

POLITICAL SCIENCE 517: LEGISLATIVE POLITICS

[Call number: 18036-3]

Spring Quarter, 2009

Instructor: Randall Ripley

2116 Derby Hall

Ripley.1@osu.edu

614-292-4392

GENERAL INFORMATION

Purpose of course: to understand the place of the Congress of the United States in the American political system, how Congress functions, and its importance. The course will explore Congress as an institution; its relationships with other important parts of the American political system, both governmental and non-governmental; the behavior of Senators and Representatives both in Washington and in the states and districts they represent; and how Congress is involved in the making of public policy, both domestic and foreign/defense.

Students are responsible for all material contained in the assigned reading, presented in class, and covered in class discussions. Slides used in class, this syllabus, and study guides for the midterm and final when they are written are available on the instructor's website:

<http://psweb.sbs.ohio-state.edu/faculty/rripley/courses/ps517.htm>.

Class meetings: Spring Quarter, 2009, Tuesdays and Thursdays, March 31 through June 4, 1:30-3:18, 262 Hopkins Hall, 128 N. Oval Mall.

Appointments with Instructor: after class, by arrangement, or during office hours [11-12 on Tuesdays and 12-1 on Thursdays]. **Appointments with Course Teaching Associate :** after class, by arrangement, or during office hours [hours and location to be announced in class].

READING

Books required for purchase [All are paperbacks that will be read in their entirety.]

Davidson, Roger H., Walter J. Oleszek, and Frances E. Lee, Congress and Its Members, 11th edition (CQ Press, 2008). **ISBN: 9780872893573**

Dodd, Lawrence C., and Bruce I. Oppenheimer, editors, Congress Reconsidered, 9th edition (CQ Press, 2009). **ISBN: 9780872896161**

Mann, Thomas E. and Norman J. Ornstein, The Broken Branch: How Congress is Failing America and How to Get It Back on Track, revised edition (Oxford University Press, 2008).

ISBN: 9780195368710

In addition, students are required to be familiar with major developments in the 1st session of the 111th Congress [2009]. There will be ongoing discussion in class of these developments and how they relate to generalizations about congressional behavior developed in the course. There will be a mandatory essay on the final exam that will require knowledge of the most important current congressional action. The most important items will become clear during the course of the quarter.

For keeping abreast of current developments, students should skim relevant sections of two major newspapers daily online: the Washington Post: <http://www.washingtonpost.com> and the New York Times: <http://www.nytimes.com>. Skimming of some additional websites at least weekly is also recommended: C-Span: <http://www.c-span.org>, U.S. House of Representatives: <http://www.house.gov>, U.S. Senate: <http://www.senate.gov>, and The Hill: <http://www.hillnews.com>.

Each student should also sign up for the free midday e-mail from Congressional Quarterly at http://www.cq.com/corp/.do?page=products_cqmiday.

A site useful for keeping track of public opinion on political matters: <http://www.pollingreport.com>.

STRUCTURE OF THE COURSE

Each week of the course we will focus on one or more substantive topics as listed below. The assigned readings, lectures, and class discussion will all address those themes. **Appendix I to this syllabus contains an outline of major lecture topics.**

WORK IN THE COURSE

Participation in class discussion: Students are expected to be prepared to discuss the assigned reading as outlined below. They should also be prepared to discuss major current developments in Congress. The last 20-30 minutes of both class meetings each week will be devoted to discussing current developments, the reading for the week, as well as giving students a focused opportunity to raise questions and make observations about various aspects of Congress. In addition, students are encouraged to interrupt lectures with questions and comments.

Midterm exam: The midterm [60 mins.] will be given during the first hour on **Tuesday, May 5**. The exam will be a mix of an essay and short identification items. The exact design of the exam will be specified in class. A study guide for the exam will be available a week or two ahead of the exam date. It will cover all material through the first five weeks of the course. The midterm exam will count for 20% of the course grade.

Research Paper: The research paper is **due before the end of class on Thursday, May 28**. [Late papers will be penalized by one full grade. No paper will be accepted after 2 p.m. on Thursday, June 4.] **Appendix II to this syllabus describes the paper assignment.** The research paper will count for 40% of the course grade.

Final exam: The final exam [1 hour, 50 mins.] will be held in the classroom on **Thursday, June 11, 1:30-3:20**. The exam will be a mix of essays and short identification items that cover the entire course. The exact design of the exam will be specified in class. A study guide for the exam will be available a week or two ahead of the exam date. **All finals will be given at the specified time. No early or late finals will be given.** The final exam will count for 40% of the course grade.

