

Legislative Processes and Behavior
POLS 3325
Spring 2009

Professor Joe Giammo
Unique Number: 10191
Room: Ross Hall 215
Time: M, W, F, 10:00 – 10:50 a.m.

Office: Stabler Hall 603A
Phone Number: 683-7220
E-mail: jdgiammo@ualr.edu
Office Hours: M, W, F, 11:00 – 12:00 noon,
T, Th, 12:30 – 1:30 p.m.,
or by appointment

Overview:

This class provides a framework for understanding legislative institutions and the behavior of their members. While it will focus most often on Congress as an important example of a legislative body, we will frequently make comparisons to other legislatures, both within the United States and in other countries. The first portion of the class focuses on the context within which legislatures operate, the processes for choosing members, and the ways in which those members must represent their constituents in the course of doing their jobs. The second section of the course will focus on the internal workings of Congress, with a particular emphasis on the rules that govern the legislative process and the effects that those rules have on the laws that it passes. The third section of the course will examine the relationship between Congress and other government officials and institutions in our separated system. Finally, we will look more closely at two major policy areas, economic and foreign policy, to understand the role that Congress plays in creating these policies, the rules and traditions which limit the ability of the legislature to regulate these areas, and the major policy options that have been considered in recent years.

Requirements:

Students are expected to arrive on time for all lectures, to participate in class discussions, and to complete all readings by the assigned dates. The textbooks for the course are:

Davidson, Roger H. and Walter J. Oleszek. *Congress and Its Members*. 11th Edition.
CQ Press. 2008

Dodd, Lawrence C. and Bruce I. Oppenheimer, eds. *Congress Reconsidered*. 8th Edition.
CQ Press. 2005

Additionally, students are expected to read a daily newspaper, watch a daily news broadcast, or follow an internet news source. The source that you choose is entirely up to you, however, we will often discuss current events, particularly as they relate to Congress and the Arkansas state legislature.

Grading:

The grade will be based on three in-class exams and an essay assignment, each worth 25% of the final course grade. Exams will consist of short answer and essay questions and will cover information from both lecture and readings. You will not be allowed to talk or use notes or books when taking the exams. No make-up exams will be given except in cases of serious, documented emergencies. Since I will be the sole judge of what constitutes such an emergency, your best policy would be to check with me beforehand. If that is not possible, you are responsible for contacting me as soon as possible after the exam. Students taking a make-up exam will not be given the same exam assigned to the rest of the class, and the format of the make-up exams may vary. The essay assignment will be handed out soon, and will be due on April 29th. More details will be forthcoming.

Letter grades will be based on the traditional scale (90-100 is an A, 80-89 is a B, 70-79 is a C, etc.). There will be no opportunities for extra credit assignments.

Attendance Policy:

You will notice that attendance does not play a formal role in your grade; however, students missing class will find it very difficult to keep up with the material. The material presented in lecture will overlap with, but not be limited to the information presented in the text. In fact, several topics covered in lecture are not mentioned at all in the textbook. Therefore, students who miss class will have trouble answering many of the questions on the tests, and their grades will naturally suffer accordingly. In fact, it is extremely unlikely that students who frequently miss class will be able to pass the course.

Academic Dishonesty:

Academic dishonesty, which includes, but is not limited to cheating on an exam, unauthorized collaboration on an assignment, and plagiarism, is taken very seriously in this course. Students who commit such actions will be reported to the Dean of Students and may receive an F for the course. If you have any questions about whether an action is considered to be academically dishonest, please see me or read the complete description of the UALR policy on academic dishonesty, which is available in the student handbook at www.ualr.edu/www/handbook/student_rights.html.

Disability Support Services

It is the policy of UALR to accommodate students with disabilities, pursuant to federal law and state law. Any student with a disability who needs accommodation, for example in arrangements for seating, examinations, note-taking, or access to information on the web should inform the instructor at the beginning of the course. The chair of the department offering this course is also available to assist with accommodations. Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact Disability Support Services, which is located in the Donaghey Student Center, Room 103, telephone 501-569-3143 (v/tty), and on the web at www.ualr.edu/dssdept.

