Congress: Politics and Policy 316
University of Wisconsin-Green Bay

Spring 2010

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OH: TR 3:30-4:30; W 3-4

Course Description:

An examination of the U.S. Congress as a representative and policymaking institution. Topics include the roles of legislatures in American politics; the electoral process and representation; the political behavior of legislators; the impact of formal and informal institutions and practices on policymaking; political parties and leadership; legislative staffs; the committee system; rules and norms; interest groups and lobbying; and the role of Congress and other legislatures in policy innovation and social change. In addition to the core texts that cover these broad topics, there will be three short papers that allow you to focus on more specific topics of personal interest.

Texts:

Roger H. Davidson, Walter J. Oleszek, and Frances E. Lee, Congress and Its Members, 12th ed. (2010).
Lawrence C. Dodd and Bruce I. Oppenheimer, eds., Congress Reconsidered,9th ed. (2009).

Each section below also includes references for further reading where useful; none is required. Those interested in state legislatures will want to examine one of the volumes listed at the end of the syllabus. Several include references to state legislative institutions and policy processes.

Current developments in Congress can be followed through perusal of CQ Weekly (4th floor periodical stacks and online through campus access). The New York Times and the Washington Post are also very useful, and both are available online as well as in the library. Two major reference works are Congressional Quarterly's Congress A to Z and Guide to Congress. We will cover more specialized sources of information, both print and electronic, in class, some of which are also listed at the end of the syllabus. Online UW-Green Bay course guide for library materials can be found at: www.uwgb.edu/library/instruction/courses/polsci316.html

Course Requirements:

There will be a midterm exam (on **March 11**), a final exam (**May 11**), and three short (4-5 pages) analytical papers due at approximately equal intervals throughout the semester (**March 4, April 6, and May 4**). Each paper assignment will provide an extensive set of topic choices. The exams will consist of a combination of short-answer and essay questions and study guides will be handed out at least a week before each. Class attendance is required and active participation in discussions and class exercises is expected.

This course has been designated as a Writing Emphasis course by the University, and the papers are an integral part of this designation. Should you need early feedback on the first paper, you can submit it earlier than the due date.

You should also be familiar with the University's policy on **plagiarism**. Plagiarism is presenting the words or work of someone else as your own without proper acknowledgement, and it can lead to a failing grade. You must credit your sources and distinguish quotations from paraphrased work.

Notebook computers and cell phones. No computers or cell phones may be used during class sessions because they can easily become a distraction and interfere with the class. Turn off your cell phones before class begins. If anyone has a special need for a computer, please see me.

Course grades will be determined approximately as follows:

Midterm examination	20%
Papers	45%
Final examination	20%
Class participation	15%

Note: attendance and participation in class will affect the course grade, and repeated absences will have more of an effect than indicated by the 15% figure.

University Disability Policy: Consistent with the federal law and the policies of the University of Wisconsin, it is the policy of the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay to provide appropriate and necessary accommodations to students with documented physical and learning disabilities. If you anticipate requiring any auxiliary aids or services, you should contact me or the Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities at 465-2671 as soon as possible to discuss your needs and arrange for the provision of services.

THE ROLE OF LEGISLATURES IN AMERICAN POLITICS

Jan. 26 Introduction

Jan. 28 Davidson, Oleszek, and Lee, Congress and Its Members, Preface and Chaps. 1-2, 1-37.

Feb. 2 Barbara Sinclair, "The New World of U.S. Senators," in Congress Reconsidered, 1-22.

Feb. 4 Lawrence C. Dodd and Bruce I. Oppenheimer, "The Politics of the Contemporary House: From Gingrich to Pelosi," in Congress Reconsidered, 23-51.

Feb. 9 Thomas E. Mann and Norman J. Ornstein, “Is Congress Still the Broken Branch?” in Congress Reconsidered, 53-69.

References:

Steven S. Smith, Jason M. Roberts, and Ryan J. Vander Wielen, The American Congress, 6th ed. 2009 (another fine text on Congress).

Thomas E. Mann and Norman J. Ornstein, The Broken Branch: How Congress Is Failing America and How to Get It Back on Track (2006).

John R. Hibbing and Elizabeth Theiss-Morse, Congress as Public Enemy: Public Attitudes Toward American Political Institutions (1995).

Joseph Cooper, ed., Congress and the Decline of Public Trust (1999).

David R. Mayhew, America's Congress: Actions in the Public Sphere, James Madison Through Newt Gingrich (2000).