SCHEDULE: TOPICS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS:

WEEK 1: MARCH 31 and APRIL 2

Topics: Introduction to Course; Congress in the American Political System

Reading: Davidson, chapters 1,2
Dodd, chapter 18 [Dodd & Oppenheimer]

WEEK 2: APRIL 7 and 9

Topics: Recruitment, Elections, Hill Styles & Home Styles

Reading: Davidson, chapters 3,4,5
Dodd, chpts. 4,5,6 [Erikson & Wright; Herrnson & Curry; Sulkin]

WEEK 3: APRIL 14 and 16

Topic: Political Parties and Party Leaders in Congress

Reading: Davidson, chapter 6
Dodd, chpts. 7,8,9 [Smith & Gamm; Pearson & Schickler; Evans & Grandy]

WEEK 4: APRIL 21 and 23

Topics: Committees, Subcommittees; Other Internal Structures

Reading: Davidson, chapter 7
Dodd, chapter 10 [Aldrich & Rohde]

WEEK 5: APRIL 28 and 30

Topics: Internal Rules and Procedures; Decision-Making

Reading: Davidson, chapters 8,9
Dodd, chapters 1,2,15 [Sinclair; Dodd & Oppenheimer; Lipinski]

WEEK 6: MAY 5 and 7

Topic: Congress and the Presidency

Reading: Davidson, chapter 10
Dodd, chapter 16 [Cooper]

NOTE: *Mann and Ornstein, read entire book before final exam on June 8, probably best done in the last two weeks of the course*

WEEK 7: MAY 12 and 14

Topic: Congress and the Bureaucracy

Reading: Davidson, chapter 11

WEEK 8: MAY 19 and 21

Topics: Congress and the Courts; Congress and Interest Groups

Reading: Davidson, chapters 12,13
Dodd, chapter 11 [Binder & Maltzman]

WEEK 9: MAY 26 and 28

Topics: Budgeting; Domestic Policy

Reading: Davidson, chapter 14

Dodd, chpts. 12,13,17 [Rudder; Oppenheimer; Dodd & Schraufnagle]

WEEK 10: JUNE 2 and 4

Topics: Congress and Foreign and Defense Policy; Concluding Thoughts

Reading: Davidson, chapters 15, 16

Dodd, chpts. 3,14 [Mann & Ornstein; Howell & Kriner]

Academic Misconduct: It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct: (http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/resource_csc.asp)

Disability Services: Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated, and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office for Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone 292-3307, TDD 292-0901; <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/>.

APPENDIX I

OUTLINE OF LECTURE TOPICS

- I. Introduction to the Course
 - A. Goals of the Course
 - B. Pursuing the Goals
 - C. Flow of Topics
 - D. Work in the Course

- II. Congress in the American Political System
 - A. The Two Congresses
 - B. Evolution of the Modern Congress
 - C. The Centrality of the Congressional-Presidential Relationship
 - D. Continuity and Change
 - E. Fragmentation and Integration
 - F. Core Functions of Congress

- III. Elections
 - A. Districting for the House
 - B. Nominations
 - C. Elections
 - 1. Voters, Candidates, and Issues
 - 2. Campaign Reforms
 - 3. Declining Competitiveness
 - 4. Incumbent Advantage
 - 5. Turnover
 - 6. Turnout
 - 7. Voting Patterns
 - 8. Campaigns
 - D. Winning Candidates
 - 1. A Profile of the Winners
 - 2. Party Control and Competitiveness
 - E. The Effect and Importance of Regular Elections

- IV. Behavior of Individual Members
 - A. Hill Styles and Home Styles
 - B. Individual Decision-Making
 - C. Congressional Staff
 - D. Norms

- V. Political Parties and Party Leaders I
 - A. The Centrality of Parties in Congress
 - B. Parties in the House
 - C. Parties in the Senate
 - D. Changes in Congressional Parties

- VI. Political Parties and Party Leaders II
 - A. House Partisanship since 1995
 - B. Senate Partisanship/Bipartisanship Tension since 1995
 - C. The General Functions of Party Leaders
 - D. Personal Styles of Leaders
 - E. Core contextual change: the Republicanization of the South
 - F. Ideological Cohesion of Congressional Parties
 - G. Party Leaders' Pursuit of Legislative Success: Resources and Techniques

- VII. Committees and Subcommittees
 - A. Basic Features of the Committee System
 - B. Committees in a Partisan Era
 - C. Special Case of the House Appropriations Committee
 - D. Growth of Committees and Subcommittees
 - E. Conference Committees
 - F. Attractiveness and Success of Committees
 - G. Concluding Thoughts

- VIII. Other Internal Structures
 - A. State Delegations
 - B. Other Groups and Caucuses
 - C. Congressional Staffs
 - 1. Personal Staff
 - 2. Committee Staff
 - D. Support Agencies
 - 1. CRS
 - 2. GAO
 - 3. CBO

- IX. Internal Rules and Procedures
 - A. General Comments
 - B. The House Rules Committee
 - C. Ties of Rules and Procedures to Fragmentation
 - D. The Special Case of the Senate Filibuster

