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# PSC 517: Seminar on Congress

4 credits

Fall 2022

Online

**Instructor:**  Matthew Geras, Assistant Professor

**Office:**  PAC 358

**Office Hours:**  Mondays: 2:30pm-5:30pm central (in person or via Zoom)

By appointment (in person or via Zoom)

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## **Course Description**

This course is a graduate-level seminar designed to explore the breadth of what it means to study the US Congress and congressional behavior from the perspective of a political scientist. To begin the semester, we will consider the goals that motivate members of Congress and their behaviors as well as how these motives influence career paths, congressional elections, and representation in Congress. In the second part of the semester, we will consider Congress as an institution and cover factors such as lawmaking, the organization of Congress (ex: committees, leadership, and parties), and the outcomes and implications of congressional action, or in some cases inaction. Finally, we will conclude the semester, by discussing ways in which Congress might be reformed to improve its efficiency and/or the quality of representation it provides to the public, with a particular focus on the potential for filibuster reform. Since this is a seminar class, you can expect to read and write on a weekly basis.

## **Course Objectives**

Upon completion of the course, students will:

* Understand the breadth of what it means to study the US Congress and congressional behavior.
* Be able to critically analyze, and communicate the findings of, scientific research in the field of American politics with a particular focus on the subfields of legislative studies, electoral behavior, and representation.
* Learn how to synthesize and connect the arguments and findings from multiple research studies to build a collective understanding of the following themes in recent political science research: the motivations of members of Congress, congressional elections, representation in Congress, lawmaking, including distributive politics, the institutional organization of Congress, congressional oversight, and ways in which Congress might be reformed.

**Learning Objectives**

* Students will describe, and communicate the current state of research on different aspects of Congress and congressional behavior through the completion of reading synthesis assignments and…
* Students will complete a literature review on a topic pertaining to Congress, congressional behavior, congressional elections, or representation to demonstrate their ability to consume, synthesize, and critique scientific research.
* Students will contribute to class discussions through participation and the submission of discussion questions to demonstrate their ability to articulate, analyze, and critically discuss the findings of scientific research.
* Students will demonstrate their knowledge of course themes by completing a written comprehensive examination and several shorter quizzes.

## **Course Expectations**

Students will use the internet to access the Canvas course site. The course has a modular structure. Each module will consist of a set of assigned readings, discussions board questions, an optional synchronous Zoom meeting, and short video lecture(s) which will highlight some of the main arguments and themes from that week of readings. Additionally, students are expected to submit 2 discussion questions or other talking points for each week of readings, which will be used to help structure class discussions.

This course is designed on principles of collaborative learning and active participation. By registering for this online course, students commit to self-motivated study, participation in online course activities, and the submission of all assignments on time. Furthermore, they commit to accessing the course Web site and checking email at least four times a week and to devoting at least as much time to this online course as to a comparable traditional class on campus.

## **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 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 accommodations, 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/). For in-depth help, please contact one of our librarians directly: [View full list of librarians by subject](https://libguides.uis.edu/librarians).

**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](mailto: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 scientific journal articles, podcasts, news articles, book excerpts, and interviews.

## **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, videos, and graded assignments and participate in class on a weekly basis. As a best practice, please keep a backup copy of all assignments that you submit.

## **Adhere to assignment deadlines as outlined on Canvas and the course schedule. Since all due dates are clearly established at the start of the semester, late submissions may be subject to a penalty of 2% per day with a maximum penalty of 50%. Depending on the circumstances, I may waive this penalty if an extension is requested and granted prior to the due date of an assignment.**

## ***I recognize we are all living through unprecedented times. Many of us are currently facing, or may in the future face, unexpected challenges. 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.***

## **Course Communication**

The best way to contact me is through email or Canvas’s messenger function, but we can also schedule Zoom meetings and telephone consultations as needed. I typically respond to emails within 24 hours Monday through Thursday and within 48 hours on weekends. You will likely receive a response from me faster than this timeline. 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 can contact me again.