THE RECRUITMENT OF LEGISLATORS: NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

Feb. 11 Davidson, Oleszek, and Lee, Chap. 3, 39-85. We will have one of the reference librarians visit the class to discuss information sources on Congress and public policy.

Feb. 16-18 Davidson, Oleszek, and Lee, Chap. 4, 87-123.

Robert S. Erikson and Gerald C. Wright, "Voters, Candidates, and Issues in Congressional Elections," in Congress Reconsidered, 71-95.

Feb. 23 Paul S. Herrnson, "Issue Voting in the 2006 Elections for the U.S. House of Representatives," in Congress Reconsidered, 97-118.

Feb. 25 Tracy Sulkin, “Promises Made and Promises Kept,” in Congress Reconsidered, 119-139.

References:

Paul S. Herrnson, Congressional Elections: Campaigning at Home and in Washington, 5th ed. (2008). A fact-filled volume on every aspect of congressional elections.

Gary C. Jacobson, The Politics of Congressional Elections, 7th ed. (2009).

Michael Bailey, et al., Campaigns and Elections: Contemporary Case Studies (1999). Includes Senate and House races, among them two Wisconsin contests: Feingold and Newmann in 1998 and Baldwin and Mussere in 1998.

James A. Thurber, ed., The Battle for Congress: Consultants, Candidates, and Voters (2001).

David Menefee-Libey, The Triumph of Campaign-Center Politics (2000).

Nye, Joseph, Philip D. Zelikov, and David C. King, eds., Why People Don't Trust Government (1997).

LEGISLATORS AND THE PUBLIC: REPRESENTATION

March 2 Davidson, Oleszek, and Lee, Chap. 5, 125-155. We'll have a small group exercise on how well members represent their districts.

March 4 Lawrence C. Dodd and Bruce I. Oppenheimer, "Congressional Politics in a Time of Crisis: The 2008 Elections and Their Implications," in Congress Reconsidered, 419-441.

First paper is due on March 4

References:

Alan Rosenthal, Burdett A. Loomis, John R. Hibbing, and Karl T. Kurtz, Republic on Trial: The Case for Representative Democracy (2003).

John W. Kingdon, Congressmen's Voting Decisions, 3rd ed. (1989), Chap. 2, "The Constituency," 29-71.

Richard F. Fenno, Jr., Home Style: House Members in Their Districts (1978).

Frances E. Lee and Bruce I. Oppenheimer, Sizing Up the Senate: The Unequal Consequences of Equal Representation (1999).

National Journal, Almanac of American Politics (biennial). Both the Almanac and the companion volume from Congressional Quarterly (Politics in America, also biennial) offer summaries of each congressional district and state along with member biographical sketches and legislative activities, recent election statistics (vote margins and campaign finance), and voting scores--including ratings by leading interest groups. Both volumes are in the reference section of the library. Much of the same information is available from online sources.

INSTITUTIONAL CHARACTERISTICS AND POLITICAL BEHAVIOR

Political Parties and Leadership

March 9 Davidson, Oleszek, and Lee, Chap. 6, 157-197.

March 11 **Midterm Examination**

Spring Break

March 23 Kathryn Pearson and Eric Schickler, "The Transition to Democratic Leadership in a Polarized House," in Congress Reconsidered, 165-188.

March 25 C. Lawrence Evans and Claire E. Grandy, "The Whip Systems of Congress," in Congress Reconsidered, 189-215.

References:

Steven S. Smith, Party Influence in Congress (2007)

Burdett A. Loomis, ed., Esteemed Colleagues: Civility and Deliberation in the U.S. Senate (2000).
Richard F. Fenno, Jr., The Emergence of a Senate Leader: Pete Domenici and the Reagan Budget (1991).
_____, Learning to Legislate: The Senate Education of Arlen Specter (1991).
Barbara Sinclair, The Transformation of the U.S. Senate (1989).
_____, Majority Leadership in the U.S. House (1983).

Committees:

March 30 Davidson, Oleszek, and Lee, Chap. 7, 199-235.

April 1 John H. Aldrich and David W. Rohde, "Congressional Committees in a Continuing Partisan Era," in Congress Reconsidered, 217-240.

References:
Richard Fenno, Congressman in Committees (1973).
David E. Price, "Congressional Committees in the Policy Process," Dodd and Oppenheimer, eds., Congress Reconsidered (3rd ed., 1985).
Christopher F. Deering and Steven S. Smith, Committees in Congress, 3rd ed. (1997).
David Whiteman, Communication in Congress: Members, Staff, and the Search for Information (1995).

Congressional Rules and Procedures

April 6 Davidson, Oleszek, and Lee, Chap. 8, 237-269.

