

**Poli. Sci. 367: Contemporary Issues in American Politics:
Presidential-Congressional Relations**

**Winter 2006, T, R 9:30-11:18 am Ramseyer Hall, room 336
Steven A. Shull, Visiting Professor, The Ohio State University
Office 2105 Derby Hall 292-9219 hrs: 11:20-12:00p
email=shull@mail.polisci.ohio-state.edu**

This course has the following two major purposes: 1) to encourage undergraduates to think and write analytically and 2) to introduce them to relationships between the first two branches of our national government in the making of public policy. First, we discuss how to write a research paper and its necessary components and some theories of presidential-congressional relations. Second, I will provide an overview of the literature about the two branches and discuss the concept of divided and partisan control of government. Then the class covers numerous aspects of the relationship between Congress and the president, such as the veto, budgeting, liaison, and prerogative power. Finally, the last element delves into comparing substantive policy areas: foreign policy (and its components), domestic policy, and economic/budget policy to examine why presidential-congressional relations may vary among them.

Three books are required for this course. They are available from the publishers, from Long's (Barnes & Noble), from the SBX, and from on-line sources, such as amazon.com, barnesnoble.com, half.com, and others. LeLoup and Shull may be available used but the other two volumes are new editions. In addition to these three books, three journal articles are required, and you need to read other sources for the required research paper.

Thurber, ed. *Rivals for Power*, 3rd. Ed. Roman & Littlefield 2006. ISBN 0742536831

LeLoup and Shull, *The President and Congress*, 2nd. Ed. Longman, 2003. ISBN 03321100417

Anson, et al. *The Longman Pocket Writer's Companion*, 2nd. Ed. Longman, 2006. ISBN 0321288262

Three required journal articles will also be placed on reserve

Grades are based upon the following components (**research paper=60%** (outline=5%, rough draft=25%; final paper=30%) and **final essay examination=40%**).

| | | |
|---------------|--|--|
| Week 1 | T 1/3 Intro to Course | R 1/5 Nature of Research |
| Week 2 | Presidential Power T 1/10 T, chs 6-7 | Political Time R 1/12, L & S. chs. 1-2—<u>topic due</u> |
| Week 3 | Writing a Research Paper T 1/17 Anson, Chs. I-III | R 1/19 Anson, Chs. IV-V |

| | | |
|----------------|--|---|
| Week 4 | Polarization/Elections T 1/24 T, chs. 2-4 <u>outline due</u> W 1/26, L & S 3-4 | |
| Week 5 | Veto T 1/31 T, ch. 8 | Prerogatives R 2/2 [Mayer & Price article] |
| Week 6 | Liaison T 2/7 T, ch. 5 <u>draft due</u> | Success R 2/9 [Prins & Shull, Bond, et al articles] |
| Week 7 | Domestic Policy T 2/14 | R 2/16 L&S, ch. 6, 8 |
| Week 8 | Budget/Economic Policy T 2/21 L & S, ch. 7 | R 2/23 T, chs. 9-10— <u>final paper due</u> |
| Week 9 | Foreign T 2/28, L & S, ch. 5 | Defense R 3/2, T, chs. 11-12 |
| Week 10 | Reforms T 3/7 L & S, ch. 9 | Review for Final R 3/9 |

Final Exam Wednesday 3/15

Research Paper Requirement:

This is a capstone course and a graduation requirement for all political science majors. For years, I have been reading and evaluating such papers for other universities to make sure that students understand and can relate political science concepts to their own research. There are three parts to the research paper. First, the topic must be approved in advance. All students will meet with me no later than 1/12. By 1/24, all class members will submit a one page formal design for their paper, including the topic, why it is an important question, and how they plan to go about conducting the research. Those designs will count for up to 5 points. Next, students will present a rough draft with at least eight scholarly sources, which will constitute 25 points, and is due 2/7—minus 15 points for each class day late. The remaining portion of the paper grade will be the final paper, which must be between 15-17 pages typed double spaced, in 12 point font with one inch margins on all four sides and is due 2/23. At least 10 sources (most of them scholarly, i.e., journal articles, not encyclopedias or magazines) are to be attached. The final paper (30%) must show considerable improvement over the rough draft.

