Syllabus

Pl Sc 315 (Winter 2014)

WARNING!! Do not rely on a printed copy of this syllabus. Only the online version is authoritative. I may modify the readings for a future lecture, and you will not know about the change unless you are using the online syllabus. WARNING!!

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What's this course about?

Although the Constitution provides for three branches, the legislative branch is the "First Branch"—the center of lawmaking authority. Regardless of an idea's source, it is Congress that shapes policy proposals into actual laws. The ultimate responsibility for the content and scope of American lawmaking and public policy rests with Congress.

The purpose of this course is to provide you with an introduction to Congressional politics. We will cover numerous topics as they relate to the U.S. Congress: legislative development, representation, Congressional
elections, Congressional committees, party leadership and organization, legislative voting decisions, and the lawmaking and policy process. We will cover some classics of Congressional research, even as we use readings, assignments, and class discussion to bring a contemporary perspective to long-standing theories of Congressional behavior.

With that in mind, these are our goals this semester:

- To obtain a general working knowledge of the U.S. Congress, and where possible other legislative bodies;
- To apply the academic literature on Congress to current Congressional politics;
- To stimulate thinking and discussion about the role and effectiveness of Congress in particular and representative democracy in general;
- And to provide you with new perspective that will shape your future attempts to critically evaluate Congress and its members.

**What is the workload?**

The university catalog defines an A as "excellent," B as "good," C as "satisfactory," and so on (see [here](#)). Elsewhere, the catalog contains [this interesting policy](#):

"The expectation for undergraduate courses is three hours of work per week per credit hour for the average student who is appropriately prepared; much more time may be required to achieve excellence."

Think that through for a moment. "Three hours of work per week per credit hour" comes out to **18 hours per week** in PSc 315 (since we are moving at double speed in only half a semester). If you want an average grade, that's how much time you should plan for this course. In the political science department, "average" means B in upper-division courses. If you want to achieve "excellence," the university's definition of an A, then "much more time may be required."

Punchline: Expect to be very busy once we get going. Ensure that your other courses, job, family, and church responsibilities leave you plenty of time for this class.

**Grades and assignments**

I use a variety of assessment methods to keep final grades as fair as possible, including closed-form questions (e.g. multiple choice, true/false), short answer questions, and essays. You may see all these question types on exams. You will also write a substantial term paper outside of class.

9% C-SPAN paper
31% Midterm
20% Final paper (and assignments 1-6; details below)
5% Critique of a classmate's final paper (Asst 7)
Late assignments: All assignments are due at the beginning of class. Any paper turned in on the due date but after the beginning of class gets a 5% penalty. One weekday late is a 10% penalty; two weekdays late is a 25% penalty; later is unacceptable. Papers must be turned in hard copy, not by email. (If a medical or family emergency causes the lateness, talk to me as soon as possible.)

Final paper: The major assignment for this course is a 10-15 page paper containing a detailed analysis of a member of the U.S. House of Representatives. Throughout the semester, you will complete several smaller assignments leading up to the final product. With the exception of assignment 7, these preparatory assignments will not receive separate grades. Instead, your work on these assignments will be reflected in your overall term paper grade. Note, though, that failure to complete a preparatory assignment satisfactorily will result in a 10% penalty on the final paper (so if you skip three of the assignments, your paper starts off with a 30% penalty). Also, if you turn one of these assignments in late, the penalty for that particular assignment will be calculated as a percentage of this 10% penalty. Further details about the assignments and paper are available online.

Missed exams: No makeups unless you (1) arrange it in advance for a valid reason or (2) have a genuine emergency and contact me as soon as possible to work things out.

Attendance: You will do poorly on the exams if you do not attend every lecture. If you must miss a lecture, get notes from another student and then visit me in my office to discuss them.

Final exam: The final exam will be in the testing center throughout finals week.

What books do we need to buy?

