

POLS 4790: Congress, the Bureaucracy and Policy-Making

Fall 2021

Baldwin 301

MWF 11:30 - 12:20

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Course Description:

POLS 4790: Congress, the Bureaucracy and Policy-Making is intended to provide students with an understanding of how American political institutions create public policy. In it, students will learn about the U.S. Congress, but also American bureaucratic governance through course readings and lectures. Students will also be required to complete a detailed analysis of the passage of a landmark piece of legislation that is integrated with the Georgia Congress Project.

Course Goals:

The primary goal of this course is to familiarize the student with the policy-making process in both the U.S. Congress and American bureaucracy. In doing so, students should be able to identify and access tools and resources associated with the tracking of bills, bureaucratic rules and policies. This includes (but is not limited to): *The Congressional Record*, Congressional Research Service Reports; Historical Newspapers; *CQ Almanac*; *ProQuest Congressional*; Voteview; Google Scholar and Congress.gov.

At the end of this course, students should be equipped to do the following: (1) Describe, assess, and critique the rules and processes that govern policy-making; (2) Examine and detail how a federal policy is made and has evolved over time; and (3) Access and interpret data on both congressional lawmaking and bureaucratic rule-making.

Books and Readings:

The following books is required and can be purchased from amazon.com:

Lewis, Michael. 2018. *The Fifth Risk: Undoing Democracy*. New York, NY: Norton.

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. 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 students might want to consider purchasing can be found on amazon.com:

Oleszek, Walter J., Mark J. Oleszek, Elizabeth Rybicki and Bill Heniff, Jr. 2020. *Congressional Procedures and the Policy Process*. 11th 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.

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

Buckley, Christopher. 2006. *Thank You for Smoking: A Novel*. New York, NY: Random House.

Vallianatos, E.G. 2015. *Poison Spring: The Secret History of Pollution and the EPA*. London: Bloomsbury Press.

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

Course Grading:

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

1. Background Survey (**5% of final grade**): Students will be asked to fill out a short background survey for the purposes of matching them with a legislative history topic. A link to the survey will be provided by the instructor. The deadline to fill out the survey is Monday, **August 23** at 5 pm.
2. Exams (**40% of final grade**): Two exams will be given on Friday, **October 8** and Wednesday, **December 15**. The exams will consist of multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank and short answer questions. The exams will be non-cumulative and include questions related to a student's assigned legislative history topic. 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. Each midterm exam is worth 20% of the final course grade.

3. **Legislative History (55% of final grade):** In order to demonstrate an understanding of the historical policy-making process, students are required to complete a paper analyzing the consideration and passage of a major piece of American legislation. After filling out the background survey discussed above, each student will be assigned to a legislative history “team.” While students are encouraged to work with their legislative history “teammates,” they are not obligated to do so. Each student will be assigned differing questions and duties related to the legislative history and graded separately. These assignments will be posted by the instructor on eLC. Students are also encouraged to use material from their exams in compiling their legislative histories. The legislative history assignment will count for 55% of the final course grade, broken up accordingly (more detailed discussions of the assignment will be provided in eLC):

(1) A one-page Topic Paper detailing the broader issue the student will be analyzing. This paper should include a broad discussion of the policy area, paying close attention to the topic’s importance and relevance. The topic paper accounts for 5% of the final course grade and is due on Friday, **September 17** at 11pm. It will not be combined with the broader legislative history paper.

(2) A Background section that answers a specific question assigned by the instructor. Typically, this will necessitate contextualizing either the political climate the legislation was considered in or provide a history of the policy. Ideally, it will demonstrate why the legislation was needed. The background section is due on Friday, **October 1** at 11pm. It is worth 10% of the final course grade.

(3) A Member Spotlight section. This is a short, one to two-page discussion detailing a member of Congress associated with the passage of the law. It can include either on a broad overview of a member’s career and/or an interesting episode they were involved in. Students are encouraged to focus on whatever details they feel are the most interesting. The Member Spotlight is due on Friday, **October 22** at 11 pm. It is worth 5% of the final course grade.

(4) A Process section that analyzes committee and floor consideration of the measure during a specific period assigned by the instructor. The may involve House or Senate consideration of a bill or conference report and will likely necessitate the discussion of a given rule or legislative procedure. It will also likely necessitate analyzing a roll call vote. The process section is due on Friday, **November 12** at 11 pm. It is worth 10% of the final course grade.

(5) An Aftermath section that analyzes a post-enactment event related to the bill assigned to the student by the instructor. This might include the law being amended by a subsequent piece of legislation, being altered by a series of Supreme Court decisions or its enforcement by the President and bureaucracy. The Aftermath section is due on Friday, **November 19** at 11 pm. It is worth 15% of the final course grade.

