours should e-mail ahead of time to ensure instructor availability.

### **Classroom Behavior:**

Students should behave professionally throughout the course and disruptive behavior of any kind will not be tolerated. This includes cell phone usage, excessive talking and derogatory or offensive comments made during discussion. Students will be held responsible for all material discussed or assigned.

## **Cheating and Plagiarism:**

Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated in this course. Students caught cheating or plagiarizing will have their names forwarded to the University. It is each student's responsibility to know what constitutes plagiarism. Further information regarding academic honesty can be found at <http://www.uga.edu/honesty/>.

**Tentative Lecture Outline/Readings Schedule:**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading</b>
Aug 15	Introduction/Syllabus	
Aug 17	How a Bill Becomes a Law	
Aug 22	The Two Congresses Path Dependency	DOLS Ch. 1 Pierson 2000
Aug 24	Evolution of the Modern Congress	DOLS Ch. 2
Aug 29	Elections: Going for It	DOLS Ch. 3
Aug 31	The Electoral Game	DOLS Ch. 4
Sep 05	Hill Styles and Home Styles	DOLS Ch. 5
Sep 07	Leaders and Parties	DOLS Ch. 6 Explaining Boehner's Resignation
Sep 12	Committees: Workshops of Congress	DOLS Ch. 7
Sep 14	Committee Development	Gamm and Smith (1989) Jenkins (1998)
Sep 19	Congressional Rules and Procedures	DOLS Ch. 8
Sep 21	Decision-Making in Congress	DOLS Ch. 9
Sep 26	"Fixing Congress"	Confessions of a Congressman Help, We're in a Living Hell and Don't Know How to Get Out
Sep 28	<b><i>Midterm 1</i></b>	
Oct 03	Congress in Film: "Lincoln"	
Oct 05	Congress in Film: "Lincoln"	Binder (2012)
Oct 10	How to Write a Research Paper	
Oct 12	How the Process has Changed	Sinclair Ch. 6

**Tentative Lecture Outline/Readings Schedule (cont):**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading</b>
Oct 17	Congress and Health Care	Sinclair Ch. 7
Oct 19	Parties in Congress	Cox and McCubbins (2002) Finocchiaro and Rohde (2008)
Oct 24	Budget Politics	Sinclair Ch. 8
Oct 26	Spatial Modeling in Congress	Shepsle and Bonchek Ch. 5
Oct 31	Supreme Court Appointments	Moraski and Shipan (1999)
Nov 02	House Rules	Schickler and Rich (1997) Cox and McCubbins (1997)
Nov 07	House Rules, cont.	Binder (1996)
Nov 09	<b><i>Midterm 2</i></b>	
Nov 14	Senate Rules	Wawro and Schickler (2004) Madonna (2011)
Nov 16	Senate Rules	Binder, Madonna and Smith (2007)
Nov 21	<b><i>No class—Thanksgiving Break</i></b>	
Nov 23	<b><i>No class—Thanksgiving Break</i></b>	
Nov 28	Congressional Leadership	Cooper and Brady (1981) Jenkins and Stewart (2003)
Nov 30	Measuring Legislative Accomplishment	Clinton and Lapinski (2006) Five reasons why you can't judge a Congress by counting laws
Dec 05	<b><i>Paper Due</i></b> Review	
Dec 07	<b><i>Final Exam</i></b>	