We will use several books. If you buy them all new at the bookstore, expect to spend around $150-170. If you follow the tips here, you might spend less than $40.

Buying older editions to save money? For the Mayhew and Fenno books, any edition is fine, no matter how old. For the remaining books, I recommend the current edition; if you choose to purchase an older edition of these books, you’ll need to figure out how the page numbers line up with this syllabus, and you cannot appeal if you happen to miss a question or two on the exam as a result of relying on an older text.

- **Required:** David Mayhew, *Congress: The Electoral Connection.*
  - There is no difference at all between the original (1974) edition and the so-called 2nd edition (2004). The publisher simply slapped on a preface in 2004 and then wrote "second edition" on the front. Yes, this was a blatant profit move by the publisher. You can buy the 2004 edition from the BYU bookstore or at Amazon (2004 edition), but you'll might save money buying the 1974 edition on Amazon. You should be able to find a used copy for $5 or less.

- **Required:** Richard Fenno, *Home Style: House Members in Their Districts.*
  - Same deal as with the Mayhew book. The so-called 2nd edition (2003) is identical to the classic 1978 edition other than the preface. Buy the 2003 edition at the BYU bookstore or on Amazon (2003 edition), or buy the original edition if it saves you money on Amazon (1978 edition). You should be able to find a used copy for $5 or less.

- **Required:** Loomis and Schiller, *The Contemporary Congress,* 5th edition. You can probably get by with a recent previous edition, but the page numbers will be different.

- **Required:** Barbara Sinclair, *Unorthodox Lawmaking: New Lawmaking Processes in the U. S. Congress*, 4th ed. You can probably get by with a recent previous edition, but the page numbers will be different.
  - Use at your own risk: Amazon (3rd edition).

**Reading schedule**

Dates may change, of course. You can also view the reading schedule in calendar format.

Although my lectures may diverge considerably from the readings—more so for some topics than for others—be advised that anything from lecture or the readings is fair game for the exams.

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**Unit 1: The Two Awkward Weeks**

**Fri, Feb 28th, 2014.** Course overview.

**Readings**

- Mayhew's book, first half [100 pages]

**FYI**

- Attendance is required today unless you are currently in the Utah legislature internship program. We will meet for only 30-50 minutes.
- Over the next two weeks, you will read Fenno's and Mayhew's books on your own. As you do so, ask yourself: Does Mayhew's theory seem more plausible than Fenno's (or vice versa)? In what ways do the two books agree, and in what ways do they disagree? According to Mayhew, what do members of Congress want? Does Fenno agree? What does each author's theory suggest about the value of Congress as an institution—does Congress work, or is it somehow flawed?
- Take thorough notes on these books. You will need to cite them heavily in papers you turn in later. That's how I will know that you read them carefully. Well, and there's also the exams. You know. Those.

**Mon, Mar 3rd, 2014.** No lecture. Study at home.

**DUE** Finish Mayhew's book

**Readings**

- Mayhew's book, second half [100 pages]

**Wed, Mar 5th, 2014.** No lecture. Study at home.

**Readings**

- Fenno's book, first third [100 pages]
Fri, Mar 7th, 2014. Member goals. What behaviors does the reelection incentive lead to? Does Mayhew's book show that our Constitutional structure is flawed? How does Fenno's theory differ from Mayhew's?

DUE Watch some C-SPAN (see C-SPAN paper instructions). The paper is not due just yet, but start watching the videos now.

Terms Hierarchy of needs; reelection incentive; power within the House; median voter theorem; advertising; credit claiming; position taking; protectionist phase; expansionist phase

Readings • "Media darling Jason Chaffetz is 'having the time of my life' as a member of Congress" (or PDF) [3 pages]
  • Fenno's book, next third [100 pages]
  • Be prepared to discuss Fenno, especially ch 5, and also Mayhew

Resources Show additional resources

FYI Current Utah legislative interns heard a version of this lecture last January in PlSc 397; the rest of you need to attend today.


