

Political Science 304: Congressional Politics
(Spring 2015 Rutgers University)

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Lecture: Tuesday/Thursday: 9:15-11:55am in LOR-022
Office Hours: Wednesday 12:00-2:00pm Or by appointment in Hickman 603

Course Overview:

This course will provide a general survey of legislatures in the United States. The primary focus of this course will be the U.S. Congress. The purpose of the course is to learn about both the history and development of the Congress, but also the workings of the current state of Congress. The course will examine various internal (i.e. institutional rules and procedures) and external (i.e. elections, interest groups) dimensions of the Congress. In addition, a large segment of the course will focus on the policy process and examine the interaction of legislative branch with other political actors. The course begins with theoretical conceptions of representation and the historical development of the Congress. Subsequent topics include congressional elections, organization within the Congress, partisan politics, and case studies of recent policies.

Required Books:

Analyzing Congress 2nd Edition, Charles Stewart III, Norton, 2011
Unorthodox Lawmaking 4th Edition, Barbara Sinclair, CQ Press, 2012
Congress Reconsidered 10th Edition, Lawrence Dodd and Bruce Oppenheimer, CQ Press 2012

Course Requirements:

Students are required to take 3 examinations over the duration of the semester.

In-class examination #1 will be held on February 25th and cover all material through the lecture of February 18th.

In-class exam #2 will be held on April 1st and cover all material through the lecture of March 25th.

A take-home final exam will be due on May 11th at 8:00am. This is the final exam date and time indicated by university schedule of final exams. It will be cumulative.

Attendance at weekly lecture is not mandatory but highly recommended since the class format will include lecture and discussion as well as a participation grade.

Grade Breakdown:

Exam #1:	25%
Exam #2:	25%
Participation:	15%
Exam #3- Take Home Final:	35%

** Please note that in order to receive a passing grade in this course, all exams must be taken.**

Grading Scale:

90-100%	A
87-89.9%	B+
80-86.9%	B
77-79.9%	C+
70-76.9%	C
60-69.9%	D
59.9 and below	F

Procedures:

Attendance/Absences: Attendance is not required but is highly encouraged. A substantial portion of the overall course grade is from participation and it is necessary to participate in class to receive these points. Moreover the exams will draw heavily from lecture material, therefore absences would result in difficulty in achieving maximum points on these assignments. If students are absent, it is his/her responsibility to obtain notes from lecture from a classmate. Lecture notes and power point slides will not be provided by the instructor.

Extensions: If you become ill or have some other emergency and cannot turn in or take an exam on the scheduled day, you must notify me ahead of time and provide documentation. Only after written confirmation from me that you can either turn in an exam late or take an exam at an alternate time without penalty, should you consider the extension granted. NO EXEPTIONS.

Late Penalty: The late penalty is 10% per calendar day (each 24 hour period) after the due date. After three days (72 Hours), no late exams will be accepted nor will alternate exams be administered. NO EXCEPTIONS.

Laptops/iPads/Phones: Laptops and iPads can be used for the purposes of taking notes in class. However, due to the distracting nature of the screens, all students who wish to use a laptop must sit in the back rows of the class. Please note that checking email/social networking/websurfing/texting are not appropriate activities using your electronic device in class. Engaging in this type of activity will result in your inability to use such devices in class.

Students with Disabilities

If you have a documented disability that requires academic accommodations, please see me as soon as possible during scheduled office hours or after lecture. In order to receive accommodations in this course, you must provide me with a Letter of Accommodation from the Office of Disabilities Services, 77 Hamilton Street, 732-932-7896.

Participation Grading: Participation comprises 15% of the overall course grade. Students are expected to come prepared to discuss the assigned material. This means readings should be completed before the Wednesday class of each week unless otherwise noted by the instructor. Some of the readings are extremely challenging in terms of the concepts they introduce and the evidence they employ. Most of these articles cannot be quickly skimmed, meaning that students should budget appropriate time for reading and thinking through each article, as well as how they relate to each other. Participation will be evaluated on both the quality and quantity of comments from students. Moreover participation/performance in activities in class such as small group discussion, debates, pop-quizzes and simulations may also be factored into the participation grade.

