

# PSC 402: Legislative Politics

Sections A & C (Undergraduate): 3 credits

Sections B & D (Graduate): 4 credits

Fall 2023

Tuesdays, 2:00pm – 4:30pm - UHB 2003

Or

Online

**Instructor:**  Matthew Geras, Assistant Professor

**Office:**  PAC 358

**Office Hours:**  Thursdays 1:30-4:30pm central (in person or by Zoom)

By Appointment (in person or by Zoom)

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## **Course Description**

This course provides a modern political science perspective on legislative politics in the United States. Our primary focus will be the United States Congress, but we will also examine behavior and politics in state legislatures with particular attention to the Illinois General Assembly. Throughout the semester, we will examine the institutional features that organize Congress including political parties, committees, collective action problems, and individual and collective goals. We will examine the legislative process in Congress and consider congressional elections and representation in Congress. Finally, at the end of the semester, we will consider how state legislatures are both similar to, and different from, Congress.

This course is designed as a modified seminar. While each class period will contain a lecture on that week’s topic, a substantial portion of each class will be dedicated to discussing the required readings for that week and important current events related to Congress and state legislatures. In some weeks this will involve individual or group research. Since this is in part a seminar class, you can expect to do a lot of reading and writing on a weekly basis. Additionally, active participation in class discussions is expected of all students.

## **Course Objectives**

Upon completion of the course, students will:

* Understand how politics and other goals motivate the behavior of individuals and parties in legislative bodies in American politics.
* Understand the processes by which members of Congress are elected.
* Understand several different perspectives on representation in Congress and state legislatures.
* Understand the powers and organizational structures of Congress and state legislatures and how these institutions operate in the American political system.
* Be able to critically analyze scientific research on Congress and state legislatures.
* Be able to use theories discussed in class to analyze historical and current events.

**Learning Objectives**

* Students will complete the assigned readings and participate in class discussions about the readings and current events during each week of class.
* Students will construct their own discussion questions, or other talking points, on legislative politics or current events to demonstrate their ability to lead and contribute to class discussions.
* Students will complete several application assignments that require you to take what we have learned in class to either evaluate or simulate a real-world application of legislative politics in either Congress or a state legislature.
* Students will demonstrate their knowledge of legislative politics in both Congress and state legislatures by completing a written final examination.

## **Course Expectations**

This is a HyFlex class meaning students can participate in person on campus, synchronously through Zoom, or asynchronously by watching recorded lectures and completing online assignments. All students will complete the same readings, the same writing assignments, and engage with the same content. The only difference between these modalities is the way in which students participate in class discussions.

For each week of class, there will be required readings, which should be completed prior to the start of class, or prior to your participation in the online discussion board. Each class session will be split into two parts. First, there will be a lecture on that week’s topic. Second, there will be a class discussion on the required readings and any important current events related to legislative politics. This will sometimes involve individual or group research during class.

On-ground and synchronous online students will attend class on Tuesday afternoons. Following each class period, I will post recorded versions of my lecture(s), open the weekly discussion board, and share any other in-class assignments for that week, by each Wednesday morning. Asynchronous students will then have one week **(Wednesday through Tuesday)** to watch these lectures video(s), participate in the online discussion board, and complete any miscellaneous assignments that were assigned that week. All students will use the same Canvas page, which means the online discussion boards will be available to everyone, but they are only required for asynchronous students who are not able to, or who prefer not to, participate in live class discussions. This course is designed based on the principles of collaborative learning and active participation.

## **UIS Academic Integrity Policy**

I support the UIS policy on Academic Integrity, which states, in part: “Academic integrity is at the heart of the university’s commitment to academic excellence. The UIS community strives to communicate and support clear standards of integrity, so that undergraduate and graduate students can internalize those standards and carry them forward in their personal and professional lives. Living a life with integrity prepares students to assume leadership roles in their communities as well as in their chosen profession. Alumni can be proud of their education and the larger society will benefit from the University’s contribution to the development of ethical leaders. Violations of academic integrity demean the violator, degrade the learning process, deflate the meaning of grades, discredit the accomplishments of past and present students, and tarnish the reputation of the university for all its members.”

Academic sanctions range from a warning to expulsion from the university, depending on the severity of your violation and your history of violations. Whatever the sanction, I will file a report of academic dishonesty to the Office of the Provost.

