

**The Legislative Process**  
**POS 3424, Section 01 (Spring 2009)**

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**Course Objectives**

Political Science 3424 is an upper-level, undergraduate course that focuses on the legislative process and how political scientists study the members, structure, and outputs of legislative institutions. The purpose of the class is to provide you with a better understanding of the role of legislatures, specifically the United States Congress, in American government as well as a clearer understanding of the scientific study of legislative politics. The course syllabus provides a general plan for the course; deviations may be necessary

In the United States, legislatures like the U.S. Congress have two key functions—*representation* and *policymaking*. In the first half of this course we will concentrate on the issue of representation by asking, “How well does Congress fulfill its representation function?” In answering this question we will examine elections, the composition of Congress, the relationship between legislators and their constituents, as well as other factors that influence whether or not members of Congress act on our behalf. In the second half of the course, we will focus on policymaking and the following question: “How well does Congress fulfill its policymaking function?” In determining whether or not Congress is an effective policymaking institution, we will explore the effect of legislative structure—particularly political parties and standing committees—on the policymaking process.

Throughout the semester, we will read and discuss political science research that tries to answer these questions. In addition, you will conduct your own research on members of Congress, their behavior, and their constituencies. This research project gives you the opportunity to learn more about what political scientists actually do—develop and test theories that explain political phenomena—by conducting your own analyses using data you have gathered on members of Congress.

**Student Responsibilities**

Your responsibilities in this course are to complete the assigned readings before each class, actively participate in class discussions and activities, and to turn in assignments by the dates specified in the syllabus or if necessary on the updated schedule on the class web page. You are also expected to treat other students and their viewpoints with respect. If you anticipate any problems meeting these responsibilities please talk with me as soon as possible.

**Texts and Materials**

**Required Texts**

There are four required texts for the course which are available at the FIU Bookstore.

Davidson, Roger H., and Walter J. Oleszek. 2008. *Congress and Its Members*, 11<sup>th</sup> ed. Washington DC: Congressional Quarterly.

Mayhew, David R. 1986. *Congress: The Electoral Connection*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Rohde, David W. 1991. *Parties and Leaders in the Post Reform House*. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press.

Sidlow, Edward I. 2004. *Challenging the Incumbent: An Underdog's Undertaking*. Washington DC: CQ Press.

### Required Journal Articles

In addition you will be asked to read selections from Political Science journals which are available through the JSTOR database, one of the full-text, online databases accessible through the library web page (<http://library.fiu.edu/>). To access JSTOR, go to the FIU library's main page (remember to choose the "Connect from Home" link and follow the directions if you are accessing the page off-campus). Choose the "Find Articles and Do Research" option and then select the "A to Z Databases" from the "Other Resources" box. Select "J" from the alphabet on the left of screen. Select "JSTOR" from the list of J databases. Once in JSTOR, choose the "Search" option, and then select the "Advanced Search." To find a specific article, search for the last name of the first author by choosing "author" from the corresponding drop-down menu and a few descriptive words in the title of the article by choosing the "title" option from the list. Make sure to check off "Political Science" from the subject list, and then perform the search. If you have any problems finding an article, ask for help from one of the librarians or feel free to stop by my office hours.

### Recommended Materials

You should also acquire an FIU student email account. You can apply for your FIU email userid and password at <http://intra.fiu.edu/irm/sc/studsearch/index2.htm>. If you have any trouble, see University Technology Services for assistance at <http://uts.fiu.edu/students.html>.

I also STRONGLY recommend that you obtain a style manual to assist you in completing the final paper for this course (for example, *Student's Guide for Writing College Papers* by Kate L. Turabian or *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* by Joseph Gibaldi). These style manuals provide guidance on writing as well as information on citation and reference. The FIU library and major bookstores have a variety of style manuals.

### Evaluation

Your final grade for this class will be based on your performance on the midterm and final exams, your research paper, and class participation. As with all work in this class, you are expected to conform to the University's Code of Academic Integrity.

Midterm exam:	30 percent
Final exam:	35
Final paper:	25
Class participation:	10

The grading scale for this course is:

A	94 - 100.00	B-	80 - 81.99	D+	68 - 69.99
A-	90 - 93.99	C+	78 - 79.99	D	62 - 67.99
B+	88 - 89.99	C	72 - 77.99	D-	60 - 61.99
B	82 - 87.99	C-	70 - 71.99	F	0 - 59.99

There are no extra credit assignments available in this course. I do not change students' grades (unless I have made a computational error). You will receive the grade that you earn in this course. February 27<sup>th</sup> is the last day drop a course with a DR grade or withdraw from the university with a WI grade.

If you want to calculate your grade at any point during the semester, multiply your grade on each assignment or exam completed so far by the percentage of the final grade that it is worth. Then add these products together, and divide the sum by the total percent of course assignments and exams completed so far. For example, if a student scored an 81 on the midterm exam and a 70 on the final paper, his or her current course grade would be  $[(81 \cdot .30) + (70 \cdot .25)] / (.30 + .25)$  or a 76.