Discussion Expectations

My goals for discussion are threefold:

1. Clarify any points of confusion from my lectures.
2. Discuss the main themes from the week's readings.
3. Engage the literature by thinking critically about the theories and evidence confirming or disconfirming the arguments.

If we do all of the above, we have had a successful discussion.

Respect and Discussion Rules

Every student brings a different perspective to the classroom. Part of my job is to make sure that one viewpoint is not privileged over others. Dialogue in my class is expected to always be respectful. We all reserve the right to respectfully disagree with one another; we do not have the right to intimidate anyone.

Citations/Footnotes

In your papers or take home exams you must cite authors from whom you draw ideas/quotations. The typical style in political science is (Last Name, Year of Publication: Page) or (Winter, 1996: 118). Footnotes and endnotes are also acceptable ways of acknowledging work. In your exams it is a good idea to cite authors that we have in the course; page numbers are obviously not required. You can use any citation style you prefer as long as it is an official style i.e. MLA or Chicago.

Plagiarism and Cheating

Plagiarism and cheating are serious offenses at Rutgers. The minimum punishment is the receipt of a grade of an F in the course.

What constitutes misrepresentation? Obviously, purchasing a paper from the internet is one way. Failing to give credit where credit is due—appropriating quotes from published authors as your own or representing authors' ideas as your own—also constitutes plagiarism. For further information you can consult the university's policy

http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/files/documents/AI_Policy_9_01_2011.pdf

Per the policy adoption in September 2011 to promote a strong culture of academic integrity, students are required to sign on examinations and major course assignments submitted for a grade "On my honor, I have neither received nor given unauthorized assistance on this examination (assignment)".

Section II specifically discusses the definitions of cheating and plagiarism. If you are having trouble assimilating outside information into your own ideas or have any other questions concerning academic writing, see the Rutgers Learning Center, or come to my office hours.

Sakai & TurnItIn

Students are required to turn in written assignments in paper copy and electronic copy when noted on the assignment sheet. Failure to turn in both formats by the deadline, will result in a late penalty until both formats are submitted. Please be aware that the electronic copy is submitted to TurnItIn on the Sakai website. It is a software program that checks for plagiarism and other forms of

academic dishonesty. All students are required to submit to this program. It is the student's responsibility to verify that the electronic upload to the Sakai site was successful and print a confirmation sheet indicating the time uploaded.

Readings

On average, the course readings per week will be approximately 120 pages. There are three primary required books for this course. They are available for purchase new and used, as well as for rent, from online sources. If you elect not to purchase the books, there will be one copy of each book on reserve at the Douglass library.

In addition to the texts, there will also be various articles that will be assigned throughout the term. The electronic PDFs will be available for download from the course Sakai site under Resources under the appropriate weeks.

Office Hours, Questions & Email Policy

If you have any straightforward administrative or logistical questions not of a personal nature (e.g. readings for the week; location of exam, etc.) please consult the website. The website will be updated regularly and have the most up to date information. For substantive questions, please come to office hours. If your question is not an emergency, please wait until our next class meeting to ask me before or after class or come to office hours. Emails sent to me from students must contain PS 304 in the subject line to receive a response and responses may take up to 48 hours to be sent.

Please note the instructor reserves the right to change the syllabus.

Good luck and I look forward to a great term together!

Course Outline and Reading Assignments

I. Introduction

Week One- 1/21

First Class/Overview of Class and Material/ Overview of 114th Congress
Research Methodology and Basics of Congress

Week Two: Spatial Models and Rational Choice Approaches 1/28

Lauren Powner. 2007. "Reading and Learning Political Science"
Dodd and Oppenheimer Ch. 2
Stewart Ch 1
Amartya Sen, "Behavior and the Concept of Preference" *Economica* 40 (August 1973):241-259.