- X. Decision-Making by Senators and Representatives
 - A. Individual Decisions
 - 1. How to Spend Personal Time
 - 2. What Legislative Initiatives to Take
 - 3. What Cues to Take
 - B. The Centrality of Bargaining
 - C. The Special Case of the Contemporary Senate
 - D. The Republican House since 1995

- XI. Congress and the Presidency, I
 - A. Central Features of the Presidential-Congressional Relationship
 - B. The President as Legislative Leader
 - C. Perspectives on the President as Legislative Leader
 - D. The Administrative President
 - E. Changes in the Presidential-Congressional Relationship over Time
 - F. Divided Government vs. Unified Government
 - G. Varying Presidential Styles
 - H. Presidential Public Relations & Legislative Leadership

- XII. Congress and the Presidency, II: Illustrations of the Relationship

- XIII. Congress and the Bureaucracy, I
 - A. Basics of the Relationship
 - B. Types of Policy Alter the Relationship
 - 1. Domestic Policies
 - 2. Foreign/Defense Policies

- XIV. Congress and the Bureaucracy, II
 - A. Conditions Promoting Cooperation or Conflict
 - B. Techniques Used by Congress and the Bureaucracy in the Relationship
 - C. The Concept and Practice of Oversight
 - D. Concluding Comments

- XV. Congress and the Courts
 - A. Senate Confirmation of Judicial Appointments
 - B. Other Central Aspects of Relationship

- XVI. Congress and Interest Groups
 - A. Basic Nature of the Relationship
 - B. Lobbying Practices
 - C. Interest Group Coalitions
 - D. Money and Workers for Elections
 - E. Interest Group Voting “Scorecards”
 - F. Subgovernments and Issue Networks
 - G. Alliances of Lobbies and Congressional Parties
 - H. Regulation of Lobbying
 - J. Conditions for Interest Group Influence
 - K. The Defensive Nature of Lobbying
 - L. An Assessment of Interest Group Impact

- XVII. Budgeting
 - A. Budgeting as Political Strategy
 - B. Some Basics of Budgeting
 - C. Budget Resolutions
 - D. Appropriations

- XVIII. Domestic Policy
 - A. Basic Relationships in Six Policy Areas [Dom. & For.&Def.]
 - B. Fragmented Treatment of Policy
 - C. Examples of Some Ongoing Policy Disputes
 - D. Congressional Access to the Stages of Policy-Making
 - E. Actor Access to Substages of Formulation and Legitimation

- XIX. Foreign and Defense Policies
 - A. The Role of Congress: A Few Generalizations
 - B. How Congress Influences Foreign and Defense Policy
 - C. The Range of Congressional Involvement in Foreign Policy since 1945

- XX. Concluding Thoughts
 - A. Introduction
 - B. Congressional Responsiveness to Multiple Publics
 - C. Congress and Constituents
 - D. Public Evaluation of Congress
 - E. Internal Institutional Problems

APPENDIX II: **THE RESEARCH PAPER**

The research paper is to be an analysis of one member of the U.S. House of Representatives of your choice who has served continuously at least since the election of 1994.

You must submit the name of the Representative you have chosen and a bit of basic information on him or her by Thursday, April 16 at the latest. A note or an e-mail to the instructor with the name, party, district [state and number of district], and year of first election to the House of Representatives (with continuous service since then) will suffice. The instructor will acknowledge each choice.

THE NATURE OF THE PAPER

This assignment is designed to achieve three major goals:

--to familiarize you with one fairly senior member of the House.

--to ask you to analyze that member's links to his/her District, party, and the House itself. Your analysis of that member will give you an additional sense of the nature of the House of Representatives and the life of members in the House and in their Districts. Such analysis will illustrate concretely a number of general relationships we will exam in the course.

--to familiarize you with a few of the major sources for conducting basic research on Congress. **You MUST use both library sources and web sources.** Use a standard scheme of your choice for citations and references.

You should aim for a paper of about 15 pages of double space text, including tables you think important in your analysis. You should try to present a significant amount of information in easy-to-understand tabular form in the text. Tables and other material you decide to include in appendices and a bibliography/references section are in addition to the 15 pages.

The following is a suggested outline for the paper, with some thoughts on important data with which you should be familiar. **Note that you should not simply reproduce raw data from any source. Carefully select and present the data you use to make analytical points. When you decide to include specific data be sure you have an answer to the "so what?" question.**

Also note that the best papers will intersperse data and analysis.

I. Basic Background Information on the Member

1. Name, Age
2. Political Party, District [State, number of district].
3. Member of the House since 19NN.
4. Education and occupation.

5. Political experience before election to Congress [e.g., other elective offices, party positions, community activism, staff positions for other politicians].
6. Why did the member originally seek a seat in the House? Speculate if necessary.

