

POLITICAL SCIENCE 517 LEGISLATIVE POLITICS

Spring Quarter, 2005

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Purpose of course: to understand the place of Congress in the American political system, how it functions, and its importance. The course is designed for junior/senior majors in political science who have some prior knowledge of the political system of the United States.

Class meetings: Spring Quarter, 2005, Tuesdays and Thursdays, March 29 through June 2, 1:30-3:18. Ramseyer Hall, Room 100.

Appointments with Instructor: after class, by arrangement, or during office hours [10-11 a.m. on Tuesdays and 11-12 a.m. on Thursdays]. Office hours for Mr. Daigle, the Graduate Teaching Associate in the course, will be announced at the first class.

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

Davidson, Roger H., and Walter J. Oleszek, Congress and Its Members, 9th edition (CQ Press, 2004).

Dodd, Lawrence C., and Bruce I. Oppenheimer, editors, Congress Reconsidered, 8th edition (CQ Press, 2005).

Thurber, James A., ed., Rivals for Power: Presidential-Congressional Relations, 2nd edition (Rowman & Littlefield, 2002).

In addition, students are required to be familiar with major developments in Congress each week. Some time will be devoted in the second hour each Thursday to discussing these developments and how they relate to general themes developed in the course.

For keeping abreast of these developments, students should skim 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.

Additional potentially useful websites are listed in the Davidson and Oleszek book on pages 516-517. One other general site not listed there is useful for keeping track of public opinion on political matters: <http://www.pollingreport.com>.

Structure of course:

Each week of the course we will focus on one or more substantive topics as listed below. The assigned readings, lectures, and discussion will all address those themes.

Work in course:

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 each Thursday. There will be a one-hour midterm exam that will cover the material up to the date of the exam [25% of grade], a written assignment [25% of grade], and a final exam covering the entire course [50% of grade].

The midterm will be given during the first hour on **Tuesday, May 3**. The nature of the exam will be discussed in class.

The final exam will be held at 1:30 to 3:20 in the classroom on **Tuesday, June 7**. The nature of the exam will be discussed in class. No early final exams will be given.

The written assignment will be due at class on **Thursday, May 26**. The assignment is to choose a member of the House of Representatives who has been there continuously at least since the election of 1994, provide some basic information on that Representative, and discuss his or her standing and importance in Congress. Your summary should be 6 to 8 pages in length. Use the following outline in preparing the assignment, but feel free to add items you think important:

1. Name of Representative.
2. Political Party.
3. Member of the House since 1994.
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. Key characteristics of the District for the 2004 election—e.g., composition of population [urban/suburban/exurban/rural; race; ethnicity; socio-economic status]; major employers; % union households; major newspapers.
7. Election results in races for the House [both losing, if any; and winning]—% of vote; % for opponent[s]; other aspects [e.g., primary opposition and results].

8. Cost of campaigns; detailed information on the 2004 campaign [e.g., expenditures, sources of funds; major endorsements and major endorsements of principal opponent].
9. Committee and subcommittee assignments, including chairmanships/ranking minority memberships, if any.
 - a. In current Congress [109th].
 - b. In previous Congresses.
10. Staff: congressional office; committee and subcommittee staff; district office[s]—size and geographical location of staff.
11. Leadership positions in the House, if any.
12. Ideological preferences, support/opposition of President George W. Bush in the 107th and 108th Congresses [2001-2004], support/opposition to majority of member's party in the House—all as revealed in compilations and analyses of roll call votes. Present some numbers and some narrative interpretation of the meaning of the numbers.
13. Major legislative accomplishments during entire career.
14. List sources used in developing your profile. **Do not depend on a single source for items requiring judgment and narrative [especially items 12 and 13, which should comprise half to two-thirds of your paper]. And, of course, use your own language and/or use quotation marks and a footnote for any directly quoted material.**

We will discuss sources in class. To get you started, you should become familiar with Congressional Quarterly publications [annual almanacs and the CQ Weekly Report], the most recent Almanac of American Politics [published by the National Journal], and the Congressional Directory [published by Congress itself at the beginning of each Congress]. You should also look at the member's website and a few of their newsletters to their constituents [these should be on line at the website]. You should also identify the leading newspaper[s] in the District and skim them for recent items on the member.

Schedule: topics and reading assignments:

WEEK 1: MARCH 29 and 31

Topics: Congress in the American Political System

Reading: Davidson, chapters 1, 2
Thurber, chapter 1

WEEK 2: APRIL 5 and 7

Topics: Recruitment, Elections, Hill Styles & Home Styles

Reading: Davidson, chapters 3-5
Dodd, chapters 4-7
Thurber, chapter 5

WEEK 3: APRIL 12 and 14

Topics: Political Parties and Party Leaders in Congress

Reading: Davidson, chapter 6
Dodd, chapters 8-10

WEEK 4: APRIL 19 and 21

Topics: Committees, Subcommittees; Other Internal Structures

Reading: Davidson, chapter 7
Dodd, chapters 11, 12 , 17

WEEK 5: APRIL 26 and 28

Topics: Internal Rules and Procedures; Decision-Making

Reading: Davidson, chapters 8, 9
Dodd, chapters 1, 2

WEEK 6: MAY 3 and 5

Topics: Congress and the Presidency

Reading: Davidson, chapter 10
Dodd, chapter 16
Thurber, chapters 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, and 8

WEEK 7: MAY 10 and 12

Topics: Congress and the Bureaucracy

Reading: Davidson, chapter 11

WEEK 8: MAY 17 and 19

Topics: Congress and the Courts; Congress and Interest Groups

Reading: Davidson, chapters 12, 13
Dodd, chapter 13

WEEK 9: MAY 24 and 26

Topics: Congress, Budgets, and Domestic Policy

Reading: Davidson, chapter 14
Dodd, chapter 14
Thurber, chapter 9

WEEK 10: MAY 31 and JUNE 2

Topics: Congress and Foreign and Defense Policy; The Future of Congress

Reading: Davidson, chapters 15, 16
Dodd, chapters 3, 15, 18
Thurber, chapters 10, 11, and 12

Academic Honesty: All work of each student must be his or her own. Incidents 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].