Second paper due on April 6

Deliberation and Decision-Making in Congress

April 8 Davidson, Oleszek, and Lee, Chap. 9, 271-299.

April 13 Rep. Daniel Lipinski, “Navigating Congressional Policy Processes: The Inside Perspective on How Laws Are Made,” in Congress Reconsidered, 337-360.

References:
Barbara Sinclair, Unorthodox Lawmaking: New Legislative Processes in the U.S. Congress, 3rd ed. (2007).
Edward V. Schneier and Bertram Gross, Legislative Strategy: Shaping Public Policy (1993). One of the best and most readable descriptions of legislative policymaking.
Walter J. Oleszek, Congressional Procedures and the Policy Process, 7th ed., (2007).
C. Lawrence Evans and Walter J. Oleszek, Congress Under Fire: Reform Politics and the Republican Majority (1997).
John W. Kingdon, Congressmen's Voting Decisions, 3rd ed. (1989).

POLICYMAKING AND CHANGE IN CONGRESS

Legislative Relations with the Executive and Courts

April 15 Davidson, Oleszek, and Lee, Chap. 10, 301-331 (on the presidency).

Davidson, Oleszek, and Lee, Chap. 11, 333-358 (on the bureaucracy).

April 20 Davidson, Oleszek, and Lee, Chap. 12, 361-387 (on the courts).

Sarah A. Binder and Forrest Maltzman, "The Politics of Advice and Consent: Putting Judges on the Federal Bench," in Congress Reconsidered, 241-261.

References:

Jon R. Bond and Richard Fleisher, eds., Polarized Politics: Congress and the President in a Partisan Era (2000).
David R. Mayhew, Divided We Govern: Party Control, Lawmaking, and Investigations, 1946-1990 (1991).
Charles O. Jones, Separate But Equal Branches: Congress and the Presidency, 2nd ed. (1999).
Louis Fisher, The Politics of Shared Power: Congress and the Executive, 4th ed. (1998).
Morris Fiorina, Divided Government, 2nd ed. (1996).

Interest Groups and Lobbying

April 22 Davidson, Oleszek, and Lee, Chap. 13, 389-413.

References:

Allan J. Cigler and Burdett A. Loomis, eds., Interest Group Politics, 7th ed. (2007)
Anthony J. Nownes, Total Lobbying: What Lobbyists Want (and How They Try to Get It) (2006).
Paul S. Herrnson, Ronald G. Shaiko, and Clyde Wilcox, eds., The Interest Group Connection: Electioneering, Lobbying, and Policymaking in Washington, 2nd ed. (2005).
Jeffrey M. Berry, The Interest Group Society, 3rd ed. (1997).
Bertram Levine, The Art of Lobbying: Building Trust and Selling Policy (2009)

Congress, Budgets, and Domestic Policymaking

April 27 Davidson, Oleszek, and Lee, Chap. 14, 415-445.

April 29 Catherine E. Rudder, "Transforming American Politics through Tax Policy," in Congress Reconsidered, 263-283

Bruce I. Oppenheimer, "The Process Hurdles: Energy Legislation from the OPEC Embargo to 2008," in Congress Reconsidered, 285-309.

Congress and National Security Policymaking

May 4 Davidson, Oleszek, and Lee, Chap. 15, 447-476.

William G. Howell and Douglas L. Kriner, "Congress, the President, and the Iraq War's Domestic Political Front," in Congress Reconsidered, 311-335. Small group discussion on the role of Congress in the Iraq war.

Third paper is due on May 4.

References:

Diana Dwyre and Victoria A. Farrar-Meyers, Legislative Labyrinth: Congress and Campaign Finance Reform (2001).
Richard E. Cohen, Washington at Work: Back Rooms and Clean Air, 2nd ed. (1995).
Costas Panagopoulos and Joshua Schank, All Roads Lead to Congress: The $300 Billion Fight Over Highway Funding (2008).
Paul C. Light, Forging Legislation (1992).
Jeffrey H. Birnbaum and Alan S. Murray, Showdown at Gucci Gulch: Lawmakers, Lobbyists, and the Unlikely Triumph of Tax Reform (1987).

CONGRESS AND THE FUTURE OF REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT

May 6 Davidson, Oleszek, and Lee, Chap. 16, 479-501.

References:

David E. Price, The Congressional Experience: A View from the Hill, 3rd ed. (2005).
Fred R. Harris, In Defense of Congress (1995).
Arthur Maass, Congress and the Common Good (1983).
Elisabeth R. Gerber, The Populist Paradox: Interest Group Influence and the Promise of Direct Legislation (1999).
Richard J. Ellis, Democratic Delusions: The Initiative Process in America (2002).