Office Hours:

My office hours are Mondays from 2:30pm to 5:30pm central and by appointment. During this time, I will be available both in person in PAC 358 and via Zoom. To participate in virtual office hours, see the Zoom link provided on Canvas. To set up an alternative meeting time, please send me an email with some suggested times. I encourage all students to attend office hours whenever they wish to discuss, or ask questions about, 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.

### 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.

## Online discussions, whether through Zoom or other platforms, present unique challenges. When on Zoom it is often difficult, or impossible, to read non-verbal cues and as a result, it is easy to accidently interrupt or talk over someone else. This is often unintentional and sometimes unavoidable, but I ask everyone to be mindful of this when we are in class. One trick I have found helpful in avoiding this is to remain muted until you have something to add to the conversation and then only unmute when you are speaking. Alternately, you can use the virtual raise-hand feature on Zoom to raise your hand as you would in an in-person class. I will do my best to manage these issues as they arise, but it is everyone’s responsibility to make sure our class discussions are civil so that everyone is able to participate and feels comfortable doing so.

## **Methods of Evaluation**

## You will be assessed on class participation, a cumulative final exam, several short quizzes, a literature review, two reading synthesis assignments, and the submission of weekly discussing questions or other talking points.

Final Exam

The final exam for this class will be a take-home essay examination modeled after the comprehensive exam you might take for PSC 590. The exam will consist of several questions that you should be able to answer by the end of the semester and you will be required to answer two of these questions. Your answer to each question should be about 5-7 pages in length and will rely on the assigned readings, class discussions, and your own thoughts on the question. A good answer with drawn upon the readings and discussions from multiple weeks of class and you must cite your sources of information as you would in a research paper. The exam will be distributed during the final week of class and will be **due on December 6th by 11:59pm**.

Unit Quizzes

There will be three short quizzes throughout the semester. Quizzes will ask students to demonstrate their understanding of the assigned readings and class discussions. Quizzes will be taken on Canvas and will consist of multiple choice, true/false, and short-answer questions. Collectively these quizzes will constitute 10% of your final grade with your lowest score being dropped from your average. A schedule for these quizzes can be seen below:

Quiz 1: Goals, Elections, & Representation Modules 1-5

Quiz 2: Lawmaking & Polarization Modules 6-8

Quiz 3: Organization & Outcomes of Congress Modules 9-12

Literature Review

You will write a literature review that examines a central research question or controversy concerning Congress. A literature review is a critical part of any research paper because it tells the reader how your research connects to, and builds off of, past research on the topic. This means within your literature review you should analyze how, and how well, the existing literature has addressed the question or controversy you have selected and then discuss ways in which future research could shed new light on the question or controversy.

Your literature review is **due by 11:59pm on November 15th** and you should have your topic approved by me no later than **October 25th**. To get your topic approved, all you need to do is send me a short email explaining your topic. When selecting your topic, make sure it is not too broad. For example, congressional elections or congressional committees is too broad, but you could write your literature review on the questions “when are congressional incumbents most likely to face a primary challenger?” or “what factors determine committee assignments in Congress?”

When writing your literature review, you are welcome to start with readings assigned in this class, or another class, but you must do your own research to find additional sources related to your topic. This means you can continue to research a topic you have investigated previously, but you must collect and analyze new sources and you cannot simply submit work you completed in a previous class. Overall, you should be analyzing and synthesizing at least 15 to 20 sources total and your literature review should be no more than 10 pages double spaced.

A good literature review will tell the reader what is already known about your topic and in some cases, how we know it. While doing this requires some summary of past research, a good literature review brings together and synthesizes past research in a way that is most relevant to the topic at hand. As a result, your literature review should not simply be a string of paragraphs where each paragraph provides a detailed summary of an individual piece of past research. In fact, organizing your literature review in such a way where each paragraph is about an individual source is generally a bad idea and will result in a lower grade on this assignment. Instead, you should be making connections between individual pieces of past research and presenting this information in an organized manner that tells a story of how the literature has developed and changed over time. This may require you to write lengthier summaries about a few pieces of literature that are key to your topic, but for the most part, you should be talking about past research in the context of what it means to the literature as a whole and the question that motivated your interest in the topic.

