

Political Science 353: U.S. Congress
Spring 2022
University of Washington
Tuesday/Thursday 10:00-11:20am in Johnson 102

Professor Sophia Jordán Wallace

Email: sophiajw@uw.edu

Office Hours: Tuesdays 11:45am to 12:45pm on Zoom and by appointment on Zoom

Course Website: <https://canvas.uw.edu/>

Teaching Assistant (TAs):

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Quizzes (All- AA, AB, AC)

Email: rfordham@uw.edu

Office Hours: Thursdays 1:30-3:30pm in Smith 30 or on Zoom and by appointment on Zoom

Course Overview:

This course focuses on the U.S. Congress. The purpose of the course is to learn about the history and development of the Congress, in addition to the current state of Congress. The course will examine various internal (i.e. institutional rules and procedures) and external (i.e. campaigns and elections, interest groups, public opinion) dimensions of the Congress. A large segment of the course will also focus on the policy process, gridlock, and the interaction of the legislative branch with other political actors. Additional topics include representation, redistricting, organization within the Congress, polarization, and recent legislation.

Required Books:

The United States Congress, 2nd Edition, E. Scott Adler, Jeffrey A. Jenkins, and Charles R. Shipan, Norton, 2021 (referred to in the syllabus by the acronym TUSC)

Congress Reconsidered, 12th Edition, Lawrence Dodd, Bruce Oppenheimer, and C. Lawrence Evans, CQ Press, 2020

The books may be purchased at the university bookstore. You are welcome to purchase print, kindle, or e-versions of the books that are available for these editions.

You may find these books available at a lower cost from online websites (such as Amazon or directly from [Norton](#)) for purchase new or used, in e-book format, or available for rent at a significantly reduced price.

Course Requirements:

This course is an upper division course with both lecture and section. Students are required to take a midterm exam, complete a paper (6-8 pages) and a final exam over the duration of the quarter. All components of the course must be completed to receive a passing grade in the course.

The due dates/exam dates are as follows:

	<u>Due Date</u>
Midterm Exam	4/21/22
Paper	5/19/22
Final Exam	6/6/22

All Assignments are considered late if not turned in by the time indicated on the assigned due date and time.

A take-home midterm exam will be due on April 21st at 11:20am on Canvas and cover all material through the lecture of April 19th.

The paper assignment will be due on May 19th at 10:00am in electronic copy on Canvas AND in hard-copy at the start of lecture.

A take-home final exam will due on Monday June 6th, 2022 at 12:30pm on Canvas. This is the final exam date and time indicated by university schedule of final exams. It will be cumulative.

Participation in section is required to have productive discussions. For this class to be successful, students need to regularly attend class and be ready to discuss the material.

Grade Breakdown:

Midterm Exam:	25%
Paper:	25%
Participation:	15%
Final Exam:	35%

Grading Policies & Procedures

The 4.0 scale used for this course is posted on Canvas. Written assignments and exams will report the raw score out of 100, the letter grade, and the corresponding 4.0 grade.

Grade scale:

100-90= A range

89-80= B range

79-70= C range

69-60= D range

below 59 = range

Evaluations of written essays

Please note the following rough guidelines will be used in the evaluation of the papers and essays. Written work in the **A** range is characterized by a strikingly creative, perceptive, and persuasive argument/thesis statement; comprehensive synthesis and analysis of the course material; fully addresses all components of the prompt; considers counter arguments; straightforward yet sophisticated organization of thoughts and error-free prose. Written work in the **B** range is characterized by sound, original, and reasonably thoughtful argument/thesis statement; addresses nearly all components of the prompt; considers counter arguments; competent analysis of various course material, logical organization; and clear and error-free prose. Written work in the **C** range is characterized by a relatively underdeveloped, simplistic, or derivative argument/thesis statement;

partial, inconsistent, or faulty analysis of course material; partially addresses prompt; convoluted organization; and awkward, or otherwise distracting prose. Written work in the **D** range is characterized by incoherent or extremely confusing argument; prose minimally engages prompt; superficial or fleeting engagement with the course material; chaotic or irrational organization; and error-riddled prose. Written work that lacks any argument or analysis and is sloppy, earns an **F**. Please take this grading metric into consideration as you allocate time on your writing as there is no curving of grades in this course.