A research design develops from and expands upon current literature, the theoretical framework for research, methods for testing propositions (including measurement of concepts, variables, operationalization of indicators of variables, types of data to be used, and analysis techniques), expected findings, and implications for the specific research area and/or for the larger relationship between Congress and the presidency. A research design is similar to a grant proposal whereby you justify what it is you want to do and show that you are capable of using

scarce funds wisely and competently. Such papers can be developed by a student **without** grounding in social science research methods. You will do all components but analyze the data and write up the results.

A good discussion of how to execute such a paper is found in Scott and Garrison, *Political Science Student Writer's Manual*, Prentice-Hall, 1995, pp. 213-232. Other useful sources for students include the following: I suggest that you use Turabian, *Chicago Manual of Style* or Strunk and White, *Elements of Style* for when and how to document and Cronin, *Write Stuff* on writing style. For students familiar with it, citation and documentation may be in the American Political Science Association (APSA) format). These are optional but the *Longman Pocket Writers Companion* is not optional but must be followed, at least for the final draft of the paper. Sources must be cited in the paper and be present in full in the references or bibliography. Final papers carry a maximum of 30 points (30% of grade) and 20 points will be taken off for each class day it is turned in late. **Hard copies only—no internet attachments—are accepted.**

The paper must examine analytically a question or problem in presidential-congressional relations. Papers must be **comparative**, **analytical**, and **evaluative** rather than simply descriptive narration. Irrespective of the topic selected, the paper assignment will necessitate additional reading. Ideally, students will read research in a relatively narrow element of presidential-congressional relations to obtain a good grasp of what the issues and concepts are. To reiterate, the research papers are to be **analytical** (examine concepts) rather than descriptive (tell stories). They should be comparative and address an explicit research question rather than simply describe the circumstances. Typically you need not provide extensive details of events. I do not want a lot of historical narrative. Thus, don't summarize the information but **compare** the similarities and differences throughout (say among numerous presidents and their use of veto threats). Papers need a conclusion or **evaluation**, where you go beyond what you have read to make assessments and draw the likely implications of your study.

Don't over-summarize and regurgitate what others say. Keep another's basic ideas but put them in your own words. Paraphrase when you can; over-quoting is lazy and does not show me that you can integrate the ideas of others with your own thoughts and words. Cite works whose ideas you incorporated even if the wording is your own, using specific page numbers whenever possible. Tie ideas and sources together so that you do not simply discuss works individually but show how authors build upon one another. Ideally, you will incorporate multiple sources on a particular idea/concept, not just a single author for each. If you are overwhelmed with evidence, the topic probably is too broad, so see me early about a more concentrated focus. You should exhaust the literature on a subject to have a good topic and subsequent paper. Use as many scholarly sources as possible (journals are preferable and found in the indexes—*JSTOR*, *EPSCO*, *Social Science Index* and *P.A.I.S.*). Abstracts (like *USPSD*) usually give a paragraph describing the article or book and are time and money savers, letting you know whether the sources is helpful without actually having to track it down first. Begin with the most recent indexes and work your way back in time. You cannot be certain when a scholarly article, say on FDR's court packing plan, for example, will appear.

Depending on the topic, biographies and popular magazines should be kept to a bare minimum. Even *CQ Weekly Reports* and *National Journal* are weekly news magazines and thus are insufficient. Scholarly books should also be used but don't depend upon the card catalog; check *Books in Print* first, and if it is not in the Library, it can usually be obtained quickly from interlibrary loan and sent to your campus mail box. Since topics must consist of a research question, several are posed below for illustrative purposes only. What determines whether presidents are more successful with Congress in foreign than domestic policy? What actions might be necessary to resolve the Medicare crisis in the U.S.? To what extent has Congress challenged the president's use of force abroad? Why does presidential success in Congress vary within policy areas (e.g., foreign=defense vs. trade; domestic=social welfare vs. resources). What have been the political and economic consequences of NAFTA for presidential-congressional relations? What accounts for the reduced impact of the two presidencies thesis since the 1970s? How and why have presidents gone around Congress in their use of prerogative power? Hopefully, you have gotten the idea of what I am looking for. Exhaust the literature on your topic and keep any opinions until the very end in your conclusion about what policy action or reforms should be taken based upon your research.

Academic Honesty: All of the work done in this course by each student must be his or her own. Any cases of cheating or plagiarism (using someone else's words or ideas without proper citation) will be reported to the University Committee on Academic Misconduct.

Disability: If you require an accommodation because of a disability please contact the Office for Disability Services [150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue , 292-3307].