If you are looking for examples of literature reviews, I recommend starting with many of the assigned readings for this class. Additionally, you can find more information on how to write a good literature review on the [Center for Academic Success’ website.](https://www.uis.edu/cas/thelearninghub/writing/handouts/research-methods/literature-review/)

Reading Syntheses

The ability to synthesize and analyze a body of research is a critical skill for graduate students to develop. You will be required to complete two reading synthesis assignments over the course of the semester. For each assignment, you will select a module and either write approximately 4 to 5 double-spaced pages or record a 10 to 12-minute presentation synthesizing and analyzing the readings from that module. I strongly encourage you to submit your reading synthesis assignments during the week in which we discuss the module you are analyzing. This will help you to keep the readings and their arguments fresh in your mind. However, the official deadlines are November 1st and November 29th. 

Each of your assignments should contain the following sections.

*Section 1: Summary (~1-2 pages)*

Begin your reading synthesis by briefly summarizing the readings’ arguments and findings. This section should consider what the readings tell us about the research questions under observation and/or the theme(s) for that module.

*Section 2: Analysis (~2-4 pages)*

After summarizing the readings, you need to analyze them in some way. A good analysis can take many different forms, but here are some questions you might consider in this section:

* Are you convinced by the readings’ theories and findings? Why or why not?
* How do the readings agree/disagree and why?
* When the readings do disagree, which readings seem the most accurate? Why?
* Do you have any theoretical or methodological critiques of any of the readings? Why?
* Do the readings fail to answer specific questions and if so, how might future research consider these questions?
* How well do the readings fit together? Why do you believe this to be the case?

You likely will not have the space or time to answer all these questions, but your analysis should be more than further summary of the readings. Additionally, it is okay if your synthesis does not cover every reading that was assigned during the module, but it should certainty engage multiple readings. You are allowed to include sources that were not assigned if you think they will help you support the arguments/claims made in your analysis.

*Section 3: References*

Include a reference list for all the sources used in your analysis, regardless of whether they were assigned readings for class. Additionally, make sure you cite your sources of information in the text where necessary.

Participation

Since this is a seminar class, I expect students to actively participate in class on a weekly basis. You have two options for participating in class. You can participate in a weekly asynchronous online discussion board, or you can participate in a weekly synchronous Zoom meeting. You are not required to participate in class via the same method each week, for example, you may attend the Zoom meeting during Module 1 but use the online discussion board during Module 2.

*Zoom Meetings*

Zoom meetings will take place on Tuesday evenings from 6:30pm to 8:30pm central. You can find the Zoom link for our synchronous meetings on Canvass. The weekly Zoom meetings are entirely optional, but in any week that you participate in the Zoom meeting, you are not required to participate in the online discussion board. Beyond attendance, to earn participation through the Zoom meeting, you should be actively engaged in the class discussion.

*Online Discussion Boards*

Each Tuesday night following the synchronous Zoom meeting, I will post 5 to 8 discussion questions on the discussion board for that module. The online discussion board will remain open until 11:59pm the following Monday night. You can participation in the discussion board at any point throughout the week, but you will get the most out of the discussion board if you are reading and contributing posts at several different points throughout the week.

*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 will 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 tell that you have completed the assigned readings and that you are able to discuss the reading’s main findings and the material covered in my module overviews 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 synchronous participation. However, you will notice, the same metrics will be used to evaluate either form of participation. Failure to either attend our weekly Zoom meeting 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 you will submit 2 talking points 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**. Due to time constraints, 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 points are used that week. 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 and demonstrates understanding of the assigned reading(s)

**Grading Scale**

Final Exam 20%

Quizzes 10%

Literature Review 20%

Reading Synthesis Assignments (2 x 7.5%) 15%

### Participation 20%

Talking Points 15%

| 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.