Appeals & Re-Grades

If you would like to appeal a grade on an assignment, you must submit your appeal to your TA within one week of the graded assignment being given back to you/grade posted on Canvas. Your appeal can be no longer than 1-page single spaced and must detail where you earned points that were not allocated to you.

If you are unhappy with the outcome of the first-level appeal, you may appeal directly to the instructor. Please turn in your appeal, the assignment, and your TA's response to your appeal within 3 days of receiving an appeal decision from your TA. Please be aware that the TA and/or the instructor reserve the right to re-grade the entire assignment once an appeal is made, which may result in an increase, no change, or decrease in the score a student receives.

Extensions

If you become ill or have some other emergency and cannot turn in an assignment by the scheduled day, you must notify the instructor or TA ahead of time. Extensions will only be granted under the gravest of circumstances. No alternate final exam options will be offered due to travel or vacation plans. Only after written confirmation from the instructor that you can turn in a paper late at an alternate time without penalty, should you consider the extension granted.

Late Penalty

If you do not get permission from the instructor ahead of time to turn in a paper or take-home exam late, the penalty is 10% per day (24 -hour period) it is late. After three days (72 hours), no late papers will be accepted for a grade. No exceptions. Given the severity of the late penalty, it is rarely in a student's interest to work on a paper or take-home exam more and turn it in late.

Assignment Submissions & SimCheck

Students are required to turn in the written paper assignment in electronic copy on Canvas and paper copy in class. Take-home exams will be submitted online via Canvas. It is the student's responsibility to verify that the electronic upload to Canvas was successful and print a confirmation sheet with date and time for their records. All submissions on Canvas are submitted to SimCheck upon uploading it. SimCheck is a software program that checks for plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty.

Readings & Audio/Visual Material

This is an upper division course that is reading intensive. Average reading load per week is 100 pages. Some weeks will have as few as 60 pages of readings, but other weeks may have as much as 130 pages of reading.

Assigned readings and course materials are either from the two required textbooks or are available electronically on Canvas. The electronic PDFs or links to online materials will be available for

download from the course website and are organized by week.

The readings include several chapters from *The Oxford Handbook of the American Congress*. This book is accessible from the UW library website in E-book form. Additionally, relevant assigned chapters have been converted to PDF and are posted on Canvas.

Ideally readings assigned for Tuesday's class should be completed before the Tuesday lecture and likewise for Thursday's readings. At a minimum, readings for the week should be completed before the Friday section of each week unless otherwise noted by the instructor or TA.

Occasionally podcasts, online articles, or film clips are assigned as readings or as a component of lecture. Please see Canvas under Modules for more information.

Additional Procedures & Policies:

COVID

We are all in this together but not equally impacted. The pandemic has been ongoing for a long time and there have been many iterations of university policies on COVID in response to rapidly evolving circumstances. UW's recently [revised policy](#) for Spring Quarter 2022 says masks are optional starting March 28th. At the same time UW also encourages people to wear masks the first two weeks of the quarter and emphasizes that it is important to respect the needs and choices of different people regarding masking.

If you have [symptoms](#), do not come to class and do get [tested](#). For FAQs about COVID-19 and the most up to date UW COVID Policies, go [here](#).

Attendance/Absences

A substantial portion of the overall course grade is from participation in section. Section is in person. It is necessary to attend and participate in section to receive these points. Assignments and exams draw heavily from in-class material, therefore absences will result in difficulty in achieving maximum points on these assignments. If students are absent, it is their responsibility to obtain notes from section or lecture from a classmate. Section or lecture notes will not be provided by the instructor or TA.

