

Legislative Process

POLS 4600, Fall 2016
MWF 10 :10-11:00

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Course Description and Goals

This course is designed as a broad survey of the legislative branch of the American government. In this course, we will 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. By the end of the semester, students should be able to identify and describe a large variety of stimuli that shape the behavior of legislators as well as legislation.

Required texts

- Smith, Steven S., Jason Roberts, and Ryan Vander Wielen. 2015. *The American Congress*. 9th Edition. Cambridge University Press. ISBN: 9781107571785
- Smith, Steven S. 2007. *Party Influence In Congress*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press. ISBN: 9780521703871
- Mayhew, David R. 2004. *Congress: The Electoral Connection*. 2nd Edition. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. ISBN: 9780300105872

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the UGA Disabilities Services office will be accommodated according to university policy. If you have documentation for accommodations from Disabilities Services, please present it to me as soon as possible. For more information, contact Disabilities Services at 706-542-8719. If you cannot reach the classroom or my office, please notify me as soon as possible so that alternative arrangements can be made.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is a core value of institutions of higher learning. All students, upon enrolling, must pledge: "I will be academically honest in all of my academic work and will not tolerate academic dishonesty of others." It is your responsibility to avoid plagiarism, cheating, and dishonesty. The university policy on academic integrity is posted at the [Academic Honesty page](#). To qualify the application of the policy in this course: tests

and written assignments should be your own work, while studying and class preparation can (and should) be done with others.

Course Requirements and Evaluation

Attendance	10 percent
Participation	10 percent
Writing Assignments	30 percent
Midterm	25 percent
Final	25 percent

Attendance: Each student will be granted 3 unexcused absences. After those are exhausted, the attendance grade will be a proportion of all classes attended. For example, a student who attends all classes will receive all 10 points. A student who attended all but 3 classes will also receive all 10 points. A student who missed more than 3 classes but had a university approved excuse will also receive all 10 points. However, a student who used both “freebies” but also missed 10 percent of the classes will only receive 90 percent of the available points, or 9 out of 10 points.

Participation: Each student is expected to arrive on time and to have completed the assigned reading beforehand. Students who consistently attend class and demonstrate completion and understanding of the material through class discussion can expect to receive most, if not all, of the available points. A detailed rubric can be found on page 4.

Writing Assignments: Each student will be asked to write four 750-900 word papers that will be worth 7.5 points each for a total of 30 points toward their final grade. Each assignment will summarize one week’s readings, but full credit will be reserved for papers that provide a clear and concise summary and discuss how that week’s readings relate to other material previously covered. At least 2 of the 4 assignments should be completed and turned in before October 5. Once a week has been covered, students can no longer turn in a paper on those readings. Papers should be typed, double spaced, and printed using 12 point Times New Roman font. Spelling, grammar, formatting, and punctuation will all be factored into the paper’s grade. A detailed rubric can be found on page 4.

Midterm: There will be one midterm exam administered during the semester. This exam will consist of a small number of short answer prompts and will be related to readings and discussion from all previous class meetings. Make-up exams will only be given to students who provide university approved excuses. Any potential conflicts should be cleared with the instructor as soon as possible.

Final: The final will be formatted similarly to the midterm and will only cover material since the midterm. Make-up finals will only be given to students who provide university approved excuses. Any potential conflicts should be cleared with the instructor as soon as possible.

Overall Grades

Grades are constructed to reflect the university standards posted online at [this page](#). Grades will be based on how many points you earn according to the following distribution:

A- = 90-93	A = 94-100	
B- = 80-83	B = 84-86	B+ = 87-89
C- = 70-73	C = 74-76	C+ = 77-79
D = 60-69		
F = 0-59		

How to Succeed in this Course

- Be respectful of your own and others' ideas.
- Attend class consistently.
- Keep up with the readings.
- If something is not clear, ask a question.
- Clarify expectations with the instructor.
- Utilize all resources available to you.

Student Resources

You can increase your chance of success in this course by using UGA's academic services. The Academic Resource Center offers tutoring in Study Strategies that can help with test preparation and in Writing. You can set an appointment at [this page](#). You also may check out opportunities at [the Miller Learning Center](#) and [the Writing Center](#).

Participation Rubric

- A Student attends every class while consistently demonstrating that he or she has completed and understands the assigned readings by participating in class discussion meaningfully.
- B Student only attends most class meetings while completing all readings and actively participating in a meaningful way.
- C Student has perfect attendance but regularly fails to demonstrate completion of readings or participate in any meaningful way.
- D Student only attends most class meetings and regularly fails to demonstrate completion of readings or participate in any meaningful way.
- F Student misses classes regularly, does not complete assigned readings, does not engage in class discussion meaningfully, or is disruptive or disrespectful.

Writing Assignment Rubric

- A Student clearly and concisely summarizes each of the week's assigned readings. Additionally, he or she has discussed at length how the readings relate to one another as well as any relevant readings from previous weeks. The paper will be organized in a coherent manner, properly formatted, and will be free of any spelling and grammatical errors.
- B Student fails to meet one of the above criteria.
- C Student fails to meet multiple criteria listed above.
- D Student fails to meet any of the listed criteria.
- F Student fails to complete the assignment.

Course Schedule

Aug. 12	Introduction Syllabus
Aug. 15 - Aug. 19	Foundations U.S. Constitution <i>The American Congress</i> ch. 1 and 2
Aug. 22 - Aug. 26	Congressional Elections <i>The American Congress</i> ch. 3 <i>The Electoral Connection</i> part 1
Aug. 29 - Sept. 2	Parties and Leadership <i>The American Congress</i> ch. 4 and 5 No Class on Sept. 2: Professor at Conference
Sept. 5 - Sept. 9	Parties in the House I Krehbiel (1993) Rohde (1994) Cox and McCubbins (1994)
Sept. 12 - Sept. 16	Parties in the House II <i>Party Influence in Congress</i>
Sept. 19 - Sept. 23	Parties in the Senate I Gailmard and Jenkins (2007) Smith and Flathman (1989) Ainsworth and Flathman (1995)
Sept. 26 - Sept. 30	Parties in the Senate II Bernhard and Sala (2006) Gailmard and Jenkins (2009) Lee (200)
Oct. 3 - Oct. 7	Midterm Week
Oct. 3	TBD
Oct. 5	Midterm Review
Oct. 7	Midterm Exam

Course Schedule Continued

Oct. 10 - Oct. 14	Legislating in Congress <i>The American Congress</i> ch. 7 and 8 Oleszek except
Oct. 17 - Oct. 21	Measurement and Roll Call Voting I Cox and Poole (2002) Krehbiel (1995) Poole (2007)
Oct. 24 - Oct. 28	Measurement and Roll Call Voting II Clinton and Lapinski (2008) Roberts and Smith (2003) Ansolabehere and Jones (2010) No Class on Oct. 28: Fall Break
Oct. 31- Nov. 4	Committees <i>The American Congress</i> ch. 6 Katz and Sala (1996) Gamm and Shepsle (1989)
Nov. 7 - Nov. 11	Influencing Congress <i>The American Congress</i> ch. 11 and 12
Nov. 14 - Nov. 18	Divided Government Binder (1999) Coleman (1999) Howell et al. (2000)
Nov. 21 - Nov. 25	Thanksgiving Break No Class
Nov. 28 - Dec. 2	Separation of Powers <i>The American Congress</i> ch. 9 and 10
Dec. 5	Final Exam Review
Dec. 12	8:00-11:00

All dates and assignments are subject to change.