**Class Introduction:**

Zoom Meeting: Tuesday, August 23 (6:30pm)

**Module 1: Goals, Political Ambition, & Congressional Careers**

Zoom Meeting: Tuesday, August 30 (6:30pm)

Discussion Board Due: Tuesday, September 6 (11:59pm) \*due to Labor Day

Readings:

* Mayhew, David R. 2004. *Congress: The Electoral Connection*. 2nd ed. New Haven: Yale University Press. (Chapter 1)
* Harbridge, Laurel, and Neil Malhotra. 2011. “Electoral Incentives and Partisan Conflict in Congress: Evidence from Survey Experiments.” *American Journal of Political Science* 55(3): 494–510.
* Eckman, Sarah J, and Amber Hope Wilhelm. 2021. *Congressional Careers: Service Tenure and Patterns of Member Service, 1789-2021*. Congressional Research Service. <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/misc/R41545.pdf>.
* Brant, Hanna K., and L. Marvin Overby. 2021. “Congressional Career Decisions in the 2018 Congressional Midterm Elections.” *Congress & the Presidency* 48(1): 8–24.
* Victor, Jennifer Nicoll. 2011. “Legislating Versus Campaigning: The Legislative Behavior of Higher Office-Seekers.” *American Politics Research* 39(1): 3–31.

**Module 2: Congressional Elections**

Zoom Meeting: Tuesday, September 6 (6:30pm)

Discussion Board Due: Monday, September 12 (11:59pm)

Readings:

* Jacobson, Gary C. 2015. “It’s Nothing Personal: The Decline of the Incumbency Advantage in US House Elections.” *Journal of Politics* 77(3): 861–73.
* Kamarck, Elaine C, and James Wallner. 2018. *Anticipating Trouble: Congressional Primaries and Incumbent Behavior*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution. R Street Policy Study. <https://www.brookings.edu/research/anticipating-trouble-congressional-primaries-and-incumbent-behavior/>.
* Jewitt, Caitlin E., and Sarah A. Treul. 2014. “Competitive Primaries and Party Division in Congressional Elections.” *Electoral Studies* 35: 140–49.
* Grossmann, Matt (host), Hans J. G. Hassell, and Robert G. Boatright. 2018. “Congressional Primaries: How the Parties Fight Insurgents.” <https://www.niskanencenter.org/episode-9-congressional-primaries-parties-fight-insurgents/>. (Podcast- listen or read the transcript)
* Porter, Rachel A., and Sarah Treul. Working Paper. “Reevaluating Experience in Congressional Primary Elections.” <https://rachelporter.org/files/amateurs_final.pdf>.

**Module 3: Redistricting**

Zoom Meeting: Tuesday, September 13 (6:30pm)

Discussion Board Due: Monday, September 19 (11:59pm)

Readings:

* Eckman, Sarah J. 2021. *Apportionment and Redistricting Process for the U.S. House of Representatives*. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service. <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R45951>.
* Navarro, Aaron. 2022. “All 50 States Have Finished Their Congressional Maps - What Do They Say about the 2022 Election?” <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/redistricting-congressional-maps-2022-election-takeaways/>.
* Mann, Thomas E. 2006. “Polarizing the House of Representatives: How Much Does Gerrymandering Matter?” In *Red and Blue Nation? Characteristics and Causes of America’s Polarized Politics*, eds. Pietro S. Nivola and David W. Brady. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution.
* Henderson, John A., Brian T. Hamel, and Aaron M. Goldzimer. 2018. “Gerrymandering Incumbency: Does Nonpartisan Redistricting Increase Electoral Competition?” *Journal of Politics* 80(3): 1011–16.
* Canon, David T. 2022. “Race and Redistricting.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 25(1): 509–28.
* Gimpel, James G, and Laurel Harbridge-Yong. 2020. “Conflicting Goals of Redistricting: Do Districts That Maximize Competition Reckon with Communities of Interest?” *Election Law Journal: Rules, Politics, and Policy* 19(4): 451–71.

