

POL 105: The Legislative Process

University of California, Davis

Winter Quarter, 2018
Tuesdays and Thursdays
3:10-4:30pm
Room: Hoagland Hall 113

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Office: 663 Kerr Hall
Office Hours: Thursdays, 1-3pm (and by appointment)

Course Description

This course is about the U.S. Congress, arguably the world's most powerful legislative body and the engine of the American political system. We will cover topics including elections, legislative procedure, the committee system, the role of parties, and the health of our political system. By the end of this course, you should have a deeper understanding of each of these concepts and be able to apply them to current congressional politics.

Since this is an upper division course, it is my expectation that you have a baseline knowledge of the structure of American government. As such, we will not be devoting much time in class to basic civics (e.g. checks and balances, the three branches of government, etc.). If you do not feel comfortable with these subjects, I highly encourage you to brush up at the beginning of the quarter and come to my office hours if you have questions.

Because we are lucky enough to have a relatively small class, there will be in-class discussion. Participation and class attendance will be a large portion of your grade, and you cannot expect to succeed without reading all the assigned material. Do not be shy to speak up, even if you are not certain about something. There is no penalty for engaging in debate or questioning what I am telling you – in fact both are heavily encouraged!

One final note – this course is meant to be fun! While the material in this class will often get into the weeds of the legislative process, I will endeavor to make sure our discussions are relevant to current political events. If there is something happening in the news that is relevant to our class, I will be sure to allocate time to discuss it. I encourage you to apply current events to course material in class discussion as well. Major legislation, elections, scandals, news stories, and policy debates are all fair game!

Class Expectations

Online Access

All readings and documents for this course (except the textbook and reader) can be accessed through the Canvas website or via hyperlinks in the syllabus schedule. Messages will be sent by me via Canvas, so make sure you have email notifications for Canvas messages activated.

Email

I welcome questions and comments, either by email or by Canvas message. When you email me, you should compose your email as you would any piece of professional correspondence. I will respond to your emails as quickly as possible, but please do not expect a quick response to email sent on weekends or after 5pm on any day.

Lecture Slides

Slides will be used in class on most days. Slides will be posted to Canvas following the class session.

Desk Name Tag (yes, this is required)

Though this class will be lecture-based, I also intend for discussion to feature prominently. Toward that aim, I ask that you place a name tag on the desk in front of you in class each day. Although attendance will not be taken every day, showing up to class with your desk name tag will greatly affect your participation grade. The best way to make this name tag is to take an 8½ x 11-inch piece of construction paper or lightweight cardboard, fold it in half lengthwise (so it's now 4¼ x 11 inches), and write your name on one side so that your name is upright when you put the folded piece of paper like a tent on the desk in front of you. Please write your full name (**FIRST AND LAST**—using whatever name you prefer to be called as your first name) in **LARGE, VERY DARK, BOLD** letters.

Laptops and Other Electronics

Numerous studies confirm that students who take notes by hand retain more information over time. It is also far less distracting to others when there is not constant typing and visual distraction going on during a lecture/discussion. As such, laptops, tablets, smartphones and other electronic devices are not allowed in class.

If you have a documented learning disability that is helped by typing your notes, feel free to talk with me and I will be happy to consider an exception. Furthermore, if you would strongly prefer to take notes during lecture with a laptop, you may write me an email letting me know, and we can discuss the matter individually. Any laptops approved for use in-class must be placed in airplane mode and not used for web surfing during class.

Finally, please silence and put away your phones. If I see you texting I will feel no shame about asking you to put your phone away. If there is an emergency, please step out of the classroom to deal with your phone.

Required Texts

There is a required textbook and a required reader for this course.

- Textbook: Steven Smith, Jason Roberts, and Ryan Vander Wielen, *The American Congress* (Both the 8th and 9th editions of this textbook are suitable for this class)
- Reader: Steven Smith, Jason Roberts, and Ryan Vander Wielen, *The American Congress Reader*

You may access all other readings through the Canvas portal for this class or via hyperlinks in the syllabus.

