

Syllabus for Topics in Politics: Congress and State Legislatures
L32 Pol Sci 3381
Fall 2015
T/Th 1:00 pm – 2:30 pm, 106 Seigle Hall

Instructor: Prof. Schilling
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Office Hours: Wednesdays 9:00 am-12:00 pm
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Please put these important dates to put on your calendar now:

Tuesday, October 13th – October 15th: Exam One

Thursday, December 10th – December 15th: Exam Two

I. Description of Course

Harry Truman called the 80th Congress (1947-49) the “do-nothing Congress,” because they refused to pass many of the bills he wanted. Despite this moniker, the 80th Congress passed 906 laws during the session. The nickname resurged in 2012 to describe the 112th Congress, because this Congress passed the lowest number of laws on modern record: 220 (note: the 113th passed enough bills at the last minute to be *slightly* more productive!). When the Founders devised the Congress in the U.S. Constitution, they deliberately created an institution with multiple hurdles, designed to slow the legislative process. However, the Founders also created an institution where legislators, elected (and, for a while, selected) by citizens, were to create laws on behalf of the citizenry they represented. In 2012, this Congress reached a modern low in popularity, with only 12% of this represented citizenry approving of the job Congress was going. Can the modern U.S. Congress represent the U.S. people well, given these characteristics?

On the other hand, state legislatures play a pivotal and crucial role in the daily lives of all Americans despite what the media covers, the behavior of the politicians in Washington, or the relative lack of knowledge and attention the average citizen gives state politics. We depend on these politicians for many services, such as roads, education, law enforcement, fire protection, aid for the unemployed, insurance for those with low incomes, legal procedures and due process, electricity, water, and other basic public resources. Furthermore, for most citizens, their interaction with government occurs at the state level. We will consider this question in this class, as we learn about the history of Congress and state legislatures, the modern rules and institutions (both in elections and the chamber), and the policy-making process.

II. Objectives and Goals of the Course

- Learn about legislative elections
- Learn about U.S. legislative structure, procedure, and policy making
- Consider examples of campaigning and law-making, and evaluate their meaning for representation in American government
- Learn how the U.S. Congress compares to U.S. state legislatures
- Develop and practice writing skills

III. Required Texts

Note: These books are available at the campus bookstore. Please be sure that if you buy these books online, you get the newest edition that we are using in class. There are also a number of additional readings for this class that will be posted on Blackboard.

Sinclair, Barbara. *Unorthodox Lawmaking: New Legislative Processes in the U.S. Congress, Fourth Edition*. Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press.

Parker, David C.W. *Battle for the Big Sky: Representation and the Politics of Place in the Race for the U.S. Senate*. Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press.

Suggested Readings

Squire, Peverill and Keith E. Hamm. *101 Chambers: Congress, State Legislatures, and the Future of Legislative Studies*. Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press.

IV. Course Requirements

Exams: There will be two exams in this class, each of which is a take-home exam. The first exam, worth 25% of your grade, will take place the week of October 13-15. The exam will be released on Tuesday, October 13, at 9 am; it will be due Thursday, October 15, at 5 pm. Class will not meet while the midterm exam is underway to give you at least 2.5 hours to work on it. The second exam, worth 35% of your grade, will be released on Thursday, December 10th, at 9 am, and due Tuesday, December 15th, at 3 pm. The exams are not cumulative; rather, they will cover approximately 1/2 of the semester each. Each exam will consist of term identification and essay questions.

Legislative Issue: Pick an issue you're passionate about! Pick an issue you don't understand! Pick an issue you hate. It's (almost) entirely up to you. The only requirement is that you have to pick a House Resolution or a bill considered by the Missouri General Assembly from the current session (114th Congress or 2015 session) that has been subject to at least one non-unanimous roll call vote. Over the course of the semester you'll be required to complete four legislative issue assignment in which you'll be expected to research one small part of your bill's legislative process to submit and present to the class. The four written assignments and in-class presentations will be worth 15% of your final grade.