Section Participation

Section participation comprises 15% of the overall course grade. Students are expected to come prepared to discuss the assigned material. Some of the readings are extremely challenging in terms of the concepts they introduce and the evidence they employ. Most of these readings 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. Please note participation points are earned through participation and are not earned by simply attending section.

Weekly discussion questions will be posted on Canvas in advance of the Friday section.

Discussion Expectations

The goals for discussion are:

1. Clarify any points of confusion from 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.
4. Make connections between the readings and lecture and current events.

If all of the above happen, then it has been a successful discussion section.

Course Communications

Announcements about the course will be made during lecture/section and noted on the course website. The instructor will also at times communicate with students using the email tool within Canvas. It is each student's responsibility to regularly check the email address connected to your account in Canvas and to check the Canvas site.

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 and syllabus. The answers to most questions are on the website or in the syllabus. If you cannot find the answer you are looking for, then email your TA or the instructor. If you do not receive a response to your email, then you should assume the answer is in the syllabus or on the course website.

For substantive and detailed questions, please see your TA or the instructor during office hours. This includes questions clarifying the course material, grading questions, and feedback on your assignments. These types of questions will not be answered via email and are best suited for a conversation. See the Canvas Home page for detailed information on office hours including Zoom links, times, etc.

Please note that TAs and the instructor will aim to respond to student emails within 24 hours, Monday through Friday. The instructor and the TAs will not consistently respond to emails over the weekend or in the evening. If you send an email during this time period, please be aware that you may not receive a response until the next day or after the weekend is over.

Accessibility/Accommodations

If you have established accommodations with Disability Resources for Students (DRS), please communicate your approved accommodations to the instructor as soon as possible so we can discuss your needs in this course. If you have not yet established services through DRS, but have a temporary health condition or permanent disability that requires accommodations (conditions include but not limited to; mental health, attention-related, learning, vision, hearing, physical or health impacts), you are welcome to contact DRS at 206-543-8924 or uwdrs@uw.edu or disability.uw.edu. DRS offers resources and coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities and/or temporary health conditions. Reasonable accommodations are established through an interactive process between you, your instructor and DRS. It is the policy and practice of the University of Washington to create inclusive and accessible learning environments consistent with federal and state law.

Washington state law requires that UW develop a policy for accommodation of student absences or significant hardship due to reasons of faith or conscience, or for organized religious activities. The

UW's policy, including more information about how to request an accommodation, is available at [Religious Accommodations Policy \(https://registrar.washington.edu/staffandfaculty/religious-accommodations-policy/\)](https://registrar.washington.edu/staffandfaculty/religious-accommodations-policy/). Accommodations must be requested within the first two weeks of this course using the [Religious Accommodations Request form \(https://registrar.washington.edu/students/religious-accommodations-request/\)](https://registrar.washington.edu/students/religious-accommodations-request/).

Course Conduct

Every student brings a different perspective to the classroom. Dialogue in this 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, insult, or harass anyone.

Students are expected to behave in a professional manner and be respectful towards myself, the TA, and their classmates. Part of respectful behavior is coming to class on time and paying attention. Eating is permitted as long as it does not disrupt others. Students are not permitted to engage in any disruptive behavior during lectures or section.

Technology

Your undivided attention during each lecture will significantly improve your performance in this class. Students are encouraged to put laptops, phones, and other electronic devices away and take notes the old-fashioned way- on paper. Research demonstrates that taking notes on paper significantly improves retention and understanding. Use of electronic devices other than for note-taking can be very distracting to other students. Disruptive behavior in this class is not permitted.

Material on the Canvas website is intended for each student's personal educational use. Reproduction of that material, recording of lectures, taking photos of lecture slides, or any distribution of any course materials are not permitted unless the instructor specifically grants permission to do so.