II. Historical Development, Procedures, and Legislative Process in Congress

Week Three: Constitutional Origins and begin Legislative Process 2/4

Stewart Ch 2 & 3
Federalist Papers, Nos. 10, 4, 51, 52 & 53 (House) and 62 & 65 (Senate)
<http://thomas.loc.gov/home/histdox/fedpapers.html>
U.S. Constitution , Article I
http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution_transcript.html

Week Four: Legislative Process in the House & Senate 2/11

Sinclair Ch 1- 3

Stewart Ch 9

Week Five: Legislative Process cont. 2/18

Sinclair Ch 4-6

III. Structure and Organization of Congress

Week Six: Polarization & Gridlock 2/25

*****EXAM #2 on February 25th in class- Exam will be 1 hr. 15 minutes, followed by lecture *****

Sarah A. Binder, "The Dynamics of Legislative Gridlock, 1947-1996," *American Political Science Review* 93 (September 1999): 519-533

Dodd and Oppenheimer Chs 9, 17, 13

Week Seven: Congressional Parties 3/4

Stewart Chapter 7

Dodd and Oppenheimer Chs 7-9

Gary W. Cox and Mathew D. McCubbins, "Bonding, Structure, and the Stability of Political Parties: Party Government in the House," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 19 (May 1994): 215-231.

Week Eight: Committees 3/11

Stewart Ch 8

Dodd and Oppenheimer Ch 8

Kenneth A. Shepsle and Barry R. Weingast, "Positive Theories of Congressional Institutions," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 19 (May 1994): 149-179.

*******No Class 3/18 Spring Break*******

IV. Representation, Elections & Constituencies

Week Nine : Representation 3/25

Richard Fenno "U.S. House Members in Their Constituencies: An Exploration," *APSR* (Sept. 1977)

Jane Mansbridge. "Rethinking Representation," *American Political Science Review* vol. 97 (4): 515-527
December 2003.

Katherine Tate. "The political representation of blacks in Congress: Does race matter?" *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, (2001) 26: 623-638.

Week Ten: Congressional Voters & Congressional Candidates 4/1

***** EXAM #2 in class on April 1st – Exam will be 1 hr. 15 minutes, followed by film "The Candidate" ******

Stewart Ch 4-5

Jamie L. Carson, Erick J. Engstrom, and Jason M. Roberts, "Candidate Quality, the Personal Vote, and the Incumbency Advantage in Congress." *American Political Science Review* 101 (May 2007): 289-301

Week Eleven: Campaigns & Elections 4/8

**** No Class, Lecture Recorded and posted to Sakai Site ****

Stewart Ch 6

Dodd & Oppenheimer Ch 4-6

Week Twelve Recruitment and Career 4/15

John R. Hibbing, "Contours of the Modern Congressional Career," *American Political Science Review* 85 (June 1991): 405-428.

Peter Swenson, "The Influence of Recruitment On the Structure of Power In the U.S. House, 1870-1940," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 7 (Feb. 1982): 7-36.

Samuel Kernell, "Toward Understanding 19th Century Congressional Careers: Ambition, Competition, and Rotation," *American Journal of Political Science* 21 (November 1977): 669-693

V. Congress, The President and Public Policy

Week Thirteen: Executive/Legislative Relations 4/22

Dodd and Oppenheimer Ch 11 & 12

Christopher J. Deering and Forrest Maltzman, "The Politics of Executive Orders: Legislative Constraints on Presidential Power," *Political Research Quarterly* (December, 1999): 767-783

Week Fourteen: Unorthodox Lawmaking & Current Policy Issues in Congress 4/29

Sinclair Chs 7, 8 and 10

Dodd and Oppenheimer Ch. 16 and 18

******* TAKE HOME FINAL EXAM is due on May 11th at 8:00am *******