You are responsible for understanding and complying with the [UIS Academic Integrity Policy](http://www.uis.edu/academicintegrity).

Academic dishonesty in an online (remote) learning environment may include the following scenarios:

* Having a tutor or friend complete a portion of your assignments
* Having a reviewer make extensive revisions to an assignment
* Copying work submitted by another student to a public class meeting
* Using information from online information services without proper citation
* Posting any work as your own that has been written by another author(s)

## **Academic Accommodations**

If you are a student with a documented temporary or ongoing disability in need of academic accommodation, please contact the Office of Disability Services at 217-206-6666.

Disabilities may include, but are not limited to: Psychological, Health, Learning, Sensory, Mobility, ADHD, TBI and Autism Spectrum Disorder. In some cases, accommodations are also available for shorter term disabling conditions such as severe medical situations. Accommodations are based upon underlying medical and cognitive conditions and may include but are not limited to extended time for tests and quizzes, distraction free environment for tests and quizzes, a note taker, interpreter, and FM devices.

Students who have made a request for an academic accommodation that has been reviewed and approved by the ODS will receive an accommodation letter which should be provided by the student to the instructor as soon as possible, preferably in the first week of class.

For assistance in seeking academic accommodations please contact the UIS Office of Disability Services (ODS) in the Human Resources Building, Room 80, phone number 217-206-6666.

## **Library Resources**

You can access library resources, databases, and helpful research guides from [Brookens Library](http://library.uis.edu/).

**The Learning Hub**

The Learning Hub provides students on campus with many services including online and face-to-face tutoring for writing, science, exercise science, academic skills, business, computer science, and math; supplemental instruction; workshops; and online resources. Any student who is enrolled at UIS is eligible for the free services.

If you feel like you need extra help in the class, please use this service along with instructor help.

Appointments can be made by contacting The Learning Hub at (217) 206-6503, thehub@uis.edu, or in person at Brookens 460. You may also use this link to access a “Make an Appointment” form to ensure you give them all the information needed to schedule an appointment. When making an appointment, please have the following information ready:

* Course number
* Instructor
* Assignment/Paper Length
* Available Days and Times

## **Required Texts**

There are no required books for this class. Instead, all course readings will be posted to Canvas.

Readings will include a combination of journal articles, news articles, book excerpts,

and podcasts. The podcasts we will listen to are produced by reputable media organizations or thinktanks and the guests/hosts will almost always be political scientists, or in some cases journalists or practitioners.

## **UIS Resources**

[University of Illinois at Springfield](http://www.uis.edu/)

[[Information Technology Services (ITS)](http://www.uis.edu/)](http://www.uis.edu/its)

[University Webmail](http://webmail.uis.edu)

[Canvas](https://go.uis.edu/canvas)

[The Career Development Center](http://www.uis.edu/career/)

## **Course Requirements**

## Complete all assigned readings, lecture videos, and graded assignments. As a best practice, please keep a backup copy of all assignments that you submit. As a UIS student you have access to a [Box](https://www.uis.edu/its/services-uis/box) account, which can be used to back up your assignments.

## **Adhere to assignment deadlines as outlined on Canvas and the course schedule. I accept late work, but assignments submitted after their due date will be subject to a penalty of 2% per day. I recognize that some late work occurs due to circumstances outside a student’s control. As a result, I may waive this penalty in such circumstances, especially if you are proactive in letting me know you will be submitting work late before the assignment deadline. Most importantly, keep in mind that if you are consistently submitting assignments late, you are limiting your ability to receive feedback on your assignments. If you submit late work after the last day of class, I cannot guarantee it will be counted towards your final score due to the university’s grading timeline.**

## ***While it is important that we all do our best to adhere to these requirements, I recognize we all continue to live through unprecedented times. If you find yourself in a situation where your ability to meet course deadlines is compromised, please let me know. I will, to the best of my abilities, work with you to come up with a solution that will allow you to complete the required components of this course.***

## **Technology Requirements**

Students will use the internet to access the Canvas course page and their UIS email. Other programs used will be Zoom, Microsoft Office, Zotero or some other bibliographic management software (optional), and resources from the UIS library. All these programs are available to students through their enrollment in UIS classes or are freely available online.

