

## Final Paper Guidelines

### Political Science 517N

Mr. Anderson

1. In this paper, you are expected to provide a comprehensive biographical assessment of the member of Congress, a thorough discussion his or her district (or state, for Senators), an analysis of the member's voting behavior on important issues before Congress, and a discussion of the sources of and impact of campaign finance in the member's congressional career. This is a great deal of work and it requires that you both find data and be able to coalesce that data into a coherent, structured, and well-argued paper.

To help guide you, I have put together suggestions for each portion of the paper. These suggestions are only that—ideas—but they can motivate how you approach completing the paper.

- a. In the first segment of the paper, you should use [www.polisci.com](http://www.polisci.com), *Congressional Quarterly's Politics in America* (most recent edition), or Barone and Ufijusa's *Almanac of American Politics* (2000) to provide me a basic biographical background of the member of the House or Senate you were assigned. Tell me who they are, where they are from, their educational and employment backgrounds, their race/ethnicity, party background, and family background.

You should also trace their prior political career from where they started to how they ended up in the U.S. House or Senate. Indicate how long they've been in the House or Senate, and (because most of the courses I've provided above do so), talk about the last few election's they've run in their state or district. Were they close? We've talked some about electoral margins and their impacts. Do these appear to hold true—does a secure electoral margin in one election assure your member of Congress a secure electoral margin the second or third time around?

- b. The second portion of the paper should focus more on the congressional district. The above sources are excellent for providing information about the district or state as well. Indicate how demographically homogeneous or heterogeneous the member's constituency is. Does the district take in urban and rural interests? How educated is the district? Are there obvious clashes between economic and political interests in the district? You should cap off a thorough discussion of the constituency (district or state) by indicating what you believe it would take to run a successful congressional campaign there—what sort of things does your member need to worry about when putting together a campaign and, given what you know about the member and the district, hypothesize (or provide basic information) as to what you think the member did to win.
- c. Part 3 of your paper requires you to analyze the legislative activities of the member. I want you to break this into three parts. **First, examine the congressional committee assignments of the member.** What committees are they on? Why do you believe they are on these committees, given what you already know about the member and their constituency? What subcommittees are they a part of? Do these assignments reflect the member's or the constituency's policymaking interests? Does it appear that the member has a better assignment than one would expect given the point they are at in their congressional career?

**Second, you should detail the legislation introduced by the member in the prior congressional term (the 1999-2000 legislative sessions).** What sorts of bills are they sponsoring? Are these bills district-focused (i.e. congressional pork), or are they more wide-ranging. Given your knowledge of the district, does it appear that the member is sponsoring bills that the constituency would approve of, and if so, how is this occurring?

If not, why not? You can gather bill sponsorship information at <http://thomas.loc.gov>. This site is Congress's official online repository for bills, laws, and legislation more broadly. Simply search the 106<sup>th</sup> Congress (1999-2000) for bills sponsored by your member. A little bit of surfing at Thomas will get you to that search engine in no time.

**Third, you should examine the member's roll call voting behavior during the legislative term.** Again, focus your attention on the 106<sup>th</sup> Congress (1999 and 2000). The Americans for Democratic Action (<http://adaction.org>) and the American Conservative Union ([www.conservative.org](http://www.conservative.org)) every year generate a list of twenty or so items that they believe to be key ideological votes. Examine both organization's lists and find your member of Congress. Did they vote conservatively, liberally, or were they pretty much middle of the road? Did any of the issues voted upon stand out to you? Did the member ever surprise you with their roll call voting behavior? Your paper should provide the ADA and ACU scores from the websites.

- d. **Finally, I want you to spend some time examining campaign finance.** Because this issue is continually on the front-burner in American politics (particularly this quarter), I would like you to examine your member's campaign finance information for the prior electoral cycle (the 2000 electoral cycle). There are numerous online sources of information here—go to [www.fec.gov](http://www.fec.gov) to get you started. You can also use [www.opensecrets.org](http://www.opensecrets.org). It is an excellent resource for campaign finance information. Examine how much money they received and, if available (I know it is), tell me where their money came from. Was it primarily from PACs, individuals, or what? Were the donors businesses or ideological groups? Does it appear to you that there is a correlation between the donation patterns to your member of Congress and their behavior either in introducing legislation or in voting on the floor of the House or Senate? If so, what is it? If not, explain what you think is going on here—is the group probably just being given access rather than influence?

## 2. Summary

I want you to provide me a complete picture of your representative, from the basic information about that individual to a more rigorous gathering and analysis of legislative, committee, and campaign finance data. Your paper will be graded according to the quality of the research you've done as well as the ability you've shown to analyze that data succinctly and accurately. You should **integrate the readings and lectures** into your paper—papers that do this will receive higher grades than those that do not. I expect that the paper will be between 15 and 20 pages, double-spaced. I will be happy to look over sections of the paper as you get them written, and I would suggest beginning work now so as the end of the quarter rolls around, you have very little left to do.

## 3. How to cite sources

You are expected to internally cite sources and then provide the full citation at the end of the paper in the form of a bibliography.

*Internal Citations:* these follow direct quotes or information that is not attributable to you. Direct quotes should also list the page number. Summaries of information provided in a reading do not need to list the page number. These are brief citations that follow this form:

"...all men are created equal," (Jefferson 1776, 2). Or (**Author Year, Page #**)

vs.

Fenno indicates that representatives view the constituency as concentric circles (Fenno 1978).

*Bibliography:* Please follow this form when constructing your bibliography.

**Books:**

- Last Name, First Name [and coauthor first name, last name]. Date of publication. *Book Title*. City of Publisher: Publisher.

*Examples:*

Single Author

Aldrich, John. 1995. *Why Parties?* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Multiple Authors

Brehm, John and Scott Gates. 1999. *Working, Shirking, and Sabotage*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Book Chapters

Herrnson, Paul. 1997. "Money and Motives: Spending in House Elections." in Lawrence Dodd and Bruce Oppenheimer, eds., *Congress Reconsidered*. Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly.

**Journal Articles:**

- Last Name, First Name [and coauthor first name, last name]. Date of publication. "Article Title." *Journal Title* Volume #: Page Numbers.

*Example:*

Hansen, John Mark. 1985. "The Political Economy of Group Membership." *American Political Science Review* 79: 79-96.

**Web Sites:**

- Author of content (if any). Date accessed. "Title of page." Website. Page address.

*Examples:*

Jehl, Douglas. December 21, 2000. "New Rules to Cut Diesel Emissions." *New York Times*. <http://www.nytimes.com/2000/12/21/politics/21FUEL.html>

Greenpeace. December 21, 2000. "Russian Parliament Votes to Become the World's Nuclear Dump Site." *Greenpeace*. <http://www.greenpeace.org/~nuclear>