### **Midterm Exam (30 percent)**

The midterm exam for this course will include multiple choice and short essay questions. It will cover material from class lectures, activities, discussions, and readings from the beginning of class up to the midterm exam date (see the tentative schedule below for the date). The exam is worth 30 percent your final grade. Make sure to be on-time for the exam. Students who arrive after the first exam has been turned in will not be allowed to sit for the exam and will receive a zero or, if they can provide documentation of a university excused absence in a timely manner, will be required to take the special cumulative final exam to count for both their midterm exam grade and their final exam grade.

### **Final Exam (35 percent)**

The final exam will include multiple choice and short essay questions as well as an extended essay question. While the multiple choice and short essay sections will focus only on material covered after the midterm, the extended essay will draw on material from the entire course. The final exam time and date, as determined by the official final exam schedule, is listed below in the tentative schedule below. Make sure to be on-time for the final exam. Students who arrive after the first exam has been turned in will not be allowed to take the exam and will receive a zero.

### **Final Paper (25 percent)**

For your final paper, you will analyze the relationship between members of Congress and their constituents using one or several members of Congress as case studies. Students will collect information on House members and their constituents to use as case studies to evaluate Richard Fenno's theory of homestyle or David Mayhew's theory of the electoral incentive (we will read and discuss both of these theories in detail in the first half of the course). Your paper should review your selected theory, present your findings, and discuss whether or not the case studies support the theory you selected.

You must carefully document all your sources using a formal method of citation and reference (MLA, Chicago Manual of Style, Turabian). We will discuss how to organize the paper and how to research members of Congress, their behavior, and their constituents in more detail later in the course. Your final paper must be typed in 12-point font, double-spaced, and have 1-inch margins on all sides. Make sure to include page numbers. Do not include a cover page; simply type your name, the date, and the course and section numbers in the upper, left-hand corner of the page. Additional information on the final paper will be available in the paper assignment sheet on the class web page. The final paper comprises 25 percent of your final grade and must be submitted to TurnItIn.com by the beginning of class on the date specified in the tentative schedule or the updated class schedule on the course webpage if applicable.

Students failing to submit their completed assignments on-time to TurnItIn.com will lose an automatic 5 points on their grades and an additional 5 points for each additional day that their paper are late including weekends and holidays. I will only grade papers which have been submitted to TurnItIn.com. If you fail to submit a paper to TurnItIn.com you will receive a zero grade on the final paper.

## **Participation (10 percent)**

Participation represents the final 10 percent of your final grade. Participation includes your active involvement in class discussions. While attendance is necessary for participation, attendance itself is not sufficient for participation. Participation requires that you carefully read the assigned material before class, complete any required assignments before class, ask questions, and actively engage in discussion. Students who actively participate in class learn more and typically do significantly better in the course than students who do not participate.

## **Administrative Policies**

### **Academic Honesty**

All academic work must comply with the University's Code of Academic Integrity (see the Student Handbook or <http://www.fiu.edu/~oabp/misconductweb/2codeofacainteg.htm> for the code and related policies). Students are responsible for informing themselves about the code before performing any academic work. Students who violate the code will be formally charged and referred to the appropriate university office for disciplinary action. Students who have been found responsible for violating the code of academic integrity in this course will receive an F and will not be permitted to replace the grade. When a student submits any work to an instructor the student implicitly promises that the thoughts and expressions contained in the work are his or her own except when properly credited to another person. Giving or receiving aid in an exam, fraud, plagiarism, and any other deceptive act in connection with academic work violate this principle. Plagiarism is defined as representing someone else's words, ideas, or other expressions as one's own. This means that failing to use appropriate citations and references for directly quoted or paraphrased material or failing to include quotation marks and appropriate citations for directly quoted material are serious violations of academic integrity and could result in a student failing the course and possibly being expelled from the University.

### **Missed Exams**

I should be notified of any and all University excused absences that could potentially cause you to miss an exam before they occur, unless they are emergencies. A missed exam will be excused only after sufficient documentation of an emergency (illness, death in family, etc.) is provided. All documentation must be provided in a timely manner, within 1 week of the missed exam. If a student provides acceptable documentation of a University excused absence, the student's score on a special cumulative final exam will count for the missed exam grade as well as the final exam grade. If a student does not provide documentation of a University excused absence in a timely manner, he or she will receive a zero for the missed exam.

If you have a University scheduled conflict for the final exam (e.g., another exam scheduled at the same time according to the University final exam schedule) it is your responsibility to make arrangements with me at least 4 weeks before the last day of class to schedule an earlier time to take the final exam. Students who fail to make alternate arrangements in a timely fashion may be required to sit for the regularly scheduled exam time.

### **Submitting Papers using TurnItIn.com**

In the class, students are required to submit their papers electronically to TurnItIn.com. TurnItIn.com is an online database of current and archived internet material, all papers previously submitted to TurnItIn, and databases of journal articles and periodicals used for plagiarism detection. Once your paper has been submitted to TurnItIn.com it becomes part of the database that future papers are checked against.

Turnitin.com also has other advantages. It records the time and date of papers submitted and it provides an archive of your submitted papers for the semester in the event that a paper is lost.