II. The Nature of the District

1. Describe the district briefly. Including a small map of the district to locate it within its state is useful.
2. Important characteristics of the District for the 2006 election [some of the data may come from the 2000 Census; other data may have been updated]—e.g., composition of population [urban/suburban/exurban/rural; race; ethnicity; various indicators of socio-economic status such as education and income; gross occupational breakdown such as blue collar, gray collar, and white collar; % union households]; major employers and number of employees; major newspapers and their circulation in the district. **[Except for the listing of major employers and newspapers, all other descriptive items should be compared to national and/or state averages in order to give them meaning.]**

III. Election Results and Campaign Finance

1. Election results in **all races** for the House over the years [both losing, if any; and winning]—% of vote for your member; % for major party opponent; % of vote for any significant third candidate. Include contested primaries.
2. Cost of campaigns; detailed information on the 2006 campaign [e.g., expenditures and sources of funds for your member and for the principal opponent].

IV. Life in the House of Representatives

1. Committee and subcommittee assignments, including chairmanships/ranking minority memberships, if any. Include current assignments [110th Congress] and how long your member has been on those committees [and subcommittees too, if you can determine that].
2. Staff size: congressional office; committee and subcommittee staff; district office[s]—size and geographical location of staff.
3. Leadership positions in the House, if any.

V. Party Loyalty, Presidential Support, Ideological Preferences, and Major Legislative Activity

1. Support of/opposition to the majority of the member's party in the House. Use party unity scores on roll call votes in Congressional Quarterly; be sure to include party averages in order to place your member in context.
2. Support of/opposition to President George W. Bush in the 107th, 108th, and 109th Congresses [2001-2006]. Use presidential support and opposition scores on roll call votes in Congressional Quarterly; be sure to include party averages in order to place your member in context.
3. Rating of your member by some leading interest groups. Be sure to identify the nature of the interest groups whose scores you use.

4. Identify any major legislative accomplishments during the entire career of your member.

VI. Analytical Discussion

Your analysis should be devoted to what you make of all of the foregoing information. Sample questions to consider include the following:

--how would you analyze the ties between the member and his/her District. How does the District shape the member? How does the member shape the District? Has the electoral safety of the member changed over time? Why and in what way[s]?

--how would you analyze the ties between the member and his/her party—both in the District and in the House?

--how would you analyze the relationship of the member and his/her Committee and Subcommittee assignments in the House?

--how would you characterize the Hill Style and Home Style of the member?

These are only sample questions. Use your imagination and produce a concise, compelling analytical statement about what you have learned about your member.

SOME THOUGHTS ON SOURCES

As with any research paper it is up to you to develop a rich array of sources. However, some useful hints on how to get started follow. **Familiarize yourself right away with library sources you will need and whether they are located in Sullivant Hall or the Ackerman Library while the main library is under renovation. Virtually everything you need will be in Sullivant. If you need help in Sullivant consult a reference librarian there.**

The following suggestions are not meant to be exhaustive or complete, but are meant to get you started.

Print sources

First, you should become familiar with a number of Congressional Quarterly publications. These include annual almanacs, CQ Weekly, and a number of summary volumes such as Congressional Districts in the 2000's: A Portrait of America; America Votes; CQ Congressional Staff Directory; CQ's Politics in America; Guide to U.S. Elections; and Directory of Congressional Voting Scores and Interest Group Ratings. The summary volumes are usually updated from time to time [some annually] so look for the most recent.

You should also look at the most recent Almanac of American Politics [published by the National Journal].

Congress itself publishes an annual Congressional Directory.

Congressional resources in Reference, Periodicals, and the History/Political Science reading room usually housed in the main library do not circulate.

Some useful websites

Your member's website

The website[s] of the major newspaper[s] in the District

The website for the U.S. Census

Archival websites with a number of helpful links:

<http://www.vote-smart.org>

<http://www.opensecrets.org>

www.thomas.loc.gov

<http://www.lib.umich.edu/govdocs/member.html>

Also note that David Lincove, an excellent librarian who specializes in political science materials, can be consulted if you need help in using library resources. He is in 280D Sullivant Hall. His phone is 292-2393. His e-mail address is Lincove.1@osu.edu.

The paper must be fully and accurately referenced. The easiest style to use is a parenthesis in the paper itself referring to a full citation in a separate References section at the end. The page numbers, if you are quoting or making a specific reference, should be in the text parenthesis. For example: in the text you might have *As Mann and Ornstein (2006, 197) note, "Faced with some pressure and public scrutiny, Speaker Hastert and Minority Leader Pelosi held a series of joint meetings beginning in May 2002;"* In the references section you would have: Mann, Thomas E. and Norman J. Ornstein. 2006. Broken Branch. New York: Oxford University Press. Choose a standard form for the references section and be consistent in using it.

When in doubt, give more information about a source, either printed or web-based, rather than less.