Grading

Grading for this course will be calculated as follows:

Participation	10%
Quizzes (best 8 out of 10)	40%
Response Paper	15%
<u>Analytic Essay</u>	<u>35%</u>
Total:	100%

All grading items listed above are detailed in the sections that follow.

Participation

Your participation grade will be based on the overall effort you put into the class, including the effort you put into your assignments, your attendance in class (and having a desk tag!), and your participation in discussions. Come to class, participate in class discussions, earn a good participation grade, and get more out of the class. It's a win-win. You are also encouraged to bring up news stories, relevant examples, and "dank" Congress memes.

Quizzes

10 short answer/multiple choice quizzes will be administered over the course of the quarter. The lowest two quiz grades will be dropped. Quizzes will take place at the beginning of class each Thursday. Since you may drop two quizzes, no make-up quizzes will be offered. Quizzes will be graded out of 5 points each.

Everything is fair game! Quizzes may cover two kinds of information:

- 1) Material from the assigned readings, even if we do not discuss it in class.
- 2) Material discussed in class, even if it is not covered in the readings.

Response Paper

While there is no midterm exam for this class, you will be expected to submit a brief response paper to one or more of the readings assigned in the first half of the course. This response paper is a means for you to engage with the (often complex!) articles we are reading in class on a deeper level.

The response paper should be approximately 3 pages long (not including the bibliography). You should spend no more than a page summarizing the article(s), then use the rest of the paper to pose questions, discuss the implications of the work for our understanding of congressional politics, and suggest additional avenues of research. You are welcome to disagree or agree with the readings in your paper – there is no "right" answer. The most important task is to critically engage with the readings and focus on the underlying "big picture" questions they ask.

For this paper, please select one or more of the academic articles, from either the reader or posted to Canvas, from weeks 2-4 of the course. Do not select a chapter from the textbook. Make sure to use 12-point font, one-inch margins, and double-spacing. Additionally, please number each page.

Analytic Essay

In lieu of a final exam, you are required to submit an analytic essay for this class. Make sure to use 12-point font, one-inch margins, double-spacing, and proper citation format (see section below). Additionally, please number each page. The essay should be 5-6 pages long (not including the bibliography). Essay prompts will be posted to Canvas early in the quarter.

Essays will be graded on content (evidence provided), analysis (claims drawn about the evidence provided), structure (clarity of thesis and logical “flow” of the essay), and mechanics (grammar, punctuation use, sentence and paragraph composition, etc.). The following elements are part of an A paper:

1. **A clear thesis** presented in the first paragraph and argued throughout. Include “In this essay I will argue that…” or something similar.
2. **Evidence to support your thesis** in the form of facts, ideas from existing research, and thoughtful, balanced analysis.
3. **Clear structure**, including an introduction, a conclusion, and reasonably sized body paragraphs. Each body paragraph should start with a topic sentence that introduces that paragraph.
4. **A bibliography** with a complete list of your sources. Some guidelines:
 - Include a **minimum of six (6)** sources total.
 - At least **three (3) academic sources** for each paper. These should be academic articles (the reader is fair game) or university press books.
 - At least one of your three academic sources must be from outside the class (meaning that it is not on the syllabus).
 - Lectures and the textbook may be cited, but do **not** count towards your required sources.
5. **Appropriate and sparing use of quotes.** Quotes do not speak for themselves. They should always be preceded by context and followed by analysis of that quote.
6. **Clear writing** with few grammatical errors.

Citations and Bibliographies

I am not a stickler for a particular citation format. What does matter is that you cite every source you reference and include a bibliography at the end of every paper you submit that references outside sources. You may use in-text parenthetical citations (e.g. [APSR style](#)) or footnotes (e.g. [Chicago style](#)), but you **MUST** be consistent and use citations every time you refer to an outside source rather than your own opinion.