## **Course Communication**

The best way to contact me is through email or the messenger function on Canvas. As needed, we can also schedule Zoom meetings and telephone consultations. I typically respond to emails within 24 hours Monday through Thursday and within 48 hours Friday through Sunday. You will likely receive a response from me much faster than this timeline. If fact, if you do not receive a response from me within this timeframe, it is okay to assume I did not receive your original message and you are welcome to contact me again.

Keep in mind that the messenger app on Canvas sometimes struggles with file attachments, especially in cases where you are responding to a Canvas message through email. As a result, email or UIS’s protected email application ([PEAR](https://www.aits.uillinois.edu/services/application_services/PEAR/)) is the better option in these circumstances. Additionally, keep in mind that I am not allowed to discuss grades through email.

Office Hours:

My office hours are Thursdays from 1:30pm to 4:30pm central and by appointment. To set up a meeting, send me an email with some suggested times. I encourage all students to attend office hours whenever they wish to discuss course content and assignments. Please view my office hours as time that I have set aside to answer your questions, clarify class discussions, and help you succeed in class. All office hours will be available either in person or via Zoom.

### Netiquette

In any social interaction, certain rules of etiquette are expected and contribute to more enjoyable and productive communication. Everyone must plan an active role in helping to facilitate and maintain a safe and comfortable learning environment where everyone should feel free to participate, ask questions, engage the course, and support one another. To do this successfully, we must remain mindful and respectful of each other’s freedom of thought and speech and provide mutual respect. Everyone should feel comfortable expressing themselves and their views. There must be a clear respect for diversity of participants including respect for gender, race/ethnicity, religion, disability, age, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, as well as culture, beliefs, and personal values.

Here are some tips for discussing serious and potential sensitive topics with your peers:

* Be empathetic and remember that this environment is a safe place for making mistakes.
* Use nonjudgmental language and phrases that do not attack an individual. One way of doing this is to ask the individual to discuss his/her process for making the final decision he/she made.
* Use specific questions, examples, and research as a way of making your point.

## **Methods of Evaluation**

## You will be assessed on several application assignments, a cumulative final exam, class participation, which includes your contribution of a weekly talking point, and several shorter miscellaneous assignments in the form of in-classes activities or homework.

Application Assignments

Throughout the semester, there will be 3 application assignments that all students need to complete and a 4th application assignment that only graduate students need to complete. Regardless of whether you are an undergraduate or graduate student, these assignments will make up 40% of your final grade. Application assignments will require you to take what we have learned in class to either evaluate or simulate a real-world application of legislative politics in either Congress or a state legislature. Instructions for each application assignment will be provided in separate assignment sheets, but the topics and due dates for these assignments are provided below:

Assignment 1: Congressional District Profile **(Due: 10/17)**

Assignment 2: Bill Proposal and Dear Colleague Letter **(Due: 11/14)**

Assignment 3: Comparing Legislatures **(Due: 12/5)**

Assignment 4: Evaluating a Theory **(Due: 12/12 \*Graduate Students Only)**

Final Exam

The final exam for this class will be a cumulative exam worth 20% of your final grade. The final exam will consist of multiple-choice, true-false, and short-answer questions. All students regardless of modality will take the final exam on Canvas. The final exam will be made available during the last week of classes and will be due by 11:59 on **Tuesday, December 12th**, which is the day of the designated exam period for this class. Students are allowed to use their notes but will only have 2 hours to complete the exam and are not allowed to work with others.

Participation (Further Explanation of Modalities in a HyFlex Class)

Since this is in part a seminar class, students are expected to actively participate in class on a weekly basis.

*On-Ground Students*

Students enrolled in the on-ground sections of this class (A & B) will attend class in person. They will earn participation credit by attending class, participating in class discussions/activities, and asking questions. They can use the online discussion boards to supplement their participation and engage in conversation with their asynchronous online classmates. If they need to miss class or cannot attend class in person due to sickness, quarantine, etc., they can participate in class synchronously through Zoom or asynchronously by watching the recorded lectures and participating in the online discussion board. However, since you signed up for the on-ground section of this class, I expect you to participate either in person or synchronously through Zoom when possible. If you need to participate in class asynchronously more than twice throughout the semester, please discuss this with me before doing so.