**Module 4: Representation 1: Home Style & Legislative Reputations**

Zoom Meeting: Tuesday, September 20 (6:30pm)

Discussion Board Due: Monday, September 26 (11:59pm)

Readings:

* Fenno, Richard F. 1977. “US House Members in Their Constituencies: An Exploration.” *American Political Science Review* 71(3): 883–916.
* Miler, Kristina. 2016. “Legislative Responsiveness to Constituency Change.” *American Politics Research* 44(5): 816–43.
* Bernhard, William, and Tracy Sulkin. 2018. *Legislative Style*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. (Chapter 9)
* McNally, Katrina F. 2021. *Representing the Disadvantaged: Group Interests and Legislator Reputation in US Congress*. Cambridge University Press. (Chapter 3)
* McKay, Amy Melissa. 2018. “Fundraising for Favors? Linking Lobbyist-Hosted Fundraisers to Legislative Benefits.” *Political Research Quarterly* 71(4): 869–80.

**Module 5: Representation 2: Descriptive Representation**

Zoom Meeting: Tuesday, September 27 (6:30pm)

Discussion Board Due: Monday, October 3 (11:59pm)

Readings:

* 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.
* Montoya, Celeste M., Christina Bejarano, Nadia E. Brown, and Sarah Allen Gershon. 2022. “The Intersectional Dynamics of Descriptive Representation.” *Politics & Gender* 18(2): 483–512.
* Snell, Paul. 2017. “Equality in the House: The Congressional LGBT Equality Caucus and the Substantive Representation of LGBTQ Interests.” In *LGBTQ Politics*, eds. Marla Brettschneider, Susan Burgess, and Christine Keating. New York: New York University Press, 309–33.
* Miler, Kristina C. 2018. *Poor Representation: Congress and the Politics of Poverty in the United States*. New York: Cambridge University Press. (Chapter 6: Surrogate Champions for the Poor)
* Roberts, Damon C, and Jennifer Wolak. 2022. “Do Voters Care about the Age of Their Elected Representatives?” *Political Behavior*.

**Module 6: Textbook & Unorthodox Lawmaking**

Zoom Meeting: Tuesday, October 4 (6:30pm)

Discussion Board Due: Monday, October 10 (11:59pm)

Readings:

* Bell, Lauren Cohen. 2005. *The U.S. Congress: A Simulation for Students*. Wadsworth Cengage Learning. (Chapter 2: The Legislative Process) (Recommended if you feel like you need an overview of Congress’s 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.
* Curry, James M., and Frances E. Lee. 2019. “Non-Party Government: Bipartisan Lawmaking and Party Power in Congress.” *Perspectives on Politics* 17(1): 47–65.
* Bussing, Austin, and Sarah A. Treul. 2021. “Majority Party Agenda Setting: Picking Fights or Avoiding Them?” *Legislative Studies Quarterly* Online First.
* Curry, James M. 2015. *Legislating in the Dark: Information and Power in the House of Representatives*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. (Chapter 4: Turning Out the Lights: Restricting Information)
* Meinke, Scott. 2021. “How the House Rules Committee Started Multitasking (and Made House Lawmaking Even More Centralized).” *LegBranch*. <https://www.legbranch.org/how-the-house-rules-committee-started-multitasking-and-made-house-lawmaking-even-more-centralized/>.

**Module 7: Theories of Lawmaking**

Zoom Meeting: Tuesday, October 11 (6:30pm)

Discussion Board Due: Monday, October 17 (11:59pm)

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.
  + If you are struggling to understand the Pivotal Politics theory as a formal model, check out this video: Daniel Butler. 2020. *Pivotal Politics: The Basics*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7LuAO3y_KSA> (July 19, 2021).
* 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)
* Lebo, Matthew J., Adam J. McGlynn, and Gregory Koger. 2007. “Strategic Party Government: Party Influence in Congress, 1789–2000.” *American Journal of Political Science* 51(3): 464–81.
* Holt, Jacob. 2022. “What Explains Party Unity? A Test of Competing Theories.” *Party Politics*: Online First.