The final exam is scheduled for Tuesday, May 11, 1 to 3 p.m.

WEB SITES ON CONGRESS AND PUBLIC POLICY

General Information on Congress

http://library.cqpress.com/cqweekly/. CQ Weekly. Full text version of the authoritative professional journal on Congress. Accessible once you log onto your UW-Green Bay account.

http://thomas.loc.gov/ (Library of Congress's Thomas search engines for locating key congressional documents. It is one of the most comprehensive public site for legislative searches. Includes bill summaries and status, committee reports, committee hearing schedules, Congressional Record text, guides to the legislative process, and access to congressional Internet sites).

http://thomas.loc.gov/home/legbranch/legbranch.html (official Congressional Internet Resources site with access to a number of Hill support agencies such as the CBO, GAO, and various congressional directories, including a pictorial directory of leaders and members. Site also includes a list of Web sites for commonly requested information about Congress and the federal government, voting records, news sites, partisan sites, and others).

http://www.senate.gov/ (official Senate site, providing access to legislative schedules, committees, leadership, votes, contact with members, Senate history, etc.).

http://www.house.gov/ (official House site, providing information on House organization, leadership, committees, members, and search engines for sites dealing with Congress, such as Thomas and the Library of Congress).

http://www.gao.gov/ (U.S. Government Accountability Office, a treasure trove of reports on government agencies and programs, esp. evaluation studies).

http://www.fedstats.gov (a diverse list of studies by federal agencies. Site maintained by the Federal Interagency Council on Statistical Policy).

http://www.opencongress.org/ (a project of the Sunlight Foundation and Participatory Politics Foundation, this site provides extensive coverage of current legislation and political actions in Congress, complete with elaborate blogs).

Public Policy Information

http://www.usa.gov/(the federal government's portal to government sites).

http://www.publicagenda.org/(provides guide to diverse policy issues and public opinion surveys).

http://www.ciser.cornell.edu/info/polls.shtml/ (Cornell University Web site that lists all major

public opinion companies with links to the Gallup Organization, Roper Center, New York Times/CBS, Washington Post, National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago, and National Election Studies at the University of Michigan. The major state and regional polling organizations are included as well).

http://www.csg.org/(Council of State Governments, with links to all fifty states as well as public policy issues, think tanks, and suggested state legislation).

http://www.wisconsin.gov/state/home/. Access to State of Wisconsin agencies and policy issues).

Journalistic Coverage of Congress and Public Policy

http://www.hillnews.com/ (Web version of The Hill newspaper).

http://www.rollcall.com/ (Web version of Roll Call newspaper).

http://www.nytimes.com/ (New York Times on line).
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http://www.washingtonpost.com/ (Washington Post on line).

http://www.wsj.com/ (Wall Street Journal on line).

Congressional Parties, Campaigns, and Elections

http://cnn.com/ALLPOLITICS/ (a good general site on elections, campaigns, and politics).

http://cnn.com/ELECTION/2004/ (good general site for 2004 election coverage).

http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2008/ (provides access to individual state data, including exit polls, detailed state election returns, and candidate profiles).

http://www.electionline.org/ (good site for coverage of election issues such as ballot reform, voter id, and the like.

http://www.kagen.house.gov/ (Rep. Steve Kagen's home page).

http://www.senate.gov/~feingold/ (Senator Feingold's home page).

http://kohl.senate.gov/ (Senator Kohl's home page).

http://www.vote-smart.org/ (Project Vote Smart, which includes a Congress tracking section with access to status of legislation, full text of bills, hearings, votes, congressional agencies, and more).

http://www.rnc.org/ (Republican National Committee page)

http://www.nrcc.org/ (National Republican Congressional Committee, campaign and election coverage).

http://www.democrats.org/index.html (Democratic National Committee page)

http://www.dccc.org/ (Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, campaign and election coverage).

http://www.campaignline.com/ (CQ site for Campaigns and Elections newsletter)

Note on online databases accessible through the UW-Green Bay Library. The library carries *CQ Researcher* as well as both the print and electronic versions of *CQ Weekly*, which is on the list above. The library also has Academic Universe, a service of LexisNexis. Once on LexisNexis, select "congressional" or select LexisNexis Congressional directly. This is an index and abstracting service for congressional publications such as hearing transcripts and testimony, committee prints and reports, bills, and public laws. A great deal of other information about Congress is available from this page as well.