To promote discussion and active participation by all students the use of laptops, tablets, and other electronic devices during section should only be for actively engaging course materials.

Citations/Footnotes

In your papers, you must cite authors from whom you draw ideas/quotations. The typical style in political science is (Last Name, Year of Publication: Page) or (Last Name, Year of Publication). For example, (Hutchings 2003 : 118) or (Hutchings, 2003). Footnotes or endnotes are also acceptable ways of acknowledging work. In your exams, it is a good idea to cite authors that we have read 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.

Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct is a serious offense at The University of Washington. All cases of suspected academic misconduct will be referred to the Arts and Sciences Committee on Academic Conduct, and may result in a grade of 0.0 for the assignment in question.

University policies and guidelines regarding cheating and plagiarism can be found at <https://depts.washington.edu/grading/pdf/AcademicResponsibility.pdf>.

What constitutes academic misconduct? The University of Washington Student Conduct Code

defines it as the follow (WAC 478-120-024)

Academic misconduct includes:

- (a) **"Cheating,"** which includes, but is not limited to:
 - (i) The use of unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations; or
 - (ii) The acquisition, use, or distribution of unpublished materials created by another student without the express permission of the original author(s).
- (b) **"Falsification,"** which is the intentional use or submission of falsified data, records, or other information including, but not limited to, records of internship or practicum experiences or attendance at any required event(s). Falsification also includes falsifying scientific and/or scholarly research.
- (c) **"Plagiarism,"** which is the submission or presentation of someone else's words, composition, research, or expressed ideas, whether published or unpublished, without attribution. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to:
 - (i) The use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment; or
 - (ii) The unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or acquired from an entity engaging in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.
- (d) **Prohibited collaboration.**
- (e) Engaging in behavior specifically prohibited by an instructor in the course of class instruction or in a course syllabus.
- (f) **Multiple submissions** of the same work in separate courses without the express permission of the instructor(s).
- (g) Taking deliberate action to destroy or damage another's academic work in order to gain an advantage for oneself or another.
- (h) The recording of instructional content without the express permission of the instructor(s), and/or the dissemination or use of such unauthorized records.

If you are uncertain what constitutes plagiarism, please ask the instructor or TA for guidance. The Political Science/JSIS/LSJ/ CHID Writing Center also offers guidance on plagiarism:

<http://depts.washington.edu/pswrite/forstudents.html>.

Please note the instructor reserves the right to change the syllabus

Course Outline and Reading Assignments

Week 1 (March 29th and 31st)

March 29th Introduction/Congress 101

Lauren Powner. 2007. "Reading and Learning Political Science"

March 31st Congress 101/Begin Historical Development

TUSC Ch. 1 "Representation and Governing in a Separated System"

Week 2 (April 5th and 7th)

April 5th Historical Development & Constitutional Design

TUSC Ch. 2 "Historical Development of Congress"

[U.S. Constitution, Article I](#) (entire)

April 7th Legislative Process in House & Senate
TUSC Ch. 7 “Policy Making in the House and Senate”

Week 3 (April 12th and 14th)

April 12th Legislative Process in the House & Senate

Roger Davidson, Walter Oleszek, Frances Lee, Eric Schickler and James M. Curry, 2020. *Congress and Its Members*. Washington D.C.: CQ Press. Ch. 8. “Congressional Rules and Procedures”

Dodd et al. Ch. 12 by Tracy Sulkin “Legislative Styles and the Dynamics of Legislative Behavior”

April 14th Legislative Process & Polarization

Brian F. Schaffner. 2011. “Party Polarization”. In the *Oxford Handbook of the American Congress*. Edited by George C. Edwards III, Frances Lee, and Eric Schickler. NY: Oxford University Press.