Redistricting Simulation: This is a one-day, group, in-class simulation based on the <http://redistrictinggame.org/>. You will work in a group to complete various redistricting scenarios. Each group will complete and turn in a worksheet based on their outcomes. Each student will write a 2-4 page paper discussing his or her views on the redistricting process. Your grade will come from both your group work and your individual paper. This will be worth 10% of your final grade.

Participation and Attendance: All students are expected to complete assigned readings, regularly attend class, and participate in discussion regarding lecture and readings. You are permitted two unexcused absences. For each additional unexcused absence, your final course grade will be reduced by 0.5%. An absence is only excused with written consent (e.g. email) from Professor Schilling. This will be worth 15% of your final grade.

Grading: Grades are assigned on the following scale. 100-98 = A+; 93-97 = A; 90-92 = A-; 88-89 = B+; 83-87 = B; 80-82 = B-; 78-79 = C+; 73-77 = C; 70-72 = C-; 68-69 = D+; 63-67 = D; 60-62 = D-; 59 or below = F.

Midterm Exam	25%
Final Exam	35%
Legislative Issue Assignments	15%

Redistricting Simulation and Paper	10%
Attendance and Participation	15%
Total	100%

V. Course Policies and Other Information

Late Exams/Assignments: Because of the take-home exam structure, make-up exams are not an issue in this class except for extenuating circumstances (e.g. hospitalization). Should you choose to turn in a paper or exam late, there is a 10% late penalty for each 24 hours the assignment is late. For example, if the exam is due October 15 at 5 pm, and you turn it in October 15 at 5:30 pm or October 16 at 9 am, your grade will begin at 90 rather than 100. “On time” assignments must be uploaded to Blackboard. Please note that I am stickler for on-time assignments; even being one minute late will incur a penalty.

Reading Assignments: Reading assignments are given in the course outline in this syllabus (below). Assigned reading for a class day is given as the “Reading Assignment” on the syllabus for the previous week – in other words, you should read the assignment given on each day in preparation for the next class day. I expect you to have done the reading for each class ahead of time, and I reserve the right to quiz you if I feel you are not doing the reading ahead of time. Reading assignments are subject to change, and any change will be announced in class.

Regrading: I will be glad to take another look at a test you feel is not graded fairly if you approach me about it in my office hours or by appointment. I will only do this over 24 hours after the test is handed back (aka “the 24 hour rule”). The reason for this is I would like for you to take the test home and carefully read and think over the comments before we talk. If I feel your paper was graded unfairly, I’ll change the grade in your favor, but I also reserve the right to lower your grade upon rereading the paper, if, after reevaluation, I think you received too high a grade.

Academic Integrity: All work in this class should be your own with appropriate citations. I strongly encourage you to review Washington University’s policies regarding academic honesty. These policies will be strictly enforced in this class. In general, if you have any questions, please feel free to ask me.

Suggested News Sources to Follow: I recommend that you stay up to date on what is going on in Congress throughout the class. This will help facilitate discussion and keep you engaged in the class. I do not expect you to know what is going on in each state legislature but it would be helpful to pay attention to Missouri General Assembly at the least. Here are some recommended websites for you to use:

The Monkey Cage – <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/>

Politico – <http://www.politico.com/congress>

CQ Weekly -- <https://library.cqpress.com/cqweekly/>

Other Stuff: Please turn your cell phone off or onto silent mode before you enter the classroom. If I see a cell phone once, you get a warning and a dirty look. If I see it twice, you will be asked to leave the classroom. I mean this – don’t let me see that phone.

Laptops are welcome for note taking in the classroom. However, I expect that if your laptop is out during class, you will be taking notes rather than checking your email or playing solitaire. If I notice that things other than note-taking are going on, you will be asked to put the laptop away and take notes in longhand. I do suggest that you take notes with paper and pen; recent scientific evidence suggests that one learns better by organizing information as you write.

Please do not pack up before I say that class is over. If this becomes a problem, pop quizzes or similar will be your new end of class activity.