*Synchronous Online Students*

Online students who want to participate in the on-ground class synchronously can do so through Zoom. The classroom is set up so that you will be able to see my lecture slides and a broad view of the classroom. Synchronous participation through Zoom is entirely optional, but in any week that you participate in class via Zoom, you are not required to participate in the online discussion board. Like on-ground students, synchronous students will earn participation credit by attending class, participating in class discussions/activities, and asking questions. They can also use the online discussion boards to supplement their participation and engage in conversation with their asynchronous online classmates.

*Asynchronous Online Students*

Online students who cannot, or do not wish to, participate in class synchronously will earn participation credit by watching recorded lectures and using the online discussion boards. Each Wednesday morning, beginning August 30th, I will post a recorded version of my lectures for that week and open the weekly discussion board. Each discussion board will contain four parts. First, there will be an overarching discussion question for the week which you will be expected to answer in your initial post. Second, in your initial post, you will also be asked to reflect on the assigned readings and lecture for that week of class more informally. By informally, I mean you are free to take this portion of your response in any direction you would like as long as it is on topic. Third, at the end of your initial response, you will share your talking point with the rest of the class (more on that below). Finally, after you have completed your initial response, you are expected to engage in the discussion of your classmates’ talking points. Asynchronous students should watch my lecture(s) and post their initial response to the discussion board by 11:59pm each Sunday night. Asynchronous students should then complete the discussion board with additional responses and complete any other in-class activities that were assigned for that week by 11:59pm the following Tuesday. See my comments below about how I will be assessing participation, but as is the case with traditional in-person class participation, asynchronous online students are not required to answer/discuss all your classmates’ talking points each week. However, they are expected to read every post on a weekly basis much like they would listen to their classmates’ questions/comment in a traditional class. To get the most out of this class as an asynchronous student, you should be accessing the discussion board multiple times each week and should be reviewing the entire conversation at the end of each week. If you fail to seriously engage with my recorded lectures, the online discussion boards, and other activities, you are harming your own development and will take less away from this course than is available to you.

*Assessing Participation*

Each week you will receive a participation score ranging from 0 to 4 regardless of your method of participation. A score of 0 indicates no participation and a score of 4 indicates outstanding participation. Your final participation grade will constitute 20% of your final grade and will be calculated by averaging your 13 highest participation scores. This means your lowest score will be dropped. Please note when I assess participation, I consider the quality of your participation in addition to the quantity of your participation. In this sense, I am not simply counting the number of discussion board posts, questions, or comments you contributed to the class discussion. Instead, I will consider the content and quality of your participation. At the end of each week of class, I should be able to see that you have completed the assigned readings and that you are able to discuss the reading’s main findings as well as the material covered in my lectures in a critical manner. On Canvas you can find rubrics for how I will be evaluating participation. There is one rubric for asynchronous participation through the online discussion boards and a second rubric for in-person and synchronous participation. However, you will notice, the same metrics will be used to evaluate either form of participation. Failure to either attend class or participate in the asynchronous discussion board will result in a 0 for the week. Overall, participation is one of the most important elements of this class, but I have designed the course such that everyone can determine the best way to participate according to their individual schedule.

Talking Points

To help facilitate class discussions, each week, starting the second week of class, you will submit 1 talking point pertaining to the readings for that week. Talking points should be the most interesting questions, thoughts, arguments, or comments you have about the week's material. Talking points should not be restatements of discussions from previous weeks of class. They should be submitted in the form of a sentence or short paragraph. To receive credit for your talking points, you must submit them to **Canvas by 11:59 pm each Monday night and asynchronous students should restate their talking point at the end of this initial weekly discussion board post**. Please note you are submitting talking points for the readings that will be due, and which we will be discussing, in the upcoming week. For example, by September 4th, you will submit talking points pertaining to David Mayhew’s *The Electoral Connection* and by September 11th, you will submit talking points pertaining to congressional elections. Due to time constraints and the number of students in class, we will not cover all the talking points that have been submitted every week. However, submitting your talking points by the deadline, provided they are relatively fresh ideas not already addressed in discussions from previous weeks, is sufficient to receive credit, regardless of whether your talking point is used in class that week. Talking points will constitute 10% of your final grade and each of your talking points will be evaluated according to the following scale:

**0 points** = no talking point was submitted

**1 point** = talking point is unlikely to generate discussion because it is either off topic, a statement of fact, or an opinion/critique of a reading that is not fully explained or justified

**2 points** = talking point is likely to generate discussion

## In-class Activities/Homework

Throughout the semester, there will be several short (no more than 1-2 pages) in-class activities and homework assignments. The purpose of these assignments is for you to either prepare for an upcoming week of class or for you to reflect on content discussed in the previous class. Collectively, these short assignments will constitute 10% of your final grade and specific assignments/activities will be explained as they arise throughout the semester.

