Course Description

The primary goal of this research seminar is to familiarize the student with American political history and development. The class will focus on the development of American political issues and institutions from the late 18th century through the early 20th century. Throughout the semester, we will focus on topics including: the failure of the Articles of Confederation, the Constitutional Convention, the creation of American political parties, slavery, the Civil War and the development of House and Senate rules. Particular attention will be given to how these events influence policy-making in contemporary American politics.

Required Books

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


Additional recommended readings are listed in the Tentative Readings Schedule. 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 (http://www.nytimes.com) and/or the Washington Post (http://www.washingtonpost.com) - or at least checking cnn.com. Additional links to political blogs or websites can be found on the instructors’ website.

Course Grading

As this is a graduate seminar, a basic understanding of American history and lawmaking is assumed. Your grade in this class will be assigned according to the following:

1. Class Attendance/Participation (20% of final grade): Students are expected to complete the required reading prior to class meetings. For each piece we read, you should be prepared to discuss how it fits in the literature, the theory, research design employed, and potential problems with the work. You should also be prepared to discuss why the paper or book might be important despite any shortcomings. Students will also be assigned “discussion leader” duties at the beginning of the semester for several weeks. During those weeks, the discussion leaders will be expected to lead the conversation on the assigned readings and an optional reading of their choice.

2. Response Papers (20% of final grade): In order to demonstrate an understanding of the literature, students will be required to write two reaction papers that summarize, synthesize, and critique readings for the week. The papers should run no longer than six double spaced pages. These papers should briefly synthesize the theory, methods, and findings of, and most importantly critique, the literature for that particular week. The first reaction paper is due before Tuesday, February 6. The second reaction paper is due before Tuesday, April 23.

3. Landmark Bill History (20% of final grade): In order to demonstrate an understanding of the historical policy-making process, students are required to complete a paper analyzing the passage of a “landmark piece” of American legislation. A list of landmark bills will be provided by the instructor. A more detailed discussion of the assignment will be provided in class, however, the analysis should include the following labelled sections: (1) An “Overview” section, which provides identifying information and a brief summary of the act; (2) A “Background” section, which includes information on the broader political context; (3) “Initial House Consideration,” which discusses the bills chronological consideration in the House of Representative as observed in the Congressional Record; (4) “Initial Senate Consideration,” which discusses the bills chronological consideration in the Senate as observed in the Congressional Record; (5) A “Subsequent Action” section, which provides an overview of the bills consideration after initial consideration in both chambers; (6) An “Aftermath” section, which includes any relevant information on the bill after enactment and; (7) An “Additional Notes” section, which includes any additional discussion and information you may find relevant. The landmark bill history should be approximately five to eight double spaced pages and is due before Tuesday, March 12.
4. **Final Class Project (40% of final grade):** Students will be expected to complete a final class project and have the option of completing either (1) an original research paper or (2) a policy history project. Students are encouraged to contact the instructor with questions regarding their project earlier in the semester. The final paper is due by Monday, **May 6.**

The research paper should be written in line with political science research papers, and will be judged according to the same criteria applied to a paper presented at a professional conference or submitted to a journal. Thus, it must address an empirical question related to Congress, relate that question to existing literature, and provide evidence in support of the conclusion(s) drawn. A research proposal (identifying the question, literature, theory, and method of analysis) is due no later than Tuesday, **March 12.**

The policy history should contain three to four separate bill histories all in the same policy domain. These should be similar to the landmark bill history assignment, while also incorporating a discussion of how each bill responded to policies created by the preceding enactment. A policy history proposal (identifying the policy area and landmark bills to be analyzed) is due no later than Tuesday, **March 12.**

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 assignments 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. Due to the large size of the course, disruptive behavior of any kind will not be tolerated. This includes cell phone usage, excessive talking and derogatory or offensive comments made during discussion.

**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/](http://www.uga.edu/honesty/).
Tentative Course Outline/Readings Schedule:

January 9 — Introduction & Syllabus

January 16 — What is APD?


Further Reading:


January 23—The Founding


Further Reading:


January 30—Antebellum Politics


Further Reading:


February 6—Civil War Politics


Further Reading:

Legislative Studies Quarterly 32:193-222.


February 13—The American Congress


Further Reading:


February 20—Lawmaking throughout History


Further Reading:


February 27—Legislative Rules I


Further Reading:


March 6—Spring Break

No course meeting.
March 12–Legislative Rules II


**Further Reading:**


March 19—Committees and Leaders


Further Reading:


March 26—Roll Call Voting I


**Further Reading:**


**April 2—Recorded Voting II**


Further Reading:


April 9—Courts


Further Reading:


**April 16—Civil Rights**


**Further Reading:**


**April 23—The Presidency**


Further Reading:


