

POLI 3310-001: The Legislative Process
Spring 2020 | TR 11:00 AM - 12:15 PM | Haley 2352

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Office Hours:	TR 9:00 AM—10:30 AM; By appointment (email me)		

Overview, Objectives, and Outcomes

The single most powerful political institution in the American political system is the United States Congress. The Founders intended for it to be the centerpiece of American democracy, devoting 2266 of the 4365 in the Constitution to Article I, which establishes Congress. Lee Hamilton, a former member of the House of Representatives from Indiana, once remarked that “Congress has few equals in its ability to shape the lives of Americans and influence the direction and success of our country.” Clearly, the institution matters!

What is fascinating, then, is how Congress uses, or more often does *not* use, this power. The collectively powerful institution divides its authority among 535 individual members in two chambers, each one with their own wants, needs, desires, and constituencies. These diverse interests have an overwhelming effect on the production of legislation in Congress (what we might call “lawmaking”). We will seek to understand this paradox through this course.

First, we will examine the Constitutional basis for the power of Congress. This includes an understanding of the colonial experience (under a foreign monarch) and the failed legislature of the Articles of Confederation. Second, we will examine how Congress and its members interact with each branch of government. Last, we will work to understand the effects of the changing political parties on the institution of Congress. We will understand the effect of these changes from a broad theoretical perspective. Through each broad question, we will cover basic Congressional facts: how members are elected and selected, basics of campaigns and elections, the creation of legislation, and Congress contrasted with the many other smaller legislatures in the United States.

Student Learning Outcomes: by the end of the course, you should understand how and why members of Congress and the institution overall acts the way they do, given the potential power of the office. You should be able to observe and understand all parts of a Congressional election, and you should be able to thoughtfully consider the actions of Congress. You should sufficiently understand the American Congress so that you feel qualified to participate in politics as an active and informed citizen. Through all, you should think critically and skeptically, as a scientist.

Official catalog description: The Legislative Process. (3). LEC. 3. Principles, procedures, and problems of lawmaking in the United States; special attention to Congress and the state legislatures.

Prerequisites

Any one of: POLI 1090, POLI 1093, POLI 1097, PHIL 1090, PHIL 1093, or PHIL 1097.

Expectations

College is an environment in which you learn how to manage your time and set your priorities. I do not take attendance. There is, however, a strong correlation between course attendance and performance (not to mention that a substantial portion of exam material is drawn from lectures). Part of your grade will also come exclusively from in-class quizzes. If you choose to come to class, you should do so responsibly. I fully expect that you will have done any assigned readings before coming to class. Class is much more interesting when you engage with both your instructor and the material. I also expect that you make a reasonable effort to maintain classroom decorum by refraining from reading newspapers, doing crossword puzzles, sleeping, texting, or playing on Facebook (or whatever social network/game/trend that I'm oblivious to). Please silence all cell phones. These ideas are formally outlined in the Auburn University Classroom Behavior policy: see tinyurl.com/au-st-pol for more details. Consistent with Auburn University policy, I encourage class attendance from all students.

Text

I'm trying something new: I'm not assigning a textbook. I'm going to ask you to read weekly articles, selections from Wikipedia, news articles, and other selections to help supplement our classroom discussion. Please do these readings. If the readings are a scholarly article or book chapter, I will post them on Canvas.

Assignments

The course is divided into the following components:

In-class quizzes (two)	7.5% (each)
Midterm examination	30%
Final examination	30%
Annotated bibliography	25%
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Total	100%

In order, those components are ...

In-class quizzes: each week, you are assigned reading. Most weeks, this will be supplemented with academic (as in written by political scientists) articles on the nature of lawmaking. You are expected to do these readings and to contribute to the class discussion around them. As an extra incentive to do the readings, there will be unannounced quizzes at least three times through the semester. They will cover straightforward questions from the readings. *Only your two highest grades will count toward your final grade.* These quizzes are also meant to be useful material to study for the exams.

Midterm examination: March 5 (Thursday), during class. We will discuss the midterm exam in detail as the date approaches.

Final examination: April 29 (Wednesday), 12:00 PM to 2:30 PM. We will discuss the final exam in detail as the date approaches.

Annotated bibliography: it is essential to learn how to synthesize and report data and findings. You are going to practice that skill in this class through an annotated bibliography. Broadly, this means finding the most relevant *political science* articles on a research question, summarizing the articles individually, and then *briefly* summarizing the findings *across* the articles.

Since our class concerns lawmaking, so should your research question. Specifically, you are required to gather articles that answer *one* of the following questions:

1. What determines public approval of Congress?
2. Do parties matter in the production of laws in Congress?
3. What affects how “rules” are used in the House of Representatives?
4. What affects the productivity of state legislatures?
5. What affects the productivity of the national legislature?
6. Who is more powerful in the construction of legislation: the president or Congress?

Note that you are expected to review the most important literature in your selected area. You should be looking for work that is highly cited (use Google Scholar [scholar.google.com] to get citation counts on your articles). You are expected to have at least *ten* articles reviewed in your annotated bibliography. At a minimum, all references must be shown relevant to the research question, well described, and the entries should be formatted as below.

A bibliography is a list of sources and articles that are relevant to a question. An annotated bibliography expands on this by providing a short summary of each individual source. Specifically, I want your summary to include:

- A one-sentence summary of the most important findings from the article,
- A brief statement of the research design,
- Any specific hypotheses from the article,
- The data used in the article,
- The main findings of the article, and
- A one-sentence summary how these findings relate to your research question.

If it isn't obvious: you must read the article to be able to write the summary. I am aware that research articles usually begin with an abstract that summarizes the article. Note that I want a more in-depth summary of the article than the abstract provides. *If you plagiarize any portion of any abstract, you will receive a zero on the entire assignment.*

A rough draft of the annotated bibliography (that includes at least five sources) is due on March 26 (Thursday). It is worth 5% of the 25% total. You will receive extensive revisions on this rough

draft that should guide you towards the final product. The final assignment is due on April 23 (Thursday).

You will receive a rubric that gives an example of an annotated bibliography entry, as well as recommendations for finding articles, within the first few weeks of class.

Makeups and Grades

Makeup assignments/examinations will only be offered to those with a University excused absence, which can be found at tinyurl.com/au-st-pol. It is your responsibility to ensure that your absence is covered by the University, and it is your responsibility to comply with all policies. These policies require that you notify me of your absence prior to the date of absence if such notification is feasible, but within one week from the missed class. Your makeup examination must be scheduled within two weeks of this notification (though I recommend much, much earlier). If I need additional information on your absence (doctor's notes, for instance), you must provide this additional documentation within one week of the last date of the absence. Note that this policy also allows for makeup examinations for reasons deemed appropriate by the instructor. If you do not have a University excused absence, and you are going to miss an examination, it is much easier for me to work with you if you notify me promptly, especially if you can provide some sort of documentation.

89.5-100:	A
79.5-89.49:	B
69.5-79.49:	C
59.5-69.49:	D
59.49↓:	F

I use the standard Auburn University grading scale. To maintain fairness, I do not change grades under any circumstances except when I make a mathematical error in computing your grade. There is a grade calculator at tinyurl.com/3310gradecal. There is no extra credit. All grades will be posted to Canvas.

Contacting Me

I'm in Haley every day, but especially during my listed office hours. I check my email very, very regularly. If you want to get in touch with me through email, I ask that you follow three guidelines when attempting to contact me. First: include the course number and section number [3310-001] in the subject of your email. Your email will almost certainly get lost in the abyss if it is missing this information. Second: wait at least 48 hours, not including weekends, to send a second email. I promise I will get to it, but it may not be immediate. Third: email me only from your Auburn University official email address. In the event that I need to contact you, it will almost certainly be at your @auburn.edu email address. You should check this email often!

Student Academic Honesty

Auburn University is a institution committed to integrity and honor. It is your job as a University citizen to uphold those values. I will not tolerate any cheating or plagiarism, broadly defined as using unauthorized aids during examinations or attempting to represent someone else's work as your own. You are not as sly as you think you are. With hundreds of heads facing forward, it is extremely easy to tell who is working alone and who is not. Be aware that academic dishonesty can lead directly to failing the course and being referred to the Academic Honesty Committee. Penalties include expulsion from Auburn, as per Chapter 1202 of Title XII. For additional information visit tinyurl.com/au-st-pol.

Emergency Contingency

If normal class is disrupted due to illness, emergency, or crisis situation, the syllabus and other course plans and assignments may be modified to allow completion of the course. If this occurs, an addendum to your syllabus and/or course assignments will replace the original materials.

Students with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please electronically submit your approved accommodations through AU Access and make an individual appointment with the me during the first week of classes (or as soon as possible if accommodations are needed immediately). If you have not established accommodations through the Office of Accessibility, but need accommodations, make an appointment with the Office of Accessibility, 1228 Haley Center, 844-2096 (V/TT).

Any requests or arrangements made with the instructor in person must be followed up with an official email request for documentation. If you believe you may need an accommodation, it is your responsibility to secure it before the first exam.

Copyrighted Materials

The lectures, presentations (including slides), readings, and exams for this course are copyrighted, so you do not have the right to copy and distribute them. This includes recording class lectures.

Course Outline

Week 1 (January 9): Introduction

- *No reading*

Week 2 (January 14 - 16): Overview, Introduction, and the Constitutional Design of Congress

- <http://tinyurl.com/hate-cong>
- The Constitution, Article I. constitutionus.com.

Week 3 (January 21 - 23): Constitutional Design and Representatives' Minds

- Mayhew, Chapter 1.
- The Constitution, Article I. constitutionus.com.

Week 4 (January 28 - 30): More Motivations, Decisionmaking, and "Homestyle"

- Fenno, Richard F. 1977. "US House Members in Their Constituencies: An Exploration." *American Political Science Review* 71(3 September): 883-917.
- Polsby, Nelson W. 1968. "The Institutionalization of the US House of Representatives." *American Political Science Review* 62(1 March): 144-168.

January 29 (Wednesday): 15th Class Day (last day to drop with no grade assignment).

Week 5 (February 4 - 6): Rationality and Spatial Models of Congress

- Pivotal Politics. http://wikisum.com/w/Krehbiel:_Pivotal_politics.
- Riker, William H. 1980. "Implications from the Disequilibrium of Majority Rule for the Study of Institutions." *American Political Science Review* 74(2 June): 432-446.

Week 6 (February 11 - 13): Congress and the Other Branches

- Bond, Jon R., Richard Fleisher, and B. Dan Wood. 2003. "The Marginal and Time-Varying Effect of Public Approval on Presidential Success in Congress." *The Journal of Politics* 65(1 February): 92-110.
- Veto Bargaining. http://wikisum.com/w/Cameron:_Veto_bargaining.

Week 7 (February 18 - 20): Regular Process: Budgeting and War

- Howell, William G. and Jon C. Pevehouse. 2005. "Presidents, Congress, and the Use of Force." *International Organization* 59(Winter): 209-232.
- Marshall, Bryan W. and Brandon C. Prins. 2011. "Power or Posturing? Policy Availability and Congressional Influence on U.S. Presidential Decisions to Use Force." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 41(3 September): 521-545.

February 26 (Wednesday): Mid-semester grades posted.

Week 8 (February 25 - 27): Committees in Congress

- Shepsle, Kenneth A. and Barry R. Weingast. 1994. "Positive Theories of Congressional Institutions." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 19(2 May): 149-179.

Week 9 (March 3 - 5): Midterm Week

March 5 (Thursday): Midterm Exam.

March 5 (Thursday): 41st Class Day (deadline to request moving final exam).

Week 9.5 (March 10 - 12): No Class (Spring Break)

Week 10 (March 17 - 19): Changing Parties in Congress

- Rohde, David and John Aldrich. “Consequences of Electoral and Institutional Change: The Evolution of Conditional Party Government in the U.S. House of Representatives.” In *New Directions in American Political Parties*, ed. Jeffrey M. Stonecash. New York: Routledge. 234-250.

Week 11 (March 24 - 26): House and Senate Differences: Rules and the Filibuster

- Binder, Sarah A. and Steven S. Smith. 1998. “Political Goals and Procedural Choice in the Senate.” *The Journal of Politics* 60(2 May): 398-416.

March 26 (Thursday): Annotated bibliography draft due.

Week 12 (March 31 - April 2): Coming Together

- *Additional reading to be assigned.*

April 3 (Friday): Last day to withdraw with no grade penalty (W).

Week 13 (April 7 - 9): Elections, Finance, and Lobbying

- Ansolabehere, Stephen, James M. Snyder, and Charles Stewart III. 2001. “Candidate Positioning in the U.S. House Elections.” *American Journal of Political Science* 45(1 January): 136-159.
- Hirano, Shigeo, James M. Snyder, Stephen Ansolabehere, and John Mark Hansen. 2010. “Primary Elections and Partisan Polarization in the U.S. Congress.” *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 5(2): 169-191.

Week 14 (April 14 - 16): Representation and Approval

- Canes-Wrone, Brandice, David W. Brady, and John F. Cogan. 2002. "Out of Step, Out of Office: Electoral Accountability and House Members' Voting." *American Political Science Review* 96(1 March): 127-140.
- Griffin, John D. and Brian Newman. 2005. "Are Voters Better Represented?" *The Journal of Politics* 74(4 November): 1206-1227.
- Jones, David R. 2013. "Do Major Policy Enactments Affect Public Evaluations of Congress? The Case of Health Care Reform." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* XXXVIII(2 May): 185-204.

April 16 (Thursday): No class. Instructor at MPSA.

Week 15 (April 21 - 23): Concluding Thoughts

- *No reading.*

April 23 (Thursday): Annotated bibliography due.

April 29 (Wednesday): Final exam (12:00 PM - 2:30 PM).