

PS 316 - Legislative Process

Western Kentucky University
Department of Political Science

Spring 2011 Course Syllabus

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Time: Thurs. 6:15-9:00 pm EDT (check location of class)
Office Hours: By Appointment

Course Description

This course is an advanced examination of legislative politics, predominantly within the American congressional context. We will study both theoretical and applied aspects of the U.S. Congress, focusing both on the institutional characteristics of Congress and the behavioral aspects of individual legislators. Topics covered include: campaigns and elections; representation; legislating; the role of parties; leaders; and committees.

Required Texts

Davidson, Roger H., Walter J. Oleszek, and Frances E. Lee. 2010. *Congress and Its Members*. 12th ed. CQ Press.

Dodd, Lawrence C., and Bruce I. Oppenheimer. 2009. *Congress Reconsidered*. 9th ed. CQ Press.

All readings, exams, and assignments will be based upon the indicated editions of these texts. There is no guarantee that older editions will contain the same information.

Other readings will be located online.

Course Requirements

1. Midterm (100 points): The midterm will cover the first half of the semester's material and will be multiple-choice.
2. Final (100 points): The final will cover the last half of the semester's material, will take place during final exam week, and will be multiple-choice.
3. Quizzes (100 points): There will be 5 pop quizzes over the reading throughout the semester. Each quiz is worth 25 points. You will receive 10 points for showing up to class on

time to take the quiz. The remaining 15 points will be determined by your short answers to questions covering the readings due for class that day. I will drop your lowest quiz grade during the semester. You will have the first 10 minutes of class to complete the quizzes.

Grade Components

Midterm	100
Final	100
Quizzes (4 X 25 pts.)	100
Total	300

Grading Scale

A = >90% (270-300)
B = \geq 80% & <90% (240-269)
C = \geq 70% & <80% (210-239)
D = \geq 60% & <70% (180-209)
F = <60% (<180)

Course Expectations & Policies

Courtesy

The instructor and students are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner. Students are expected to arrive to class on time and to stay for the entire class period as indicated on the syllabus in order to prevent any unnecessary distractions. Please make sure that your schedule allows you to arrive on time and stay for the allotted period.

Cellular phones in the classroom are a major distraction to yourself, other students, and the instructor. If you have a cell phone on your person during the class period, it must be silenced (not on vibrate). I do not tolerate text-messaging during the class period. While it may appear to be an innocuous and quiet activity, it is disrespectful, and I will ask you to leave if I become aware of any cellular phone activity.

Late Work Policy & Make-Up Exams

Based upon previous observations, the following policies will be used concerning late work and make-up examinations:

1. Quizzes will be given promptly at the beginning of the class and you will have 10 minutes to complete them. At the end of the 10-minute period, the quizzes will be collected by the facilitator. If you arrive after the quiz has been administered, you will not be able to take it. There will be no make-up quizzes.

2. Any make-up exams, regardless of excuse, will be made-up during Finals week at a time convenient for the professor.

Extra Credit

There will be no extra credit assignments this semester.

Study Guides & Review Sessions

Study guides and review sessions often incentivize students to not do the readings before class and/or not attend class. However, I recognize that there is a lot of information in this course and additional assistance for exam preparation may be necessary. Study guides or review sessions will be given prior to exams under two conditions. If the class quiz-grade average for the quizzes prior to the exam date is at least 80%, I will provide a study guide or a review session. Students should not come to class to see if there is a quiz and leave if there is no quiz. I have instructed the facilitators to inform me if this behavior occurs. Repeated instances of leaving class early will result in no study guide or review session being provided, regardless of the class quiz average. If you come to class, I expect you to remain for the class' duration. If you must leave early, you should inform me prior to the beginning of class.

Incomplete Grades

Incomplete grades at the end of the semester will only be given for the most extenuating circumstances and will be allocated at the discretion of the instructor. I will ask for documentation regarding the situation before making a decision.

Additional Information

Instructional Availability and Assistance

Given that I am not located on main campus, office hours will be conducted by appointment. Email is the best way to contact me to set up a meeting. If you are not located near the Elizabethtown/Ft. Knox/Radcliff Centers and still need assistance, we will need to work out a time and medium through which to communicate (e.g. email, telephone, or Skype).