**Module 8: Ideology, & Polarization in Congress**

Zoom Meeting: Tuesday, October 18 (6:30pm)

Discussion Board Due: Monday, October 24 (11:59pm)

Readings:

* Ellenberg, Jordan. 2001. “Growing Apart: The Mathematical Evidence for Congress’ Growing Polarization.” *Slate*. <https://slate.com/human-interest/2001/12/mapping-congress-growing-polarization.html>.
  + Read more about DW-Nominate Scores here: <https://voteview.com/about>
    - The “Chamber” tab will allow you to look at polarization across congresses
* 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)
* Russell, Annelise. 2021. “Minority Opposition and Asymmetric Parties? Senators’ Partisan Rhetoric on Twitter.” *Political Research Quarterly* 74(3): 615–27.

**Module 9: Congressional Committees**

Zoom Meeting: Tuesday, October 25 (6:30pm)

Discussion Board Due: Monday, October 31 (11:59pm)

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.
* Ryan, Josh M. 2021. “The Partisanship of House Committees and Member Self-Selection.” *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 46(4): 995–1029.
* Francis, Katherine, and Brittany Bramlett. 2017. “Precongressional Careers and Committees: The Impact of Congruence.” *American Politics Research* 45(5): 755–89.
* Ban, Pamela, Ju Yeon Park, and Hye Young You. 2022. “How Are Politicians Informed? Witnesses and Information Provision in Congress.” *American Political Science Review*: 1–18.
* Lewallen, Jonathan. 2017. “Congressional Attention and Opportunity Structures: The Select Energy Independence and Global Warming Committee.” *Review of Public Policy*.

Assignments:

* Literature Review Topic Approval (Due: 10/25)

**Module 10: Leadership in Congress**

Zoom Meeting: Tuesday, November 1 (6:30pm)

Discussion Board Due: Monday, November 7 (11:59pm)

Readings:

* Heitshusen, Valerie. 2019. *Party Leaders in the United States Congress, 1789-2019*. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service. <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/misc/RL30567.pdf>.
* Green, Matthew N., and Douglas B. Harris. 2019. *Choosing the Leader: Leadership Elections in the U.S. House of Representatives*. Yale University Press. (Chapter 7: Conclusion)
* Green, Matthew, and Douglas B. Harris. 2020. “Maintaining the Organizational Cartel: How Nancy Pelosi Won Election as Speaker of the House.” Rochester, NY. SSRN Scholarly Paper. <https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=3638134>.
* Fram, Alan, and Mary Clare Jalonick. 2021. “House GOP Elects Trump Defender Elise Stefanik to No. 3 Post.” *PBS NewsHour*. <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/house-gop-elects-trump-defender-elise-stefanik-to-no-3-post>.
* Bekafigo, Marija Anna. 2014. “How Is Leadership Exercised in the US House? Party Leaders’ and Committee Chairs’ ‘Actions.’” *Social Science History* 38(3–4): 291–310.
* Grossmann, Matt, Mary Layton Atkinson, and John Lovett. 2021. “How Media Coverage of Congress Limits Policymaking.” <https://www.niskanencenter.org/how-media-coverage-of-congress-limits-policymaking/>. (Podcast- listen or read the transcript)

Assignments:

* Reading Synthesis 1 (Due: 11/1)

**Module 11: Legislative Productivity**

Zoom Meeting: Wednesday, November 9 (6:30pm) \*due to Election Day

Discussion Board Due: Monday, November 14 (11:59pm)

Readings:

* Volden, Craig, and Alan E Wiseman. 2013. “Legislative Effectiveness and Representation.” In *Congress Reconsidered*, eds. Lawrence C. Dodd and Bruce I. Oppenheimer. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 237–64.
  + If you are interested, you can see LES scores here: [The Lawmakers](https://thelawmakers.org/find-representatives)
* 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>.
* 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.
* Sulkin, Tracy, Paul Testa, and Kaye Usry. 2015. “What Gets Rewarded? Legislative Activity and Constituency Approval.” *Political Research Quarterly* 68(4): 690–702.
* Thomsen, Danielle, Sarah Treul, Craig Volden, and Alan E Wiseman. Working Paper. “Turning Legislative Effectiveness into Electoral Success.” <https://thelawmakers.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Center-for-Effective-Lawmaking-Primary-Effectiveness-Working-Paper.pdf>.

