POLS 8140: Legislative Process

Fall 2021

Instructor
Dr. Michael S. Lynch
Office: Baldwin Hall 416
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Office Hours: Tuesday
9:30AM – 11:00AM and by appointment

Class Schedule
4:00PM – 6:45PM
Baldwin Hall 301

Introduction
This course is intended to provide students with a survey of the academic literature on the U.S. Congress. The U.S. Congress is arguably the most studied political institution in the world and the amount of literature on Congress is overwhelming. This course will focus on institutional studies of the House and Senate, but will attempt to introduce all major topics common to the study of Congress. This syllabus provides a tentative reading list that is subject to change as the semester proceeds.

Readings
Required Texts
The following books are required:


Supplemental Texts
The following books, while not required for this course, are helpful references for students planning on pursuing research in legislative politics.


Additional Readings
All additional readings will be available via the web or the instructor will provide the reading to the class.

Grading and Expectations

1. **Attendance and Participate – 20% of final grade**

   Attend all classes having read the assigned articles. Be ready to discuss the assigned articles. To facilitate this, I want everyone to be able to answer the following 4 questions for each of the readings:
   1. What is the claim of the article?
   2. How does the author(s) show evidence to support the article’s claim?
   3. What is your evaluation of the article?
   4. How does the article relate to the rest of the congressional literature?

2. **Discussion Leaders and Reaction Papers – 40%**

   All enrolled students will serve as discussion leaders for two weeks. Auditing students will be required to serve as discussion leaders for one week. Discussion leaders will briefly present a summary of the materials assigned for the week and will lead the class in discussing and critiquing the materials. They will also find and discuss an additional reading that they think would be a good addition to the syllabus in future iterations of this course.

   Students will also be required to write three reaction papers, one for each of the two weeks they serve as a discussion leader and one for an additional week of their choosing. Reaction papers should summarize the readings’ theory, methods and findings. They should also critique the readings and compare/contrast that week’s readings. These reaction papers should be no longer than 6 pages and are due one week after a student serves as a discussion leader.
3. **Research Paper and Presentation – 40%** Each student is expected to complete and present an original research paper related to a course topic. Details about paper expectations will be discussed early in the semester. A research proposal is due October 13. A rough draft of the paper is due November 10. Conference-style presentations based on these rough drafts will occur on December 1. The final draft of the paper is will be due after the presentations. We will determine an exact due date later in the semester.

**Other Issues**

1. **Disabilities**: Students with disabilities of any kind are strongly encouraged to tell me at the beginning of the semester, so appropriate accommodations can be made. Students with disabilities that have been certified by the UGA Disabilities Services Office will be accommodated according to university policy. Contact Disabilities Services for more information.

2. **Instructor Availability**: I am available to meet with students by appointment if anyone cannot attend my posted office hours. Please email me to schedule a meeting.

3. **Technology in the Classroom**: Technology, used correctly, has the potential to greatly improve the quality of our lives. Technology, used incorrectly, has the potential of making the instructor very angry. Turn off your cell phone while in class (some exceptions may apply - e.g. you are a transplant surgeon anxiously awaiting the arrival of a donor heart). Laptops may be used to take notes in class. Texting is never appropriate in class, unless it is to give your friends an update on how the filibuster pivot affects American policymaking. While live tweeting of class lectures is encouraged, many of the concepts we will cover may be difficult to explain in 280 characters.

4. **Cheating and Plagiarism**: All course work must meet the standards put forth in the University of Georgia’s Student Honor Code. See the Academic Honesty Policy for details on what is expected of you (https://ovpi.uga.edu/sites/default/files/uga-academc-honesty-policy-may-07.pdf).

**Tentative Course and Topics Schedule**

**August 18**

Introduction

**August 25**

Motives and Representation 1


Recommended:


September 1


Recommended:


September 8

Institutional Analysis


Recommended:


September 15

Parties 1


In Lawrence C. Dodd and Bruce I. Oppenheimer, Congress Reconsidered, 7th Edition.


Recommended:
Aldrich, John. 1995. Why Parties? (C)


September 22


Recommended:

Laver, Michael and Kenneth A. Shepsle. 1996. Making and Breaking Governments. (C)


September 29


Thomsen, Danielle M. 2019. “Partisan Polarization in Congress.”


Recommended:


**October 6**


**Recommended:**


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**October 13 (Research Proposal Due)**


Recommended:


Crisp, Brian and Amanda Driscoll. 2012. “The Strategic Use of Legislative Voting Procedures.” Legislative Politics Quarterly. (C)

October 20


Recommended:


Recommended:


Lee, Frances and Bruce Oppenheimer. 1999. *Sizing up the Senate: The Unequal Consequences of Equal Representation.*

**November 3**


Recommended:


Shugart, Matthew and John Carey. 1992. *Presidents and Assemblies: Constitutional Design and Electoral Dynamics.* (C)
November 10 (Rough Draft Due) Separation of Powers 2


Recommended:


November 17 Measurement

Poole, Keith T. and Howard Rosenthal. 2007. Ideology and Congress. Chapters 5-12.


Recommended:


November 24

No Class – Thanksgiving Break

December 1

Presentations

TBA

Final Paper Due