

POLI 3310-001: The Legislative Process
Fall 2021 | TR 12:30 PM - 1:45 PM | Haley 2206

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Office Hours:	TR 11:00 AM - 12:15 PM (Zoom ID: 7720942787); 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.

Required Materials

There are no required texts. However, 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**. You are responsible for reading the assigned textbook reading *and* any other assigned reading by the *Monday* of that week of class.

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%
<hr/> Total	<hr/> 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: there is a midterm exam on October 14. Details of the midterm exam can be found under the assignment on **Canvas**.

Final examination: there is a final exam on December 8. See the final exam schedule at tinyurl.com/AU-F-Finals-2021. Details of the final exam can be found under the assignment on Canvas.

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?

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 *eight* 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. Specifically, for each article that you summarize, 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 four sources) is due on October 28. 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 December 3. You will receive a rubric that gives an example of an annotated bibliography entry, as well as recommendations for finding articles, through Canvas.

Makeups and Grades

Writing assignments and homework assignments must be turned in, electronically, on the day assigned. Makeup 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.

If you turn in a homework assignment late, you will be penalized 10 points (not 10%, but 10 points) each day that the relevant assignment is late.

I use the following grading scale. To maintain fairness, I do not change grades under any circumstances except when I make a mathematical error in computing your grade.

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

There is a course grade calculator on Canvas. There is no extra credit. All grades will be posted to Canvas.

Contacting Me

I will be in Haley 8024 (my physical office) daily from around 9 AM to 2 PM. I am also an adamant email checker, I have regular (virtual) office hours, and I will supplement them as required (by appointment). If you do contact me over email, I encourage you to follow these guidelines. First: include the course number [3310] in the subject of your email. Your email will almost certainly get lost in the abyss if it 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. 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 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.

Important Dates

- August 20 (Friday): Last day to add course.
- August 24 (Tuesday): No in-person class.
- September 3 (Friday): 15th Class Day (last day to drop with no grade assignment).
- September 14 (Tuesday): No in-person class.
- October 5 (Tuesday): Mid-semester grades posted.
- October 7 (Thursday): Fall break (no class).

- October 14 (Thursday): 41st Class Day (deadline to request moving final exam).
- November 19 (Friday): Last day to withdraw with no grade penalty (W).

Course Outline

Week 1 (August 17 - 19): Introduction

- *No reading*

Week 2 (August 24 - 26): Overview, Introduction, and the Constitutional Design of Congress

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

August 24 (Tuesday): No in-person class.

Week 3 (August 31 - September 2): Constitutional Design and Representatives' Minds

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

Week 4 (September 7 - 9): More Motivations, Decisionmaking, and "Homestyle"

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

Week 5 (September 14 - 16): 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): 432-446.

September 14 (Tuesday): No in-person class.

Week 6 (September 21 - 23): 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): 92-110.
- Heersink, Boris. 2018. "Trump and the Party-in-Organization: Presidential Control of National Party Organizations." *The Journal of Politics* 80 (4): 1474-1482.
- Veto Bargaining. http://wikisum.com/w/Cameron:_Veto_bargaining.

Week 7 (September 28 - 30): “Regular Process”

- Clarke, Andrew J. and Kenneth S. Lowande. 2016. “Informal Consequences of Budget Institutions in the US Congress.” *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 41 (4): 965-996.
- Curry, James M. and Frances E. Lee. 2020. “What Is Regular Order Worth? Partisan Lawmaking and Congressional Processes.” *The Journal of Politics* 82 (2): 627-641.

Week 8 (October 5 - 7): Committees in Congress

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

October 7 (Thursday): Fall break (no class).Week 9 (October 12 - 14): Midterm Week**October 14 (Thursday): Midterm Exam.**Week 10 (October 19 - 21): Changing Parties in Congress

- Curry, James M. 2019. “Congressional Processes and Public Approval of New Laws.” *Political Research Quarterly* 72 (4): 878-893.
- Lee, Frances E. 2018. “The 115th Congress and Questions of Party Unity in a Polarized Era.” *The Journal of Politics* 80 (4): 1464-1473.
- Rohde, David and John Aldrich. 2010. “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 (October 26 - 28): House and Senate Differences: Rules and the Filibuster

- Magleby, Daniel B. and Molly E. Reynolds. 2017. “Putting the Brakes on Greased Wheels: The Politics of Weak Obstruction in the United States Senate.” *Congress & the Presidency* 44 (3): 344-368.
- Park, Hong Min and Steven S. Smith. 2016. “Partisanship, Sophistication, and Public Attitudes about Majority Rule and Minority Rights in Congress.” *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 41 (4): 841-871.

October 28 (Thursday): Annotated bibliography draft due.Week 12 (November 2 - 4): Coming Together

- *Additional reading to be assigned.*

Week 13 (November 9 - 11): 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): 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.
- McCrain, Joshua. 2018. "Revolving Door Lobbyists and the Value of Congressional Staff Connections." *The Journal of Politics* 80 (4): 1369-1383.

Week 14 (November 16 - 18): Representation and Approval

- Barbera, Pablo, Andreu Casas, Jonathan Nagler, Patrick J. Egan, Richard Bonneau, John T. Jost, and Joshua A. Tucker. 2019. "Who Leads? Who Follows? Measuring Issue Attention and Agenda Setting by Legislators and the Mass Public Using Social Media Data." *American Political Science Review* 113 (4): 883-901.
- Jones, David R. 2013. "Do Major Policy Enactments Affect Public Evaluations of Congress? The Case of Health Care Reform." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* XXXVIII (2): 185-204.

Week 14.5 (November 23 - 25): No Class (Thanksgiving Break)

Week 15 (November 30 - December 2): Concluding Thoughts

- *No reading.*

December 3 (Friday): Annotated bibliography due.

December 8 (Wednesday): Last Exam.