**Grading Scale**

Application Assignments: 40%

Final Exam: 20%

### Participation: 20%

Talking Points: 10%

In-class Activities: 10%

| Percent Range | Letter Grade |
| --- | --- |
| 100-93 | A |
| 92-90 | A- |
| 89-87 | B+ |
| 86-83 | B |
| 82-80 | B- |
| 79-77 | C+ |
| 76-73 | C |
| 72-70 | C- |
| 69-67 | D+ |
| 66-63 | D |
| 62-60 | D- |
| 59 and below | F |

## **Course Calendar**

Below is the course calendar with assigned readings and the due dates of major assignments. Please note this schedule is subject to change.

**Tuesday, August 29th: Class Introductions & Collective Action Problems**

*Asynchronous: 8/30 - 9/5*

Readings:

* Read the syllabus before coming to class.
* [Article 1 of the US Constitution](https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/constitution-transcript) (Recommended)
* Kernell, Samuel, Gary C. Jacobson, Thad Kousser, and Lynn Vavreck. 2016. *The Logic of American Politics*. 7th ed. CQ Press. (Chapter 1: The Logic of American Politics, pg. 8-35) (Recommended)

**Tuesday, September 5th: Legislators’ Goals and the Electoral Connection**

*Asynchronous: 9/6 - 9/12*

Readings:

* Mayhew, David R. 2004. *Congress: The Electoral Connection*. 2nd ed. New Haven: Yale University Press. (Chapter 1)
	+ I strongly recommend that graduate students read the entire book but do not require it since I cannot provide you will free access to the entire book. You can check out the book at a library, request the 2nd chapter through an ILL, or buy the book. The book is relatively cheap.
* Jacobson, Gary C. 2017. “The Electoral Connection, Then and Now.” In *Governing in a Polarized Age: Elections, Parties, and Political Representation in America*, eds. Alan S. Gerber and Eric Schickler. New York: Cambridge University Press, 35–64.

**Tuesday, September 12th: Congressional Elections**

*Asynchronous: 9/13 - 9/19*

Readings:

* Kosar, Kevin R. (Host), and Andrew B. Hall (Guest). 2022. “Are Elections Fueling Polarization in the House of Representatives?” <https://www.aei.org/podcast/are-elections-fueling-polarization-in-the-house-of-representatives-with-andrew-b-hall/>.
* Kamarck, Elaine C, and James Wallner. 2018. *Anticipating Trouble: Congressional Primaries and Incumbent Behavior*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution. R Street Policy Study.
* Thomsen, Danielle M. 2023. “Competition in Congressional Elections: Money versus Votes.” *American Political Science Review* 117(3): 675–91.
* Bennett, Geoff, and Matt Loffman. 2023. “A Look at Competitive House Seats as 2024 Campaign Takes Shape.” *PBS News Hour*. <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/a-look-at-competitive-house-seats-as-2024-campaign-takes-shape>. (Video – watch or read the transcript)
* Jacobson, Louis. 2023. “The 2024 Senate Landscape.” *U.S. News and World Report*. <https://www.usnews.com/news/elections/articles/2023-06-01/the-2024-senate-landscape>.