Dodd et al. Ch. 9 by Sarah Binder, “The Struggle to Legislate in Polarized Times”

Week 4 (April 19th and 21st)

April 19th Legislative Process, Gridlock, & Dysfunction (remote lecture)

Dodd et al. Ch. 1 by C. Lawrence Evans and Wendy Schiller, “The U.S. Senate and the Meaning of Dysfunction”

Frances Lee. 2016. *Insecure Majorities: Congress and The Perpetual Campaign*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Ch. 3 “The Logic of Confrontation”

April 21st – Take-Home Midterm Exam is due by 11:20am on Canvas

Week 5 (April 26th and 28th) Parties & Party Leadership

April 26th

TUSC Ch. 6 “Parties”

Dodd et al. Ch. 7 by Steven S. Smith and Gerald Gamm “The Dynamics of Party Government in Congress”

April 28th

Dodd et al. Ch. 8 by Ruth Bloch Rubin “House Parties, Divided: Intraparty Organization in the Contemporary Congress”

Dodd et al. Ch. 2 by John Aldrich and David W. Rohde, “Lending and Reclaiming Power: Majority Leadership in the House from the 1950s to Trump”

Week 6 (May 3rd and 5th) Committees

May 3rd

TUSC Ch. 5 “Committees”

C. Lawrence Evans. 2011. “Congressional Committees”. In the *Oxford Handbook of the American Congress*. Edited by George C. Edwards III, Frances Lee, and Eric Shickler. NY: Oxford University Press.

May 5th

Michael Minta. 2011. “Legislative Oversight and the Substantive Representation of Black and Latino Interests in Congress”.

Week 7 (May 10th and 12th) Representation & Redistricting

May 10th

TUSC Ch. 4 “Representation”

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

May 12th

Dodd et al. Ch. 6 by Rodney Hero and Robert Preuhs, “Black-Latino Relations in Congress: Examining Institutional Context and Inter-Minority Group Relations Further”

Christopher T. Stout, Katherine Tate, and Meghan Wilson. 2021. “Does Black Representation Matter: A Review of Descriptive Representation for African Americans in Legislative Offices”. *National Review of Black Politics*. 2(1):2-21.

Week 8 (May 17th and 19th) Campaigns & Elections

May 17th

TUSC Ch. 3 “Elections”

Dodd et al. Ch. 3 by Robert S. Erickson, and Gerald Wright, “Voters, Candidates, and Issues in Congressional Elections”

May 19th

**** Paper Assignment is due 5/19 at 10:00am on Canvas and in paper copy at lecture**

Dodd et al. Ch. 4 by Gary Jacobson “Partisanship, Money, and Competition: Elections and the Transformation of Congress since the 1970s”

Dodd. et al. Ch 5 by Danielle Thompsen, “Women Running, Women Winning: Voter Preferences in 2018”

Week 9 (May 24th and 26th) Congress, the Presidency, and the Courts

May 24th

TUSC Ch. 9 “Congress and the President”

TUSC Ch. 11 “Congress and the Courts”

May 26th

Dodd et al. Ch. 16 by Nolan McCarty, “How Congressional Polarization is Transforming the Separation of Powers”

Dodd et al. Ch. 10 by Gregory Kroger, “The War over Judges in the Senate”

Week 10 (May 31st and June 2nd)

May 31st Congress & the Public

David W. Brady. 2011. “Public Opinion and Congressional Policy”. In the *Oxford Handbook of the American Congress*. Edited by George C. Edwards III, Frances Lee, and Eric Shickler. New York: Oxford University Press.

John Griffin. 2011. “Public Evaluations of Congress”. In the *Oxford Handbook of the American Congress*. Edited by George C. Edwards III, Frances Lee, and Eric Shickler. New York: Oxford University Press.

June 2nd – Course Wrap-Up & Looking Ahead to the 2022 Elections

Dodd et al. Ch. 17 by Lawrence C. Dodd, Bruce I. Oppenheimer “The 2020 Congressional Elections in a Time of COVID-19, Economic Turmoil, and Trump”

******* Take-Home Final Exam is due on Monday June 6, 2022 at 12:30pm*******