Course Format:

Classes will consist of both lecture and class discussion. I will often ask questions of the class and may call on students at random. Student questions and observations are always encouraged. Politics is by its nature a matter of considerable disagreement and strong opinions, and students should feel free to express their own viewpoints, even when the subject is a sensitive one. I fully expect you to disagree with each other and with me on a variety of topics. In fact, class discussions are much less interesting or useful when everyone seems to agree with each other. While healthy disagreement and discussion is encouraged, it should always, however, remain on a respectful and professional level.

General Policies:

Students who are having difficulty with the course or who wish further clarification on a particular topic from lecture or the readings should feel free to see me during my office hours or to schedule an appointment with me to meet at another time. You may also e-mail me, and I will try to get back in touch with you within one business day of your contact. Under no circumstances should you contact me at home.

In order to facilitate a better learning environment, distractions need to be kept to a minimum. Therefore, you should turn off your cell phones before the start of each class. Additionally, you should not bring children with you to class.

WebCT

Additional information, documents, and course announcements will be available through the course web page. You can access the web page at <http://webct.ualr.edu/webct/public/home.pl>

Course Outline and Assignments:

All dates subject to change

Note – CIM = *Congress and Its Members*, CR = *Congress Reconsidered*

Date	Topic	Reading Assignment
January 12	Introduction	
14	Preliminary Assessment and Basic Concepts	Dodd and Oppenheimer reading, posted on WebCT
16	The Two Congresses	CIM, Ch. 1
19	Development, Powers, and Evolution	CIM, Ch. 2, Constitution, Article I, posted on WebCT
21	Running for Congress: Rules and Context	CIM, pp. 39-64
23	Running for Congress: Recruitment and Incumbency Advantages	CR, Ch. 6
26	Running for Congress: Recruitment and Incumbency Advantages	CR, Ch. 7
28	Running for Congress: The Nominating Process	CIM, pp. 64-67

30	Running for Congress: Resources	CIM, pp. 67-82
February 2	Running for Congress: Resources	CR, Ch. 5
4	Running for Congress: Campaign Strategy	CIM, pp. 82-98, CR, Ch. 4
6	Running for Congress: Voters and Public Opinion	CIM, pp. 98-115, CR, Ch. 3
9	Hill Styles and Home Styles	CIM, Ch. 5
11	Hill Styles and Home Styles	
13	Representation	CR, Ch. 17
16	Exam I	
18	Congressional Leaders	CIM, pp. 149 -181
20	Congressional Leaders	CR, Ch. 8
23	Parties in Congress	CIM, pp. 182-191
25	Committees	CIM, Ch. 7
27	No Class	
March 2	Committees	CR, Ch. 11
4	Committees	CR, Ch. 12
6	House Rules	CIM, pp. 237-258
9	House Rules	CR, Ch. 2
11	House Rules	CR, Ch. 9
13	Senate Rules	CIM, pp. 258-270
16	Senate Rules	CR, Ch. 1 & 10
18	Decision Making in Congress	CIM, Ch. 9
20	Exam II	
March 23 – 27	Spring Break – No Class	
30	International Comparison	
April 1	International Comparison	
3	No Class	
6	Congress and the President	CIM, Ch. 10
8	Congress and the President	CR, Ch. 16
10	Congress and the Bureaucracy	CIM, Ch. 11
13	Congress and the Bureaucracy	CIM, Ch. 11
15	Congress and the Courts	CIM, Ch. 12
17	Congress and the Courts	CR, Ch. 13
20	Congress and Interest Groups	CIM, Ch. 13
22	Congress and Interest Groups	
24	Economic Policy	CIM, Ch. 14
27	Economic Policy	CR, Ch. 14
29	National Security Policy, Essays Due	CIM, Ch. 15
May 1	National Security Policy	CR, Ch. 15
May 4	Course Conclusions	
May 6, 10:30 - noon	Final Exam	