**Tuesday, September 19th: Representation in Congress 1 (Members of Congress & Their Constituents)**

*Asynchronous: 9/20 - 9/26*

Readings:

* Kosar, Kevin R. (Host), and Casey Burgat (Guest). 2023. “What Are the Job Descriptions of Representatives and Senators?” <https://www.aei.org/podcast/what-are-the-job-descriptions-of-representatives-and-senators-with-casey-burgat/>. (Podcast – listen or read the transcript)
* Dassonneville, Ruth, André Blais, Semra Sevi, and Jean-François Daoust. 2021. “How Citizens Want Their Legislator to Vote.” *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 46(2): 297–321. (\*This article is about representation is Canada, but I want you to think about how the theory might apply to legislatures in the US.)
* Fenno, Richard F. 1977. “US House Members in Their Constituencies: An Exploration.” *American Political Science Review* 71(3): 883–916.
* Bishin, Benjamin G. 2009. *Tyranny of the Minority: The Subconstituency Politics Theory of Representation*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press. (Chapter 2: The Subconstituency Politics Theory of Representation)
* Miler, Kristina. 2013. “How Constituent Contact Matters in the U.S. Congress.” *The Monkey Cage*. <http://themonkeycage.org/2013/04/how-constituent-contact-matters-in-the-u-s-congress/>.

**Tuesday, September 26th: Representation in Congress 2 (The Importance of Descriptive Representation)**

*Asynchronous: 9/27 – 10/3*

Readings:

* Rhinehart, Sarina, and Michael H. Crespin. 2020. “Women in Congress.” In *New Directions in Congressional Politics*, eds. Jamie L. Carson and Michael S. Lynch. Routledge, 67–86.
* Stout, Christopher T., Katherine Tate, and Meghan Wilson. 2021. “Does Black Representation Matter? A Review of Descriptive Representation for African Americans in Legislative Office.” *National Review of Black Politics* 2(1): 2–21.
* Grossmann, Matt (Host), Kris Miler (Guest), and Christopher Ellis (Guest). 2018. “Does Anyone Speak for the Poor in Congress?” <https://www.niskanencenter.org/does-anyone-speak-for-the-poor-in-congress/>. (Podcast)
* Brant, Hanna K., and L. Marvin Overby. 2023. “The Rainbow Wave in 2020: The LGBTQ+ Community and the Parth to Equitable Representation.” In *Identity Politics in US National Elections*, eds. Tauna S. Sisco, Jennifer C. Lucas, and Christopher J. Galdieri. Palgrave Macmillan, 83–100.
* Lowande, Kenneth, Melinda Ritchie, and Erinn Lauterbach. 2019. “Descriptive and Substantive Representation in Congress: Evidence from 80,000 Congressional Inquiries.” *American Journal of Political Science* 63(3): 644–59.
	+ I assign this article in several of my classes. If you have not already read it, I strongly recommend that you do this week.

**Tuesday, October 3rd: The Legislative Process in Congress**

*Asynchronous: 10/4 - 10/10*

Readings:

* Bell, Lauren Cohen. 2005. *The U.S. Congress: A Simulation for Students*. Wadsworth Cengage Learning. (Chapter 2: The Legislative Process)
* Curry, James M., and Frances E. Lee. 2020. “What Is Regular Order Worth? Partisan Lawmaking and Congressional Processes.” *The Journal of Politics* 82(2): 627–41.
* Kosar, Kevin R. (Host), and James M. Curry (Guest). 2022. “Are Members of the House of Representatives Legislating in the Dark?” <https://www.aei.org/podcast/are-members-of-the-house-of-representatives-legislating-in-the-dark-with-james-m-curry/>. (Podcast – listen or read the transcript)
* Reynolds, Molly E. 2020. “What Is the Senate Filibuster, and What Would It Take to Eliminate It?” *Brookings*. <https://www.brookings.edu/policy2020/votervital/what-is-the-senate-filibuster-and-what-would-it-take-to-eliminate-it/>.
* “Arguments for and against the Filibuster, 2021.” 2021. *Ballotpedia*. [https://ballotpedia.org/Arguments\_for\_and\_against\_the\_filibuster,\_2021](https://ballotpedia.org/Arguments_for_and_against_the_filibuster%2C_2021) (June 21, 2021).

**Tuesday, October 10th: Reserved for Democracy and Polarization Summit Co-Hosted by UIS & Work Week**

*Asynchronous: 10/11 – 10/17*

No formal class meeting or assignments this week. In-person and local online students are strongly encouraged to attend the Democracy and Polarization Summit co-hosted by UIS on October 9th and 10th. I will provide more information as the event gets closer. Regardless of whether you can attend this event, I strongly recommend that you use the time you would normally dedicate to class to work on Application Assignment #1 and if you are a graduate student, Application Assignment #4.

