

POL 105: The Legislative Process

University of California, Davis

Winter Quarter, 2021
Tuesdays and Thursdays
1:40-3:00pm (live online via Zoom)

Live lecture URL: <https://ucdavis.zoom.us/j/94242489687>

Class YouTube URL: <https://tinyurl.com/yc7qdnta>

Class Discord Invite URL: <https://discord.gg/gfskMY7f4E>

Instructor: Dr. Isaac Hale
Email: idhale@ucdavis.edu
Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday, 12:30-1:30 PM via Zoom (or by appointment)
Office Hours Zoom Link: <https://ucdavis.zoom.us/j/96535143409>

Teaching Assistant: JD Mussel
Email: jdmussel@ucdavis.edu
Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday, 8:30 – 9:30 AM via Zoom (or by appointment)
Office Hours Zoom Link: <https://ucdavis.zoom.us/j/96451931180>

Teaching Assistant: Yuki Hirai
Email: ymhirai@ucdavis.edu
Office Hours: Monday & Wednesday, 1:00-2:00 PM via Zoom (or by appointment)
Office Hours Zoom Link: <https://ucdavislaw.zoom.us/j/92545728509>

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, Yuki's, or J.D.'s office hours if you have questions.

The ongoing COVID-19 crisis will make this a challenging quarter for all of us. This class will be my first priority, but I do not expect it to be yours. If you or your family are sick or struggling, let me know – I can help make sure you succeed in this class anyways. There is also no shame in taking this class pass/fail: do not hesitate to let me know if this would be your preference.

I also know that the transition to online courses means that the course structures you are probably used to at UC Davis are not appropriate this quarter. As such, I have taken several steps to make this course as engaging and accessible as possible. There will be no midterm or final exam for this course. Instead, the course will have brief response papers and a short final paper. This will help ensure that students face less pressure and that each graded assignment is worth less of the total grade.

The class will feature both live lectures on Zoom (at the regularly scheduled class time) and lecture recordings will be uploaded to YouTube. I encourage you to attend live lecture – there will be opportunities for Q&A and engagement every class. If you cannot attend some classes, you can watch the lecture recording at a time that works for you. Regardless, you are expected to keep up with the class material and attend class when possible. The links for both the live lecture and the YouTube channel are posted at the top of the syllabus.

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

Live Lecture

Because of the COVID-19 suspension of in-person classes, all lectures will be given digitally on Zoom. These lectures will be given live on Zoom during the normal class time. There will be opportunities for students participating live to ask questions during lecture. To join lectures throughout the quarter, use the following link: <https://ucdavis.zoom.us/j/94242489687>

Lecture Recordings

Lectures will be recorded and posted to YouTube for students who are not able to attend lecture at the regular time. The YouTube link for class lectures is <https://tinyurl.com/yc7qdnta>. You are responsible for keeping up with lecture and should take care not to fall behind.

Office Hours

The office hours for the instructor and TAs are listed at the top of this syllabus. You can join our Zoom office hours using the links provided at the beginning of the syllabus.

In addition, we are happy to set up additional office hours at a time more convenient for you. Send us an email if you wish to do so. Once you have scheduled additional office hours you may use that same link to meet with us.

Online Access

All readings and documents for this course (except the textbook) 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.

Participation

Because this class is fully online, “participation” will not be a part of your grade. However, I still encourage you to ask questions, participate in the class chat, and share your opinions. There will be opportunities to do so during the virtual lecture.

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 before class.

Class Discord

There is a Discord channel for this class. Participation is not required and will not affect your grade. You may use it to ask me questions, chat about the class, talk politics, and socialize. While you are encouraged to discuss class material with each other, please keep in mind that you are expected to complete your assignments individually. You may join using the following link:

<https://discord.gg/gfskMY7f4E>

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* (The 8th, 9th, and 10th 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:

Response Papers (best 7 out of 8)	70%
<u>Analytic Essay</u>	<u>30%</u>
Total:	100%

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

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 roughly five pages long (not including the bibliography). Essay prompts and grading guidelines are posted to Canvas.

Response Papers

There are no exams in this class. However, 70% of your grade will be determined by **eight (8)** short weekly response papers. The response papers are a means for you to engage on a deeper level with the (often complex!) articles and chapters we are reading for class.

There will be a response paper every week EXCEPT for weeks 1, and 10

Each response paper will be short (generally less than a page), though the exact length will vary from paper to paper. Each one should take you no more than an hour to complete. Your lowest scoring response paper will be dropped from your final grade.

Prompts will be posted to Canvas at 5:00 PM every Thursday. You will have 72 hours to complete each assignment, meaning submissions will close at 5:00 PM each Sunday.

Make sure to use 12-point font, one-inch margins, and double-spacing. All response papers will receive in-text comments on Canvas via the SpeedGrader tool.

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 or the TAs have provided.
- 2) If you still have questions, go the office hours of the TA who graded you, or contact them 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.

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.

Response papers 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 analytic essays will not be accepted after the end of the quarter.

Writing Resources

There are lots of writing resources still available, even with social distancing. The writing center (<https://tutoring.ucdavis.edu/writing>) provides video resources and handouts with writing guides. They also offer one-on-one appointments with both professional specialists and undergraduate peer tutors. If you do not feel confident in your writing, I highly encourage you to take advantage of these resources.

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. The following document contains specific guidelines for avoiding plagiarism: <http://sja.ucdavis.edu/files/plagiarism.pdf>. In general, 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.

You may also find information on the UC Davis code of academic conduct here: <https://ossja.ucdavis.edu/code-academic-conduct>.

