

THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS
(Political Science 345 L32)

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Fall 2013
Tue/Thu 1:00-2:30
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PURPOSE. This course examines legislative politics in the United States, focusing mostly (though not exclusively) on the U.S. Congress. Much of the course is devoted to tracing the development of legislative institutions and examining their effects on policymaking. We will also investigate how factors external to legislatures—including the executive branch, the courts, and the public—affect the dynamics of legislative politics. The course is oriented around the following main concepts:

1. Political preferences: how are legislators elected into office, and what explains their behavior as members of a legislative body?
2. Political institutions: what are the “rules of the game,” and how and why have they changed over time?
3. Political outcomes: how does the combination of preferences and institutions help us to understand when new laws are passed and (just as importantly) when they are not? And, as just one political actor among many, what institutions besides legislatures affect the policymaking process?

The course's goal is to help us come to a deeper understanding of the complexities of legislative politics. Along the way we will address some of the core themes of democratic government, including representation, legitimacy, and accountability.

CLASS MEETINGS. This is a survey-based course. The assigned readings are somewhat extensive (typically 75-100 pages per week), and the lectures will cover even more material. Attendance at all lectures is a natural expectation of the course, as students are responsible for all readings as well as the material presented in lecture.

Class meetings will be a combination of lecture and discussion. The purpose of the lectures is to help place the readings in context and provide additional material for discussion.

Students are expected to be active participants in the class discussion. This includes answering the instructor's questions, responding to arguments, claims, and evidence

found in the readings, engaging the comments and inquiries of fellow classmates, and the like. To this end, laptops will not be permitted in class. If the course is fully engaging, it will not be necessary to refresh Facebook and nytimes.com every few minutes; such behavior will only distract you and your fellow classmates. If, instead, you find the course unengaging and uninteresting, I encourage you to let me know so that we can find a way to make the course a more productive experience for all of us.

COURSE TEXTBOOKS. The material for this course will rely primarily on two texts, available in the campus bookstore:

Steven S. Smith, Jason M. Roberts, and Ryan J. Vander Wielen. *The American Congress*, 7th Edition. Cambridge University Press.

Charles M. Stewart, III. *Analyzing Congress*, 2nd Edition. Norton.

I will also assign a number of journal articles and books chapters in addition to these textbooks. These assignments are posted online on the course website. All readings should be completed **prior** to that lecture.

REQUIREMENTS. Each student's grade will be based on the following components:

(a)	Mid-term exam (October 10)	20% of grade
(b)	Final exam (December 5)	25% of grade
(c)	Course paper (due on December 3)	30% of grade
(d)	Group blogging project (throughout the course)	25% of grade

Students cannot pass the course without completing *all* four components. I reserve the right to change due dates, with sufficient notice, depending upon the course's progress.

Exams. Both exams will be administered in class. The exams will not be designed to test your memorization of the material presented in the course, but rather will examine how critically you have thought about the core concepts discussed in class and your ability to apply them to the study of legislative politics. The midterm exam will cover material from the first half of the course (through October 8). The final exam will ask you to think comprehensively about what you have learned throughout the course, but with an emphasis on the material from the second half.

Course paper. The course paper should be 8-10 pages typed, double-spaced, and with 1" margins. The paper should address some sort of institutional reform that has implications for Congress or state legislatures. Examples include electoral reforms (e.g., partisan vs. nonpartisan elections), the design of legislature institutions (e.g., unicameralism vs. bicameralism), changes in legislative rules or procedures (e.g., the cloture rule), etc. Final papers should address the institutional context in which reform might be (or is being) discussed, what would be necessary for it to occur, the likely consequences of such

reform, and your argument about whether or not the reform should be implemented. One page summaries of your research topic should be submitted by email to the instructor and the TA on October 18. Final papers should be submitted via email to both the instructor and the TA by December 3. Please take advantage of office hours with your TA and me to discuss your paper.

Group project. The legislative process receives lots of attention from the media. Unfortunately, much of this coverage overlooks basic facts of institutional design that have important implications for how and why policy change occurs (or fails to occur). The goal of this project is for you to apply your knowledge of the material from the course to the real (and often messy) world of politics. An excellent example of the basic idea for this project can be found at <http://www.themonkeycage.org>. You should form groups containing either two or three students (no exceptions) with whom you will work together on a blog project this semester. You may use any platform to host your blog. For instance, the course blog was created using <http://www.blogger.com>.