I check my email often, and I am happy to answer questions via email. However, please use proper grammar, punctuation, and communication when emailing your professor. Use actual words, such as “you,” instead of “u.” Please identify yourself in the subject line if you are not using a “wustl” address. Please do not call me by my first name. In general, just remember to conduct yourself in a professional manner. Please expect to wait 24 hours for an answer to email, since I get a lot of email in one day!

VI. Course Calendar

Week 1: T, August 25: Class Intro

- Reading assignment: The U.S. Constitution (find it online)
- Toobin, Jeffery, “Our Broken Constitution,” *The New Yorker*. 2013. (find it online)
- Brady and Theriault, “Reassessment of Who’s to Blame,” 2001. (Blackboard)
- Squire “Historical Evolution of Legislatures” 2006. (Blackboard)

R, August 27: Legislative Development and the Constitution

- Reading assignment: readings on 2014 congressional elections (Blackboard)
- *Big Sky* chapters 1-4
- Goldmacher, Shane. “Why Would Anyone Ever Want to Run for Congress?,” *The Atlantic*. 2013. (find it online)

Week 2: T, September 1: Elections

- Reading assignment: Nyhan, McGhee, Sides, Masket, and Greene. “One Vote out of Step?” 2012. (Blackboard)
- Fox and Lawless. “Gendered Perceptions and Political Candidacies.” 2010. (Blackboard)

R, September 3: Elections

- Reading assignment: *Big Sky* chapters 5-10
- Jacobson “Strategic Politicians.” 1989. (Blackboard)
- Cillizza, Chris, “How Citizen’s United Changed Politics, in 7 charts,” *The Washington Post*. 2014. (find it online)
- Hamm and Hogan “Campaign Finance Laws in State Legislative Elections.” 2008. (Blackboard)
- **1st Legislative Issue Assignment due**

Week 3: T, September 8: Redistricting Simulation, in class

- Reading assignment: same

R, September 10: Elections: “Can Mr. Smith Get to Washington”

- Reading assignment: Jeff Smith article (Blackboard)
- Richardson, Russell, and Cooper. “Legislative Representation in Single-Member versus Multiple-Member Districts.” 2004. (Blackboard)
- Carey, Niemi, Powell, and Moncrief. “The Effects of Term Limits.” 2011. (Blackboard)

- Schaffner, Streb, and Wright. “Teams without Uniforms: The Nonpartisan Ballot in State and Local Elections.” 2001. (Blackboard)

Week 4: T, September 15: Elections: “Can Mr. Smith Get to Washington”

- Reading assignment: same
- **Redistricting paper due**

R, September 17: Elections

- Reading assignment: Miller and Stokes. “Constituency Influence in Congress.” 1963. (Blackboard)
- Weissberg. “Collective vs. Dyadic Representation in Congress.” 1978. (Blackboard)
- Selection from Fenno (Blackboard)
- Selection from *Freshman Orientation* (Blackboard)

Week 5: T, September 22: Representation and Legislative Organization

- Reading assignment: Mansbridge “Should Blacks Represent Blacks and Women Represent Women?” 1999. (Blackboard)
- Bratton and Haynie. “Agenda Setting and Legislative Success.” 1999. (Blackboard)
- Mundy, Liza. “The Secret History of Women in the Senate.” *Politico*. 2015. (find it online)
- Choma, Russ. “Millionaires’ Club: For the First Time Most Lawmakers are Worth \$1 Million-Plus.” *OpenSecrets*. 2014 (find it online)

R, September 24: Representation and Legislative Organization

- Reading assignment: Smith, et. al. (Blackboard)
- **2nd Legislative Assignment due**

Week 6: T, September 29: Leadership and Parties

- Reading assignment: Hooper, Molly K. “Pelosi methodically moved member.” *The Hill*. 2010. (find it online)
- Binder, Sarah. “Oh 113th Congress Hastert Rule, we hardly knew ye!” *The Monkey Cage*. 2013. (find it online)

R, October 1: Leadership and Parties

- Reading assignment: Jessee and Malhotra. “Are Congressional Leaders Middlepersons or Extremists?” (Blackboard)
- Thomsen “Ideological Moderates Won’t Run.” 2011. (Blackboard)
- Cox and McCubbins. “On the Decline of Party Voting.” 1991. (Blackboard)