**Tuesday, October 17th: Leadership & Committees in Congress**

*Asynchronous: 10/18 – 10/24*

Readings:

* Groseclose, Tim, and David C. King. 2001. “Committee Theories Reconsidered.” In *Congress Reconsidered*, eds. Lawrence C. Dodd and Bruce I. Oppenheimer. Thousand Oaks, California: CQ Press.
* Kosar, Kevin R. (Host), and Maya Kornberg (Guest). 2023. “What Do Congressional Committees Do?” <https://www.aei.org/podcast/what-do-congressional-committees-do-with-maya-kornberg/>.
* Heitshusen, Valerie. 2019. *Party Leaders in the United States Congress, 1789-2019*. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service. <https://www.everycrsreport.com/reports/RL30567.html>.
* Green, Matthew N., and Douglas H. Harris. 2019. *Choosing the Leader: Leadership Elections in the U.S. House of Representatives*. Yale University Press. (Exerpt)
* Sinclair, Barbara. 2008. “Orchestrators of Unorthodox Lawmaking: Pelosi and McConnell in the 110th Congress.” *The Forum* 6(3).

Assignments:

* Application Assignment #1: District Profile (Due by 11:59pm)

**Tuesday, October 24th: Theories of Congressional Behavior (Lawmaking)**

*Asynchronous: 10/25 - 10/31*

Readings:

* Krehbiel, Keith. 2009. “Pivotal Politics: A Theory of US Lawmaking.” In *The American Congress Reader*, eds. Steven S Smith, Jason M. Roberts, and Ryan Vander Wielen. Cambridge University Press, 307–16.
* Daniel Butler. 2020. *Pivotal Politics: The Basics*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7LuAO3y_KSA>. (Video)
* Aldrich, John H., and David W. Rohde. 2000. “The Logic of Conditional Party Government: Revisiting the Electoral Connection.” <https://themonkeycage.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/aldrich-and-rohde.pdf>.
* Cox, Gary W., and Matthew D McCubbins. 2005. *Setting the Agenda: Responsible Party Government in the U.S. House of Representatives*. Cambridge University Press. (Chapter 2: Procedural Cartel Theory)

**Tuesday, October 31st: Polarization in Congress**

*Asynchronous: 11/1 - 11/7*

Readings:

* Barber, Michael, and Nolan McCarty. 2013. “Causes and Consequences of Polarization.” In *Negotiating Agreement in Politics*, eds. Jane Mansbridge and Cathie Jo Martin. Washington, D.C.: American Political Science Association, 19–53.
* Thomsen, Danielle M. 2014. “Ideological Moderates Won’t Run: How Party Fit Matters for Partisan Polarization in Congress.” *The Journal of Politics* 76(3): 786–97.
* Lee, Frances E. 2016. *Insecure Majorities: Congress and the Perpetual Campaign*. University of Chicago Press. (Chapter 3: The Logic of Confrontation)
* Kosar, Kevin R. (Host), and Frances E. Lee. (Guest) 2023. “Partisan Polarization: Is It Crippling Congress?” <https://www.aei.org/podcast/partisan-polarization-is-it-crippling-congress-with-frances-e-lee/>. (Podcast – listen or read the transcript)

**Tuesday, November 7th: Congressional Productivity: Getting Things Done**

*Asynchronous: 11/8 - 11/14*

Readings:

* Grossmann, Matt (Host), Patricia Kirkland (Guest), and Benjamin Schneer (Guest). 2019. “Are Divided Governments the Cause of Delays and Shutdowns?” <https://www.niskanencenter.org/are-divided-governments-the-cause-of-delays-and-shutdowns/>. (Podcast – listen or read the transcript)
* Binder, Sarah, and Frances Lee. 2013. “Making Deals in Congress.” In *Negotiating Agreement in Politics*, eds. Jane Mansbridge and Cathie Jo Martin. Washington, D.C.: American Political Science Association, 54–72.
* Volden, Craig, and Alan E Wiseman. 2021. *Being an Effective Lawmaker From Day One*. Center for Effective Lawmaking.
* Eatough, Mandi, and Jessica Preece. Working Paper. “Crediting Invisible Work (Horses): Congress and the Lawmaking Productivity Metric.” <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/6007a54f9c24b70ab4042efa/t/60c797cc467ba11090ee1d9e/1623693262179/LawProM_CreditingInvisibleWork_EatoughPreece.pdf>.