Academic Integrity

These excerpts are taken from the WKU Faculty Handbook:

The maintenance of academic integrity is of fundamental importance to the University. Thus it should be clearly understood that acts of plagiarism or any other form of cheating will not be tolerated and that anyone committing such acts risks punishment of a serious nature.

***Plagiarism** - To represent ideas or interpretations taken from another source as one's own is plagiarism. Plagiarism is a serious offense. The academic work of students must be their own. Students must give the author(s) credit for any source material used. To lift content directly from a source without giving credit is a flagrant act. To present a borrowed passage after having changed a few words, even if the source is cited, is also plagiarism.*

***Cheating** - No student shall receive or give assistance not authorized by the instructor in taking an examination or in the preparation of an essay, laboratory report, problem assignment, or other project that is submitted for purposes of grade determination.*

***Disposition of Offenses** - Students who commit any act of academic dishonesty may receive from the instructor a failing grade in that portion of the course work in which the act is detected or a failing grade in the course without possibility of withdrawal. The faculty member may also present*

the case to the University Disciplinary Committee through the Office of the Dean of Student Life for disciplinary sanctions. Students who believe a faculty member has dealt unfairly with them in a situation involving alleged academic dishonesty may seek relief through the Student Complaint Procedure.

Students should familiarize themselves with these policies as outlined in their student handbook. The instructor reserves the right to use plagiarism-detecting software at his discretion.

Student Disability Services

In compliance with university policy, students with disabilities who require accommodations (academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids or services) for this course must contact the Office for Student Disability Services in Downing University Center A-200. The phone number is 745-5004; TTY is 745-3030. Per university policy, please DO NOT request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a letter of accommodation from the OFSDS.

Syllabus Change Policy

The contents of this course syllabus are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances.

Course Schedule

Jan. 27: Introduction to the Course

- Federalist #51*. (Available through Internet search)
- DOL. Ch. 1.

Feb. 3: Introduction to Congress

- DOL. Ch. 2.
- Dodd & Oppenheimer. Ch. 1 & 2.

Feb. 10 : Congressional Campaigns & Elections

- DOL. Ch. 3. pp. 39-76.
- DOL. Ch. 4. pp. 87-107.

Feb. 17: Campaign & Elections, contd.

- DOL. Ch. 4. pp. 107-122.
- Dodd & Oppenheimer. Ch. 4.
- Film: *Taking on the Kennedys*.

Feb. 24: Representation

- DOL. Ch. 5.
- Dood & Oppenheimer. Ch. 6.

Mar. 3: Parties and Leaders

- DOL. Ch. 6. pp. 157-189.
- Dodd & Oppenheimer. Ch. 7 & 8

Mar. 10: No Class - Spring Break

Mar. 17: Midterm

Mar. 24: Parties & Leaders, contd.

- Dodd & Oppenheimer. Ch. 9.
- Dodd & Oppenheimer. Ch. 17.

Mar. 31: How a Bill Becomes Law

- DOL. Ch. 8
- DOL. Ch. 9, pp. 271-282; 293-299.

Apr. 7: Committees

- DOL. Ch. 7, pp. 199-227.
- Dodd & Oppenheimer. Ch. 10.

Apr. 14: Congress & The President

- DOL. Ch. 10.
- Dodd & Oppenheimer. Ch. 14.
- ~~-Dodd & Oppenheimer. Ch. 16.~~

Apr. 21: Congress & Other Political Actors

- DOL. Ch. 12. pp. 361-376.
- Dodd & Oppenheimer. Ch. 11.
- DOL. Ch. 13, pp. 389-406.

Apr. 28: Congress & Policymaking

- DOL. Ch. 14. pp. 421-436.
- DOL. Ch. 15. pp. 462-476.
- Dodd & Oppenheimer. Ch. 12.

May 5: Summing Up

- DOL. Ch. 16.
- ~~-Dodd & Oppenheimer. Ch. 18.~~
- Film: *Charlie Wilson's War*.

May 12: Final Exam

- 6:00 - 8:00 pm Central
- 7:00 - 9:00 pm Eastern