Each group should focus their blog on either a **nationally significant area of legislation currently under consideration by the 113th Congress**, or a **state legislature of your choosing**. During the semester, you will be responsible for monitoring media coverage of your chosen subject area and writing blog posts that reflect thoughtful application of our class material to the subject you have chosen. (For instance, if you have chosen to follow the Alabama state legislature, you might discuss how the governor's reported opposition to a particular bill will shape the legislature's behavior since a gubernatorial veto can be overridden by a simple majority.) **Again, your job is to lend insightful, critical commentary to current events in legislative politics.**

There are three basic writing requirements. First, each student will be responsible for authoring **six** blog posts over the course of the semester. Generally speaking, blog posts should be about 500 words in length, but can be as long or as short as you'd like so long as you say something insightful and can keep your readers engaged. Second, each group should coordinate their efforts so that there is at least one post per week. (For instance, the first post must be published by Sunday, September 15. The last post should be published by Sunday, December 1.) Furthermore, students should regularly visit their classmates' blogs. Thus, beginning on September 16, each student is required to post **at least two comments per week** (total of 24 comments) on their classmates' blog postings. All posts and comments should be clearly identified with your name and the date. *Each group is responsible for the technological maintenance of their blog.*

By Friday, September 8, one member from each group should email the following information to the TA: names of all members of the group; the blog URL; and the blog's subject matter.

Group projects require the full commitment and participation of all group members. Please come see me immediately if there are any concerns about this issue. At the end of the course each student will anonymously rate the level of participation from each group member.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY. Students will be bound by the University's academic integrity policy (available at: <http://academicintegrity.wustl.edu/policy>). Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions regarding this policy.

COURSE OUTLINE

- August 27 Introduction
- August 29 NO CLASS
(Annual meeting of the American Political Science Association)
- September 3 The Spatial Model
- Analyzing Congress, Chapter 1
- September 5 Congress and the Constitution
- Analyzing Congress, Chapter 2
 - The American Congress, Chapter 1 (skim), Chapter 2 (30-44)
- September 8: Email TA with information on group project
- September 10 Historical Developments
- The American Congress, Chapter 2 (pages 45-53)
 - Analyzing Congress, Chapter 3
 - Polsby, Nelson. 1968. "The Institutionalization of the U.S. House of Representatives." *American Political Science Review* 62: 144-168.
- September 12 Congressional Elections, Part I
- The American Congress, Chapter 3
 - Analyzing Congress, Chapter 5
- September 17 Congressional Elections, Part II
- Analyzing Congress, Chapter 6
 - Ansolabehere, Stephen, James M. Snyder Jr., and Charles Stewart III. 2001. "Candidate Positioning in U.S. House Elections." *American Journal of Political Science* 45: 136-159.
- September 19 Congressional Elections, Part III
- Jacobson, Gary C. 1989. "Strategic Politicians and the Dynamics of U.S. House Elections, 1946-86." *American Political Science Review* 83: 773-793.
 - Cox, Gary W., and Jonathan N. Katz. 1996. "Why Did the Incumbency Advantage in U.S. House Elections Grow?" *American Journal of Political Science* 40: 478-497.
 - Jacobson, Gary C. 1990. "The Effects of Campaign Spending in House Elections: New Evidence for Old Arguments." *American Journal of Political Science* 34:

334-362.

September 24

Representation, Part 1

- Mayhew, David. 1974. *The Election Connection*. Chapter 1.
- The American Congress, Chapter 4
- Pitkin, Hannah. 19xx. *The Concept of Representation*.
- Przeworski, Adam, Susan Stokes, and Bernard Manin. 1999. *Democracy, Accountability, and Representation*. Chapter 1.

September 26

Representation, Part 2

- Sulkin, Tracy, and Nathaniel Swigger. 2008. "Is There Truth in Advertising? Campaign Ad Images as Signals about Legislative Behavior." *Journal of Politics* 70: 232-244.
- Mansbridge, Jane. 1999. "Should Blacks Represent Blacks and Women Represent Women? A Contingent Yes." *Journal of Politics* 61: 628-657.
- Anzia, Sarah F., and Christopher R. Berry. 2011. "The Jackie (and Jill) Robinson Effect: Why Do Congresswomen Outperform Congressmen?" *American Journal of Political Science* 55: 478-493.
- Cameron, Charles, David Epstein and Sharyn O'Halloran. 1996. "Do Majority-Minority Districts Maximize Substantive Black Representation in Congress?" *American Political Science Review* 90: 794-812.

October 1

Accountability

- Jones, Philip E. 2011. "Which Buck Stops Here? Accountability for Policy Positions and Policy Outcomes in Congress." *Journal of Politics* 73: 764-782.
- Przeworski, Adam, Susan Stokes, and Bernard Manin. 1999. *Democracy, Accountability, and Representation*. Chapters 2 and 4.
- Rogowski, Jon C. Working paper. "Faithful Agents? Electoral Platforms and Legislative Behavior.

October 3

Parties in Congress

- The American Congress, Chapter 5
- Analyzing Congress, Chapter 7.

October 8

Committees in Congress

- The American Congress, Chapter 6
- Barry R. Weingast and William C. Marshall. 1988. "The Industrial Organization of Congress, or, Why Legislatures, Like Firms, Are Not Organized as Markets." *Journal of Political Economy* 96: 132-163.
- Krehbiel, Keith. 1991. *Information and Legislative Organization*. Chapters 1 and

2.