**Module 12: Distributive Politics**

Zoom Meeting: Tuesday, November 15 (6:30pm)

Discussion Board Due: Monday, November 21 (11:59pm)

Readings:

* Saturno, James V. 2020. *A Brief Overview of the Congressional Budget Process*. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service.
* Desjardins, Lisa, Matt Loffman, and Ian Couzens. 2021. “What Is an Earmark? Examining the Pros and Cons of the Congressional Provision.” *PBS NewsHour*. <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/what-is-an-earmark-examining-the-pros-and-cons-of-the-congressional-provision>. (Watch the video or read the transcript)
* Hudak, John. 2021. “Earmarks Are Back, and Americans Should Be Glad.” *Brookings*. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/fixgov/2021/03/17/earmarks-are-back-and-americans-should-be-glad/>.
* Lazarus, Jeffrey. 2010. “Giving the People What They Want? The Distribution of Earmarks in the U.S. House of Representatives.” *American Journal of Political Science* 54(2): 338–53.
* Mills, Russell W., Nicole Kalaf-Hughes, and Jason A. MacDonald. 2016. “Agency Policy Preferences, Congressional Letter-Marking and the Allocation of Distributive Policy Benefits\*.” *Journal of Public Policy* 36(4): 547–71.
* Craig, Alison W. 2021. “It Takes a Coalition: The Community Impacts of Collaboration.” *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 46(1): 11–48.

Assignments:

* Literature Review (Due: 11/15)

**Module 13: Congressional Oversight**

Zoom Meeting: Tuesday, November 22 (6:30pm)

Discussion Board Due: Monday, November 28 (11:59pm)

Readings:

* Oleszek, Walter J. 2010. *Congressional Oversight: An Overview*. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service. <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/misc/R41079.pdf>.
* Bolton, Alexander, and Sharece Thrower. 2016. “Legislative Capacity and Executive Unilateralism.” *American Journal of Political Science* 60(3): 649–63.
* Lowande, Kenneth, and Rachel Augustine Potter. 2021. “Congressional Oversight Revisited: Politics and Procedure in Agency Rulemaking.” *The Journal of Politics* 83(1): 401–8.
* Selin, Jennifer L., and Caylie Milazzo. 2021. “The Law: ‘If Men Were Angels’: The Legal Dynamics of Overseeing the Executive Branch.” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 51(2): 426–49.
* Fowler, Linda L. 2021. “The Continued Decline of Congressional Oversight of U.S. Foreign Policy.” In *Congress and U.S. Foreign Policy: Activism, Assertiveness, and Acquiescence in a Polarized Era*, eds. James M. Scott and Ralph G. Carter. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

**Module 14: Reforming Congress (with Special Attention to the Filibuster)**

Zoom Meeting: Tuesday, November 29 (6:30pm)

Discussion Board Due: Monday, December 5 (11:59pm)

Readings:

* Rubin, Ruth Bloch. 2020. “Lessons from the History of Reform.” In *Congress Overwhelmed: The Decline in Congressional Capacity and Prospects for Reform*, eds. Timothy M. LaPira, Lee Drutman, and Kevin R. Kosar. University of Chicago Press, 255–67.
* Furnas, Alexander C., and Timothy M. LaPira. 2020. *Congressional Brain Drain: Legislative Capacity in the 21st Century*. New America. <http://newamerica.org/political-reform/reports/congressional-brain-drain/>.
* Curry, James M., and Frances E. Lee. 2021. “One Obstacle among Many: The Filibuster and Majority Party Agendas.” *The Forum* 19(4): 685–708.
* Grossmann, Matt (host), Molly E. Reynolds, and James Wallner. 2018. “Rules Around the Senate Filibuster.” <https://www.niskanencenter.org/episode-7-rules-around-senate-filibuster/>. (Podcast- listen or read the transcript)
* Gould, Jonathan S, Kenneth A Shepsle, and Matthew C Stephenson. 2021. “Democratizing the Senate from Within.” *Journal of Legal Analysis* 13(1): 502–57.

Assignments:

* Reading Synthesis 2 (Due: 11/29)
* Final Exam (Due: 12/6)