**Tuesday, November 14th: Congress and Other Political Actors**

*Asynchronous: 11/15 - 11/21*

Readings:

* Grossmann, Matt (Host), Mary Layton Atkinson (Guest), and John Lovett (Guest). 2021. “How Media Coverage of Congress Limits Policymaking.” <https://www.niskanencenter.org/how-media-coverage-of-congress-limits-policymaking/>.
* Kalla, Joshua L., and David E Broockman. 2016. “Campaign Contributions Facilitate Access to Congressional Officials: A Randomized Experiment.” *American Journal of Political Science* 60(3): 545–58.
* Box-Steffensmeier, Janet M., Dino P. Christenson, and Alison W. Craig. 2019. “Cue-Taking in Congress: Interest Group Signals from Dear Colleague Letters.” *American Journal of Political Science* 63(1): 163–80.

Assignments:

* Application Assignment #2: Bill Proposal & Dear Colleague Letter (Due by 11:59pm)

**Tuesday, November 21st: State Legislatures**

*Asynchronous: 11/22 - 11/28*

Readings:

* Squire, Peverill, and Gary Moncrief. 2020. *State Legislatures Today: Politics Under the Domes*. 3rd ed. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. (Chapter 3: The Changing Job of State Legislator)
* Kousser, Thad. 2008. “Term Limits and State Legislatures.” In *Democracy in the States: Experiments in Election Reform*, eds. Bruce E. Cain, Todd Donovan, and Caroline J. Tolbert. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution.
* Shipan, Charles R., and Craig Volden. 2012. “Policy Diffusion: Seven Lessons for Scholars and Practitioners.” *Public Administration Review* 72(6): 788–96.
* Bromley-Trujilo, Rebecca, and Mirya R. Holman. 2020. “Climate Change Policymaking in the States: A View at 2020.” *Publius: The Journal of Federalism* 50(3): 446–72.

**Tuesday, November 28th: The Illinois Legislature**

*Asynchronous: 11/29 - 12/5*

Readings:

* Illinois Constitution, [Article 4](https://www.ilga.gov/commission/lrb/con4.htm)
* Nowlan, James D., Samuel K. Gove, and Richard J. Winkel Jr. 2010. *Illinois Politics: A Citizen’s Guide*. University of Illinois Press. (Chapter 5: The Legislature)
* Moore, Brenden. 2023. “Pritzker Signs Budget, but Small Tweak Highlights Broad Veto Powers.” *The Pantagraph*. <https://pantagraph.com/news/state-and-regional/govt-and-politics/pritzker-signs-budget-but-small-tweak-highlights-broad-veto-powers/article_fae25a74-0554-11ee-b022-ffd65b8d48d2.html> (August 14, 2023).
* Additional readings to be determined based upon current events.

**Tuesday, December 5th: Legislative Staff & Reforms**

*Asynchronous: 12/6 - 12/12*

Readings:

* Review some of the resources provided by the National Conference of State Legislatures on [Working for America’s Legislatures](https://www.ncsl.org/legislators-staff/legislative-staff/legislative-staff-coordinating-committee/legislative-careers.aspx)
* Kosar, Kevin R. (Host), and Derek Kilmer (Guest). 2020. “Reforming Congress for the 21st Century.” <https://www.aei.org/podcast/reforming-congress-for-the-21st-century-with-rep-derek-kilmer/>. (Podcast – listen or read transcript)
* Kosar, Kevin R. (Host), and Mark Strand (Guest). 2021. “How Can a New Staffer Survive Congress?” <https://www.aei.org/podcast/how-can-a-new-staffer-survive-congress-with-mark-strand/>. (Podcast – listen or read transcript)
* Selin, Jennifer, and Hanna K. Brant. 2018. “Staff Have the Skills to Assist Congress, but They Need More Resources.” *LegBranch.org*. <https://www.legbranch.org/2018-10-9-staff-have-the-skills-to-assist-congress-but-they-need-more-resources/>.

Assignments:

* Application Assignment #3: Comparing Legislatures (Due by 11:59pm)

**Tuesday, December 12th: Final Exam**

Assignments:

* Final Exam (Due by 11:59pm)
* Graduate Students Only: Application Assignments #4 Evaluating a Theory (Due by 11:59pm)