

Legislative Politics

POLI 420

Fall 2018

INSTRUCTOR	Sarah Treul Roberts
OFFICE	Hamilton 311
OFFICE HOURS	Tuesday 9:00am-noon and by appointment
EMAIL	streul@unc.edu
WEBSITE	www.unc.edu/~streul
LOCATION	Venable G307
TIME	Tues/Thurs 2:00-3:15

Course Description

This course is intended as a detailed examination of the legislative branch of the United States' government. The course focuses on the origins and developments for the U.S. Congress, congressional campaigns and elections, representation, the committee system, the role of political parties, and the separation of powers system. This class does not specifically focus on legislative procedure (please consider taking 424 if that is your area of interest). However, procedure will be tangentially covered throughout the semester.

General Expectations

I expect all students to behave professionally in this class. I am generally intolerant of disruptive behavior in the classroom, including talking during lectures and the ringing of cell phones or pagers. Class discussions are expected to be civil, rational, and respectful of the opinions of others. Although class attendance is not mandatory, you will be held responsible for all material in the textbooks and in lectures, even if you miss a class. Moreover, I expect all students to attend class prepared to participate in any class discussion and to show up on time. I reserve the right to hold "pop" quizzes if no one is participating in class discussion. Laptops, tablets, and other forms of electronic media are not to be used in this class. There is a great deal of research supporting the argument that people who take notes by hand perform much better. Here is a link to an Atlantic article, which articulates this argument: <http://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2014/05/to-remember-a-lecture-better-take-notes-by-hand/361478/>. If you need an exception to this rule, please see me. I am willing to make accommodations.

Required Texts

- Smith, Steven S., Jason M. Roberts and Ryan J. Vander Weilen. 2015. *The American Congress*. 9th edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Smith, Steven S., Jason M. Roberts and Ryan J. Vander Weilen. 2008. *The American Congress Reader*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Aldrich, John et al. 2017. *Change and Continuity in 2016 Elections*. Sage.

- Students are responsible for staying informed of the issues before the U.S. Congress. Reading a daily, national newspaper such as *The New York Times* or the *Washington Post* is highly recommended.

Recommended Texts

- Mayhew, David. 1974/2004. *Congress: The Electoral Connection*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Course Requirements

Exams (2) 40% The first exam will be taken in class on October 11. The second exam will be taken during the final exam period (December 8). Each exam will be worth 20% of your grade for this class. The final exam is *not* comprehensive. Exams will primarily consist of short answer type questions and essay questions.

Writing Assignment 40% The writing assignment is worth 40% of your grade for this class. The assignment will be done in two parts. The first part (8 pages) is due IN CLASS on November 6. This part is worth 30% of your paper grade. The second part of the assignment (2 pages) is due IN CLASS on November 20. This part of the assignment is worth 10% of your paper grade. Additional information will be handed out in class.

Presentation 5% Each student will present the findings of their paper to the class in a five minute presentation on November 13 or 15. More information will be handed out in class.

Discussion Leader 10% Each student is responsible for leading discussion on the non-textbook readings for *one* class meeting (along with another student). As discussion leader, you are responsible for submitting 3-4 discussion questions to me via email. Turning in the discussion questions is 5% of your “discussion leader” grade and is an automatic 95 percent. In order to get the full grade (95%) the questions must be sent to me by 1am on the day you are the discussion leader. If you email the questions before our class meets, you will receive a 70% on this portion. After our class begins, late questions are no longer accepted (resulting in a 0% for that portion of your grade.) On the date you are leader, you will lead the class in the discussion of the readings (not including the textbook). It is your responsibility to ask thought provoking questions and get your fellow students engaged with the readings. Asking “yes/no” questions are not thought to be engaging. Your ability to lead a thoughtful discussion will then make up the remaining 5% of the “discussion leader” grade. A sign-up sheet will be handed out in class on August 23. 1-2 slots will be made available per class.

Participation 5% Your class participation will be evaluated. I strongly encourage all students to actively participate in discussion. Class attendance is part of your participation grade, as is participation in discussion. If you attend every class, but never say a word you can do no better than an 80% for participation (though this is not guaranteed, as you must show evidence of active listening (i.e. sleeping, being on Facebook/Twitter, etc., and emailing do not demonstrate active listening).

Miscellany

Grading and Makeups

A final grade of “incomplete” will only be given in this course under exceptional circumstances and is solely at the discretion of the instructor. Assignments turned in late will be penalized one letter grade per day late. In addition, written assignments that do not follow the guidelines of the assignment and/or have poor grammar and spelling will be severely penalized. As a general rule, make-ups for exams will not be given. Students who must miss exams because of scheduled activities of an official University student organization, a religious holiday, or a verifiable illness should contact the instructor IN ADVANCE of missing an exam so that alternative arrangements can be made.

Grading Scale

A 94-100, A- 90-93, B+ 87-89, B 84-86, B- 80-83, C+ 77-79, C 74-76, C- 70-73, D+ 67-69

Assignments

You are responsible for keeping a copy of all written assignments for the course. This ensures that we will not run into problems with lost assignments. You are also responsible for keeping copies of the assignments once they are handed back. Sometimes errors do happen, and a grade may not be recorded for you. If this happens you must be able to produce the GRADED paper to verify that the assignment was completed and that the grade is correct.

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty is broadly defined as submitting work that is not your own without attribution, and is not acceptable in this or any other academic course. Any academic dishonesty found on an assignment results in a failing grade for that assignment and will be prosecuted to the fullest extent permissible under University of North Carolina guidelines, which can be accessed at: <http://honor.unc.edu>.

Student Disabilities

Any student with a documented disability condition (e.g. physical, learning, psychiatric, systemic, vision, hearing, etc.) who needs to arrange reasonable accommodations should contact the instructor and the Academic Success Program (919-962-7227) at the beginning of the semester.

Instructor Availability

If you would like to speak with me outside of class time, feel free to stop by my office during regularly scheduled office hours. If you are unable to meet during office hours, you can arrange an alternate time to see me by setting up an appointment. I also try to respond quickly to email inquiries.

Communication

Periodically the instructor may communicate with students via email, regarding assignments, schedule changes, or other course related matters. Students are responsible for the content of *all* such communications.

Tentative Course Outline

Readings should be done before the class for which they are listed.

Date	Description	Required Readings
August 21	Introduction	n/a
August 23	Why study Congress? (Discussion signup)	<i>Textbook</i> Ch. 1; <i>Reader</i> Ch. 1 & 2 & Binder*
August 28	Congressional History I	<i>Textbook</i> Ch.2
August 30	Congressional History II	<i>Reader</i> Ch. 4, 5
September 4	Representation I	<i>Textbook</i> Ch. 4; <i>Reader</i> Ch. 6, 7
September 6	Representation II	<i>Reader</i> Ch. 11, 13
September 11	Representation III	<i>Broockman*</i> & <i>Griffin et al.*</i>
September 13	Elections I (National)	C&C skim Ch. 2-4
September 18	Elections II	<i>Textbook</i> Ch. 3; <i>Reader</i> Ch. 9 & 10
September 20	Elections III	C&C Ch. 8 & 9
September 25	Congressional Voters	C&C Ch. 4, 6, & 10
September 27	Linking Representation, Money, & Elections	Gimpel et al.* & Jacobson Ch. 3*
October 2	A Conversation with Rep. Mark Meadows (R-NC)	Questions
October 4	Spatial Concepts	<i>Textbook</i> Appendix; <i>Reader</i> Ch. 42
October 9	CATCH UP & REVIEW	n/a
October 11	EXAM 1	n/a
October 16	Parties I	<i>Textbook</i> Ch. 5
October 18	FALL BREAK	n/a
October 23	Parties II	<i>Reader</i> Ch. 14, 15, 16
October 25	Committees I	<i>Textbook</i> Ch. 6
October 30	Committees II	<i>Reader</i> Ch. 17, 18, 41
November 1	Polarization I	<i>Post</i> articles*
November 6	Polarization II (Paper Due)	Brady,* Hare et al.,* Shapiro*
November 8	<i>Small Group Election Presentation Prep</i> & Elections Recap	n/a
November 13	Election Presentations	n/a
November 15	Election Presentations	n/a
November 20	Ambition in Congress (Paper Due)	Fox & Lawless,* Herrick,* <i>Reader</i> Ch. 12
November 22	NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK	n/a
November 27	Congress & the President	<i>Reader</i> Ch. 28-32
November 29	Congress & the Courts	<i>Reader</i> Ch. 34, 35
December 4	Congress & the Budget	<i>Text.</i> Ch. 12; <i>Read.</i> Ch. 38, 39
December 8 - 12:00	FINAL EXAM	n/a

* Reading can be found on course website.