Week 7: T, October 6: Leadership and Parties

- Reading assignment: Tam Cho, Gimpel, and Shaw. “The Tea Party Movement.” 2012. (Blackboard)
- Jenkins. “Party Influence on Roll Call Voting.” 2008. (Blackboard)
- Mooney. “Measuring State House Speakers’ Formal Powers.” 2013. (Blackboard)

R, October 8: Leadership and Parties and Exam Review

- Week 8: T, October 13: Midterm Exam released, 9:00 am
- R, October 15: Midterm Exam due, 5:00 pm
- Reading assignment: Noel, Hans. “Ten Things Political Scientists Know that You Don’t.” (find it online)
 - Clark, Osborn, Winburn, and Wright. “Representation in U.S. Legislatures.” 2009. (Blackboard)
 - Shor and McCarty. “The Ideological Mapping of American Legislatures.” 2011. (Blackboard)
- Week 9: T, October 20: Papering about congressional data and information
- Reading assignment: Aldrich, Perry, and Rohde (Blackboard)
 - Deering and Smith (Blackboard)
 - Hamm, Hedlund, and Martorano. “Measuring State Legislative Committee Power.” 2006. (Blackboard)
- R, October 22: Committees
- Reading assignment: Granat, Diane. “1st Freshman Test: The Right Committee Seat.” *CQ Weekly* (find it online)
 - Kellerman and Shepsle. “Committee Seniority.” (Blackboard)
 - Hall and Wayman. “Buying Time.” 1990. (Blackboard)
 - Kathlene. “Power and Influence in Policymaking.” 1994. (Blackboard)
 - **3rd Legislative Issue Assignment due**
- Week 10: T, October 27: Committees
- Reading assignment: Sinclair chapters 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 9
- R, October 29: Rules and Procedure in the House
- Reading assignment: Cox. On the Effects of Legislative Rules.” 2000. (Blackboard)
- Week 11: T, November 3: Rules and Procedure in the House
- Reading assignment: Sinclair chapter 3, 4
 - Koger. “Cloture Reform and Party Government.” 2006.
- R, November 5: Rules and Procedure in the Senate
- Reading assignment: Packer, George. “The Empty Chamber: Just how broken is the Senate?” *The New Yorker*. 2010. (find it online)
- Week 12: T, November 10: Rules and Procedure in the Senate
- Reading assignment: Smith, Roberts, and Vander Wielan. “Introduction to the Spatial Theory of Legislating.” 2009. (Blackboard)
 - Binder. “The Dysfunctional Congress.” 2014. (Blackboard)
 - Krehbiel *Pivotal Politics* excerpt (Blackboard)
 - Binder. “The Dynamics of Legislative Gridlock, 1947-1996.” 1999. (Blackboard)
- R, November 12: Understanding Spatial Theories of Legislating
- Reading assignment: same
- Week 13: T, November 17: Understanding Spatial Theories of Legislating

- Reading assignment: Sinclair chapter 5, 10
- **4th Legislative Issue Assignment due**

R, November 19: The Budgeting Process

- Dometrius and Wright. "Governors, Legislatures, and State Budgets." 2010. (Blackboard)
- Chen and Malhotra. "The Law of k/n." 2007. (Blackboard)

Week 14: T, November 24: The Budgeting Process

- Reading assignment: Binder and Maltzman (Blackboard)
- "Hello, deadlock" *The Economist*. 2014 (find it online)

R, November 26: No classes, Thanksgiving Break

Week 15: T, December 1: Intrabranh Relations

- Reading assignment: Wiggins. "Executive Vetoes and Legislative Overrides." 1980. (Blackboard)
- Kousser and Phillips. "Who Blinks First?" 2009. (Blackboard)
- Gerber. "Legislative Response to Initiatives." 1996. (Blackboard)

R, December 3: Intrabranh Relations and Exam Review

Exam Week is December 7-16. Final exam will be released Thursday, December 10, at 9:00 am and due Tuesday, December 15, at 3 pm.