(6) A Final Paper that combines the background, member spotlight, process, and aftermath sections and incorporates any instructor comments is due on Tuesday, **December 7** at 11pm. The final paper should also include a brief, three-paragraph Summary detailing the legislation and issue the student will be analyzing. Specifically, the summary section should do three things: Paragraph 1: Tell the reader what the law does/sought to do; Paragraph 2: Tell the reader why both the underlying issue and law are (or are not) considered important today; Paragraph 3: Characterize its passage. Was it controversial? Partisan? What were the key votes/moments that occurred during consideration? The summary section is worth 5% of the final course grade. The final paper with edits is worth an additional 5%.

Each of the sections mentioned above should be clearly labelled, written in Times New Roman 12-point font (main text) and Times News Roman 10-point font (footnotes). It should be single-spaced and include a Work Cited section.

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 set up a meeting. In addition to holding regular office hours both in person and in a Zoom Meeting Room, I am available via phone or e-mail.

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:

Day	Topic	Readings
Aug 18	Introduction to POLS 4790	
Aug 20	Five Key Take-Away Points about Congress Congressional Fundraising	Help! We're in a Living Hell LWT - Congressional Fundraising
Aug 23	How a Bill Becomes a Law: House <i>Qualtrics Survey Due</i>	CRS and Legislative Process
Aug 25	How a Bill Becomes a Law: Senate	CRS: Intro to the Legislative Process
Aug 27	Fall 2021 Legislative History Groups Congressional Resources and Information	The Georgia Congress Project Legislative History Resources
Aug 30	Lincoln <i>Zoom Group Meeting Week</i>	Binder (2012)
Sep 1	<i>Zoom Group Meeting Week</i>	
Sep 3	<i>Zoom Group Meeting Week</i>	
Sep 6	<i>No Class - Labor Day</i>	
Sep 8	Constitutional Foundations of Congress	U.S. Constitution
Sep 10	Why Rules?	Cox 2000
Sep 13	Path Dependency	Pierson 2000
Sep 15	Path Dependency 2	
Sep 17	Bureaucratic Politics - Overview <i>Legislative History Topic Paper Due</i>	Federal Workforce Statistics
Sep 20	Spatial Modeling in Congress	Shepsle and Bonchek Ch. 5
Sep 22	Committee-Gatekeeper Games	
Sep 24	Committee-Gatekeeper Games with Bad Stick Figures	

Tentative Lecture Outline/Readings Schedule (cont):

Date	Topic	Reading
Sep 27	Bureaucratic Politics 2	LWT - IRS
Sep 29	Delegation	McCubbins and Schwartz 1984
Oct 1	Delegation 2 <i>Background Section Due</i>	LWT - Nutritional Supplements
Oct 4	Presidential Unilateralism	Klein (2015)
Oct 6	Presidential Unilateralism 2	Moe and Howell (1999)
Oct 8	<i>Exam 1</i>	
Oct 11	Presidential Unilateralism 3	Lynch et al. (2007)
Oct 13	Presidential Unilateralism 4	
Oct 15	Agency Rule-Making	Potter and Shipan (2019)
Oct 18	Agency Rule-Making 2	LWT - Net Neutrality
Oct 20	Agency Rule-Making 3	
Oct 22	Bureaucratic Control <i>Member Spotlight Due</i>	Calvert et al. (1999)
Oct 25	Bureaucratic Control 2	Moe (1987)
Oct 27	Bureaucratic Control 3	
Oct 29	<i>No Class - Fall Break</i>	
Nov 1	Supreme Court Appointments	Moraski and Shipan (1999)
Nov 3	Supreme Court Appointments II	
Nov 5	Process Sections	Sinclair Ch. 13

Tentative Lecture Outline/Readings Schedule (cont):

Date	Topic	Reading
Nov 8	Congress and Health Care	Oleszek and Oleszek 2012
Nov 10	Game Trees and Political Negotiations	Clinton (1994)
Nov 12	Game Trees and Political Negotiations 2 <i>Process Section Due</i>	
Nov 15	Game Trees and Political Negotiations 3 Working in Congress	Best Intern Ever: Roll Call's Guide to Acing Your Internship
Nov 17	Fifth Risk	Lewis Prologue
Nov 19	Department of Energy <i>Aftermath Section Due</i>	Lewis Part 1
Nov 22	Department of Energy II	
Nov 24	<i>No Class - Thanksgiving Break</i>	
Nov 26	<i>No Class - Thanksgiving Break</i>	
Nov 29	Department of Agriculture	Lewis Part 2
Dec 1	Department of Commerce	Lewis Part 3
Dec 3	Department of Commerce II	
Dec 6	Fixing the Policy-Making Process	Confessions of a Congressman New Directions in Legislative Research: Lessons from Inside Congress
Dec 7	Conclusion <i>Summary Section Due</i> <i>Final Legislative History Due</i>	
Dec 15	<i>Exam 2</i>	

Readings are either linked on the syllabus or will be provided via ELC. The final exam for this course (Exam 2) is scheduled from 12-3:00 pm on December 15th in Baldwin 301.