Late Submissions

Do not wait until the night before it is due to begin to work on an assignment. Life is complicated and full of unexpected surprises. Plan for uncertainty by managing your time efficiently. Even if your work is not complete because something unexpected interfered, submit what you have accomplished prior to the emergency. After-the-fact extensions will be granted only under extreme circumstances, and at my sole discretion.

If you know in advance that you will miss an assignment deadline, you may submit a partially completed assignment early — and then appeal for an extension.

Essays submitted late will have 10% deducted from their final score for every day they are late. This penalty begins immediately following the day and time the assignment is due and will not be prorated. Late essays will not be accepted after the scheduled final exam date.

Grade Appeals

If you are not satisfied with the grade you receive on an assignment or exam, please take the following steps:

- 1) Review any comments/feedback I have provided.
- 2) If you still have questions, come to my office hours or contact me by email.
- 3) If you still believe the grade you received is in error, submit a one-paragraph written request for a regrade by email. If the request is approved, your work will receive a completely new evaluation by me. Your score may increase, decrease, or stay the same.

Disabilities

UC Davis encourages qualified students with disabilities to participate in its programs and activities and is committed to the policy that all people shall have equal access to programs, facilities, and admissions without regard to personal characteristics not related to ability, performance, or qualifications as determined by University policy or by state or federal authorities. I am strongly committed to the same policy. If you feel you may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability, you should contact the Student Disability Center at (530) 752-3184 as soon as possible to identify and document your specific needs. Additionally, it is your responsibility to contact me privately immediately at the beginning of the quarter (i.e., within the first week) so we can discuss how to accommodate your needs. Do not wait until just before an assignment deadline or an exam to inform me of a learning disability.

Academic Dishonesty

All course work by students is to be done on an individual basis unless otherwise specified by me. Any reference materials used to prepare an assignment must be cited. Generally speaking, you must cite the person at the end of the sentence in which you use another person's idea. When you use a specific phrase, you must put that phrase in quotation marks and cite the original author at the end of the sentence in which you use the phrase. If you wish to submit a piece of writing that you have used in another class, you must receive my permission before doing so. The following webpage contains specific guidelines for avoiding academic misconduct: <https://ossja.ucdavis.edu/code-academic-conduct>.

Weekly Assignments and Topics

The list below indicates reading assignments, class topics, and essay due dates. All journal articles and other readings (excluding the required textbook and reader) will be available on Canvas or linked below. You should do each day's readings before that day's class. I'll generally keep us on schedule but note that discussions may bleed over from one class to the next.

Date	Topic	Readings Due
Week 1		
Tue, Jan 8	Course Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Syllabus Textbook, Chapter 1: The American Congress: Modern Trends
Thu, Jan 10	Congress & the Constitution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Textbook, Chapter 2: Representation & Lawmaking in Congress: The Constitutional and Historical Context Reader, Chapter 4: The U.S. Constitution, Article I (pp. 31-35) Reader, Chapter 5: Madison, James. 1787. "Federalist 10." (pp. 43-47)
Week 2		
Tue, Jan 15	The Electoral Connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Textbook, Chapter 4: Members, Goals, Resources, and Strategies Reader, Chapter 10: "Congress: The Electoral Connection" (by Mayhew)
Thu, Jan 17	Congressional Districts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reader, Chapter 8: "Elbridge Gerry's Salamander: The Electoral Consequences of the Reapportionment Revolution." (by Cox and Katz) Web: Liptak, Adam. 2013. "Smaller States Find Outsize Clout Growing in Senate." <i>The New York Times</i>. http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2013/03/11/us/politics/democracy-tested.html Web: Bump, Philip. "By 2040, two-thirds of Americans will be represented by 30 percent of the Senate." <i>The Washington Post</i>. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/politics/wp/2017/11/28/by-2040-two-thirds-of-americans-will-be-represented-by-30-percent-of-the-senate