- Maltzmann, Forrest. 1997. *Competing Principals: Committees, Parties, and the Organization of Congress*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. Chapter 2.

October 10 Midterm Exam

October 15 Rules of the Game

- The American Congress, Chapter 7.
- Sinclair, Barbara. 2007. *Unorthodox Lawmaking*. Chapter 6.
- Binder, Sarah. 1996. "The Partisan Basis of Procedural Choice: Allocating Parliamentary Rights in the U.S. House, 1789-1990." *American Political Science Review* 90: 8-20.
- Schickler, Eric. 2000. "Institutional Change in the House of Representatives, 1867-1998: A Test of Partisan and Ideological Power Balance Models." *American Political Science Review* 94: 269-288.

October 17 The Congressional Agenda

- Cox, Gary W., and Mathew D. McCubbins. 2005. *Setting the Agenda*. Chapter 2.
- Taylor, Andrew. 1998. "Domestic Agenda Setting, 1947-1994." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 23: 373-397.
- Walker, Jack L. 1977. "Setting the Agenda in the U.S. Senate: A Theory of Problem Selection." *British Journal of Political Science* 7: 423-445.
- Sinclair, Barbara. 1985. "Agenda Control and Policy Success: Ronald Reagan and the 97th Congress." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 10: 291-314.

October 18: Research Paper topics due (one page) via email to TA

October 22 Roll Call Votes

- The American Congress, Chapter 8
- Analyzing Congress, Chapter 9 (stop at page 373)
- Krehbiel, Keith, and Douglas Rivers. 1990. "Sophisticated Voting in Congress: A Reconsideration." *Journal of Politics* 52: 548-578.

October 24 The Budgetary Process, Part I

- Walter J. Oleszek. 2010. *Congressional Procedures and the Policy Process*. Chapter 2.

October 29 The Budgetary Process, Part II

- The American Congress, Chapter 12.

October 31

Polymaking and Gridlock

- Mayhew, David. 2005 [1991]. *Divided We Govern*. Chapter 1.
- Krehbiel, Keith. 1998. *Pivotal Politics*. Chapters 1 and 2.

November 5

Institutions and Obstructionism

- Koger, Gregory. 2006. "Cloture Reform and Party Government in the Senate, 1918-1925." *Journal of Politics* 68: 708-719.
- Schickler, Eric, and Gregory J. Wawro. 2004. "Where's the Pivot? Obstruction and Lawmaking in the Pre-cloture Senate." *American Journal of Political Science* 48: 758-774.

November 7

Executive-Legislative Relations

- The American Congress, Chapter 9.
- Canes-Wrone Brandice. 2001. "The President's Legislative Influence from Public Appeals." *American Journal of Political Science* 45: 319-329.
- Howell, William G., and Jon C. Rogowski. 2013. "War, the Presidency, and Legislative Voting Behavior." *American Journal of Political Science*.
- Cameron, Charles, and Nolan McCarty. 2004. "Models of Vetoes and Veto Bargaining." *Annual Review of Politics* 7: 409-435.

November 12

Legislative Oversight and the Bureaucracy

- Walter J. Oleszek. 2010. *Congressional Procedures and the Policy Process*. Chapter 9.
- Huber, John D., Charles R. Shipan, and Madelaine Pfahler. 2001. "Legislatures and Statutory Control of Bureaucracy." *American Journal of Political Science* 45: 330-345.
- McCubbins, Mathew D., and Thomas Schwartz. 1984. "Congressional Oversight Overlooked: Police Patrols versus Fire Alarms." *American Journal of Political Science* 28: 165-179.
- Shipan, Charles R. 2004. "Regulatory Regimes, Agency Actions, and the Conditional Nature of Congressional Influence." *American Political Science Review* 98: 467-480.

November 14

Congress and the Courts

- The American Congress, Chapter 10.

November 19

Lobbying and Interest Groups

- The American Congress, Chapter 11.
- Hall, Richard, and Alan Deardorf. 2006. "Lobbying as Legislative Subsidy." *American Political Science Review* 100: 69-84.

November 21

Polarization and the Contemporary Congress

- McCarty, Nolan, Keith T. Poole, and Howard Rosenthal. 2006. *Polarized America: The Dance of Ideology and Unequal Riches*. Cambridge: MIT Press. Chapters 1 and 2.
- McGhee, Eric, Seth Masket, Boris Shor, Steven Rogers, and Nolan McCarty. Working paper. "A Primary Cause of Partisanship? Nomination Systems and Legislative Ideology."
- Sinclair, Barbara. 2006. *Party Wars: Polarization and the Politics of National Policymaking*. Chapters 5-7.

November 26/28

Happy Thanksgiving; No Class

December 3

Exam Review

December 3: Final papers due via email by 12 noon

December 5

Final Exam