Weekly Assignments and Topics

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

Date	Topic	Readings Due
Week 1		
Tues, Jan 5	Course Introduction & Logistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Syllabus • Textbook, Chapter 1
Thurs, Jan 7	Congress & the Constitution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Textbook, Chapter 2: Representation & Lawmaking in Congress • 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		
Tues, Jan 12	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) • 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 • Podcast: <i>Politics in Question</i>. Episode: "What is a gerrymander?" www.politicsinquestion.com/episodes/pg1wj52wjv5r0vx65o5y4uabs6oud5
Thurs, Jan 14	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)

Week 3		
Tues, Jan 19	Congressional Elections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Textbook, Chapter 3: Congressional Elections Utych, Stephen. 2020. "Man Bites Blue Dog: Are Moderates Really More Electable Than Ideologues?" <i>The Journal of Politics</i>, 82(1), 392-396. <p>Optional:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reader, Chapter 9: "Strategic Politicians and the Dynamics of House Elections" (by Gary Jacobson) Reader, Chapter 12: "Risk Bearing and Progressive Ambition" (by David Rohde)
Thurs, Jan 21	The US Congress in Comparative Perspective <i>Guest Lecturer: JD Mussell</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Canvas: selection from Taylor, Steven L., Matthew S. Shugart, Arend Lijphart, and Bernard Grofman. 2014. Selection from: <i>A Different Democracy</i>.
Week 4		
Tues, Jan 26	Representation I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Canvas: Canes-Wrone, B. (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)
Thurs, Jan 28	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: selection from 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		
Tues, Feb 2	Legislative Procedure I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Textbook, Chapter 7: The Rules of the Legislative Game • Reader, Chapter 20: “Sample of a Special Rule” • Reader, Chapter 21: “Sample of a Unanimous Consent Agreement”
Thurs, Feb 4	Legislative Procedure II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Textbook, Chapter 9 (or 8 depending on your edition): The Floor and Voting • Canvas: Binder, Sarah. (2015). “The Dysfunctional Congress.” <i>Annual Review of Political Science</i>, 18(1), 85–101. • Podcast: <i>Politics in Question</i>. Episode: “Filibuster or Filibusted?” https://www.politicsinquestion.com/episodes/filibuster
Week 6		
Tues, Feb 9	Committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Textbook, Chapter 6: The Committee System
Thurs, Feb 11	The Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Textbook, Chapter 8 (or 12, depending on your edition): The Rules of the Game: The Budget Process • Reader, Chapter 38: “Appropriation in the Republican Era” (by Evans)

Week 7		
Tues, Feb 16	Parties I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Textbook, Chapter 5: Party Leaders Reader, Chapter 15: “Setting the Agenda” (by Cox & McCubbins) <p>Optional:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reader, Chapter 16: “Party Influence in Congress” (by Steven Smith)
Thurs, Feb 18	Parties II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Canvas: Hetherington, M. J. (2009). Review article: Putting polarization in perspective. <i>British Journal of Political Science</i>, 39(2), 413–448. Malone, Clare. “The Republican Choice.” June 24, 2020. https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/the-republican-choice/
Week 8		
Tues, Feb 23	The President & Congress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Textbook, Chapter 10 (or 9, depending on your edition): Congress and the President Reader, Chapter 32: “The Politics of Shared Power: Congress & the Executive” (by Fisher)
Thurs, Feb 25	The Pivotal Politics Model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Canvas: Stone, Walter. (forthcoming). “The Pivotal Politics Model.” <p>Optional:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reader, Chapter 27: “Pivotal Politics: A Theory of U.S. Lawmaking” (by Keith Krehbel)
Week 9		
Tues, Mar 2	Congress and the Courts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Textbook, Chapter 11 (or 10, depending on your edition): Congress and the Courts <p>Reader, Chapter 34: “Senate Voting on Supreme Court Nominees” (by Cameron, Cover, & Segal)</p>

Thurs, Mar 4	Today's Republicans & Democrats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drutman, Lee. 2017. "Political Divisions in 2016 and Beyond: Tensions Between and Within the Two Parties." Voter Study Group. https://www.voterstudygroup.org/publication/political-divisions-in-2016-and-beyond (also in a PDF on Canvas) • Podcast: <i>Why Is This Happening? with Chris Hayes</i>. Episode: "The Democratic Coalition After 2020 with David Shor." https://overcast.fm/+Vm1iRbURc <p><i>Optional:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canvas: Santucci, Jack. (2020). "Did the party system change from 2012–2016?" <i>Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties</i>, 0(0), 1–11.
Week 10		
Tues, Mar 9	Is Congress Broken?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canvas: Fishkin, Joseph and Pozen, David E. 2018. "Asymmetric Constitutional Hardball." <i>Columbia Law Review</i>, Vol. 118, pp. 915-82, 2018. • Taylor, Steven. "There Is Something Fundamentally Wrong with Congress." December 17, 2011. https://tinyurl.com/y3kzrdal
Thurs, Mar 11	Reforming Congress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "America Needs a Bigger House." <i>The New York Times</i>. November 9, 2018. https://tinyurl.com/yblbqhod (also on Canvas if paywalled) • Taylor, Steven. "Reforms: the Possible, the Improbable, and the Unpossible." August 16, 2020. https://tinyurl.com/vyvsp3avc • Podcast: <i>The Science of Politics</i>. Episode: "Can America Become a Multiparty System?" https://www.niskanencenter.org/can-america-become-a-multiparty-system/

NO FINAL EXAM – Analytic Essay due noon, March 19th