I will only grade the papers submitted to TurnItIn.com. Students who fail to submit papers to TurnItIn.com will receive a zero for their paper grade. TurnItIn.com allows you to check your submission so you can make sure that you submitted the correct version of the paper in an accessible, readable format. If you realize you have submitted an incomplete or incorrect version of the paper you may submit another version just email me and advise me that you are submitting a second, correct and complete version of your paper to TurnItIn.com.

In order to submit your paper to Turnitin.com you will need to create user profile. The student tutorial at [http://www.turnitin.com/static/pdf/tii\\_student\\_qs.pdf](http://www.turnitin.com/static/pdf/tii_student_qs.pdf) contains detailed instructions for creating a user profile and uploading your paper. In order to create a user profile you need a specific class ID for this course, an enrollment password, and your own email address. The syllabus contains information about how to acquire a free FIU student email account if you do not already have one. The class ID for this class is **2543751**, and enrollment password for this class is **congress**. You must submit your paper to Turnitin.com as a Microsoft Word file, a Wordperfect file, a rich text file (rtf), or an Adobe Acrobat file (pdf).

### **Religious Observances**

A student who desires to be excused from class in order to observe a religious holy day should notify me two weeks in advance. A student who is absent from class because of religious observances will not be penalized if he or she notifies me two weeks in advance. However, if the student notifies me after the absence or less than two weeks in advance the absence will not be excused.

### **Special Needs**

FIU encourages qualified persons with disabilities to participate in its programs and activities. If you anticipate needing any type of accommodation in this course please contact the Disability Resource Center at (305) 348-3532 or locate them online at [www.fiu.edu/~disser/](http://www.fiu.edu/~disser/) as soon as possible. I will do my best to make arrangements for students with special needs; however, I can only do so after proper documentation has been provided to me by the Disability Resource Center. You are not required to discuss any special needs or required arrangements with me personally, but I would be happy to discuss these with you if you choose.

## **Tentative Class Schedule**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

1/6 Course overview and expectations

- Course syllabus and Code of Academic Integrity
- *Congress and Its Members*, chapters 1 and 2
- Sinclair, Barbara. 1996. "An Effective Congress and Effective Members: What Does It Take?" *PS: Political Science and Politics* 29: 435-439.

### **II. REPRESENTATION**

1/8 to 1/15 Representation

- Mansbridge, Jane. "Should Blacks Represent Blacks and Women Represent Women? A Contingent 'Yes.'" 1999. *The Journal of Politics* 61: 628-657.

## A. Elections

- 1/20 & 1/22                      Who runs and who wins?
- *Congress and Its Members*, chapters 3 and 4
  - *Challenging the Incumbent*, all

## B. Constituency Connections

- 1/27 & 1/29                      The electoral connection
- *Congress: The Electoral Connection*, all
- 2/3 & 2/5                         Constituency and homestyle
- *Congress and Its Members*, Ch. 5
  - Fenno, Richard F., Jr. 1977. "U.S. House Members in their Constituencies: An Exploration." *The American Political Science Review*, 71: 883-917.
- 2/10                                 ***Midterm review***
- 2/12                                 ***Midterm Exam***

## C. Congressional Behavior

- 2/17                                 Researching Members of Congress
- Review paper assignment sheet available on class web page
- 2/19 & 2/24                      Congress members' voting decisions
- *Congress and Its Members*, Ch. 9
  - Kingdon, John. 1977. "Models of Legislative Voting." *The Journal of Politics*, 39: 563-595.
- 2/26 & 3/3                        Campaign contributions and members' behavior
- *Congress and Its Members*, Ch. 13
  - Hall, Richard L., and Frank W. Wayman. 1990. "Buying Time: Moneyed Interests and the Mobilization of Bias in Congressional Committees." *The American Political Science Review* 84: 797-820.

## III. POLICYMAKING

- 3/5 & 3/10                        An overview of the policymaking process
- *Congress and Its Members*, Ch. 8

## A. The Role of Political Parties

3/12 Introduction to Congressional parties

- *Congress and Its Members*, Ch. 6
- *Parties and Leaders*, Ch. 1-3

3/16 to 3/20 Spring Break: No Class

3/24 & 3/26 Parties and policymaking

- *Party and Leaders*, Ch. 4-6
- Andres, Gary J. 1999. "Observations on a Post-Gingrich House." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 32: 571-574.

**3/26** ***Final paper due at the beginning of class and on Turnitin.com***

## B. The Role of Committees

3/31 to 4/9 Congressional committees and committee power

- *Congress and Its Members*, Ch. 7
- Shepsle, Kenneth A., and Barry R. Weingast. 1987. "The Institutional Foundations of Committee Power." *American Political Science Review* 81: 85-104.

## IV. CONCLUSIONS

4/14 Conclusions on the study of Congress

- *Congress and Its Members*, Ch. 16
- Hamilton, Lee. 2000. "What I Wish Political Scientists Would Teach About Congress." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 33: 757-764.

4/16 ***Exam review***

**4/23** ***Final exam (9:45-11:45 a.m on Thursday.)***

- **Verify final exam date and time with official FIU final exam schedule**