Week 3		
Tue, Jan 22	Congressional Elections I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Textbook, Chapter 3: Congressional Elections and Policy Alignments • Podcast, <i>Radiolab Presents: More Perfect</i>. Episode: “The Political Thicket” http://www.wnyc.org/story/the-political-thicket <p>Optional:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reader, Chapter 9: “Strategic Politicians and the Dynamics of House Elections” (by Gary Jacobson)
Thu, Jan 24	Congressional Elections II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reader, Chapter 12: “Risk Bearing and Progressive Ambition” (by David Rohde)
Week 4		
Tue, Jan 29	Representation I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canvas: Canes-Wrone, Brandice. (2013). “From Mass Preferences to Policy.” <i>Annual Review of Political Science</i>, 18(1). • Reader, Chapter 6: “U.S. House Members in Their Constituencies: An Exploration” (by Richard Fenno)
Thu, Jan 31	Representation II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canvas: Gilens, Martin & Benjamin Page. 2014. “Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens.” <i>Perspectives on Politics</i> 12(3): 564-581. • Canvas: Schattschneider, E.E. 1960. “The Scope & Bias of the Pressure System” In <i>The Semisovereign People: A Realist's View of Democracy in America</i>. New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Week 5		
Mon, Feb 4	NO CLASS – Response Paper due by 10 AM	
Tue, Feb 5	Legislative Procedure I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Textbook, Chapter 7: The Rules of the Legislative Game
Thu, Feb 7	Legislative Procedure II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Textbook, Chapter 8: The Floor and Voting • Reader, Chapter 20: “Sample of a Special Rule” • Reader, Chapter 21: “Sample of a Unanimous Consent Agreement”
Week 6		
Tues, Feb 12	The Pivotal Politics Model I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canvas: Stone, Walter. (forthcoming). “The Pivotal Politics Model.”
Thurs, Feb 14	The Pivotal Politics Model II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canvas: Bafumi, J., & Herron, M. C. (2010). “Leapfrog Representation and Extremism: A Study of American Voters and Their Members in Congress.” <i>American Political Science Review</i>, 104(3), 519–542.

Week 7		
Tue, Feb 19	Congress and the Courts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Textbook, Chapter 10: Congress and the Courts • Reader, Chapter 34: “Senate Voting on Supreme Court Nominees” (by Cameron, Cover & Segal) • Reader, Chapter 35: “From Abe Fortas to Zoe Baird: Why Some Presidential Nominations Fail in the Senate” (by Krutz, Fleisher, & Bond)
Thu, Feb 21	Parties I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Textbook, Chapter 5: Parties and Leaders • Reader, Chapter 15: “Setting the Agenda” (by Cox & McCubbins)
Week 8		
Tue, Feb 26	Parties II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canvas: Lee, Francis E. (2015). “How Party Polarization Affects Governance.” <i>Annual Review of Political Science</i>, 18, 261–282. • Reader, Chapter 16: “Party Influence in Congress” (by Smith)
Thu, Feb 28	Committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Textbook, Chapter 6: The Standing Committees

Week 9		
Tue, Mar 12	The President & Congress II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canvas: Binder, Sarah. (2015). “The Dysfunctional Congress.” <i>Annual Review of Political Science</i>, 18(1), 85–101. • Canvas: Rohde, David W. & John G. Greer. 2014. “The President and Congressional Parties in an Era of Polarization.” In George C. Edwards III & William G. Howell eds., <i>The Oxford Handbook of the American Presidency</i>. New York, NY: Oxford University Press 2016.
Thu, Mar 14	Is Congress in Crisis?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canvas: Rae, Nicol C. 2007. “Be Careful What You Wish For: The Rise of Responsible Parties in American National Politics.” <i>Annual Review of Political Science</i>, 10(1), 169–191. • Canvas: Fishkin, Joseph and Pozen, David E. 2018. “Asymmetric Constitutional Hardball.” <i>Columbia Law Review</i>, Vol. 118, pp. 915-82, 2018.
Mon, Mar 18	NO FINAL EXAM – Analytic Essay due by 10 AM	