DUE Finish Fenno's book

Readings • Fenno's book, the rest [100 pages]


Readings • Finish Fenno and Mayhew if you haven't already
  • Watch more C-SPAN (see C-SPAN paper instructions)

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Unit 2: Congress—The Basics

Fri, Mar 14th, 2014. Congress in the Constitution. Why don't we like Congress? Why did the founders design Congress the way they did?

DUE Watch more C-SPAN (see C-SPAN paper instructions)

Terms Congress vs most members of Congress vs your member of Congress; tyranny vs efficiency tradeoff; 17th amendment

Readings 5 pages
  • Read this entire syllabus before coming to class
  • The Constitution, Article I (online) [5 pages]
  • You should have already read 100% of Fenno's and Mayhew's books by now. If you haven't, finish pronto.

FYI Now that the Utah legislative session is over, everybody should attend from here out. Prepare to get busy.

Mon, Mar 17th, 2014. Legislative development. How/why do the internal institutions of Congress change over time? What role do norms play?

DUE • Assignment 1 (see term paper instructions)
Assignment 2 (see term paper instructions)

Terms
Institutionalization; well-bounded; internal complexity; universalism; centralization/decentralization of power; norms; sociological learning vs rational apprenticeship

Readings
- Loomis and Schiller, chs 2-3 [54 pages]
- Deseret News (2009), "Hatch, Kennedy made political theater as 'odd couple''" (or PDF) [3 pages]

Resources Show additional resources


DUE Assignment 3 (see term paper instructions)

Terms
Geographic constituency; reelection constituency; primary constituency; personal constituency (intimates); issue representation ("substantive" representation); service representation; allocational representation; descriptive representation; delegate vs trustee; home style (allocation of resources, representation of self, explanation of Washington activity)

Readings
- Loomis and Schiller, ch 1 [12 pages]
- Mendelberg and Karpowitz (2012), "More Women, but not Nearly Enough" (or PDF) [2 pages]
- Politico (2009), "Women Lawmakers Best Men" (or PDF) [3 pages]
- Sen. Robert Byrd (read about him) once gave us an excellent example of home style; view it here [2:45]

FYI
- The "member goals" lecture and today's "representation" lecture both draw heavily on Fenno's and Mayhew's books, the two most important things you will read in this course. If for some reason you haven't read both books yet, do so. They will be covered heavily in the exams; you will also need to be able to discuss them in your term paper.
- Note to legislative interns: While you were gone, I lectured to the non-interns on member goals. You heard a very similar lecture (the same one, actually) in PLSc 397 in the "What legislators want" lecture. Review your notes from 397, as this material will be on the 315 exam. Visit with me if you have questions. That lecture drew heavily on Mayhew.

Unit 3: Congressional Elections

Fri, Mar 21st, 2014, Reapportionment and redistricting. What method do we use to apportion House seats, and why? What values influence redistricting, and when do these values conflict? How do redistricting committees and legislators have competing interests?

Terms Apportionment vs districting; Alabama paradox; Method of equal proportions (Huntington-Hill method); Texas redistricting controversy

Readings
Mon, Mar 24th, 2014. Recruitment, nominations, and strategy. Why do some people run for Congress but others don't? What kinds of people run? When do the "best" candidates run?

DUE C-SPAN paper (see C-SPAN paper instructions)

Terms Ambition (discrete, static, progressive); types of amateur vs professional; strategic entry calculus; opportunity costs of running

Readings

- Loomis and Schiller, ch 4 [25 pages]
- Herronson, chs 1-2 [64 pages]
- Washington Post (2012), "Congressional retirements reach highest point since 1996" (or PDF) [2 pages]

Resources Show additional resources


DUE Assignment 4 (see term paper instructions)

Terms Campaign finance; FECA; Buckley v Valeo; BCRA; soft money; hard money; PAC; 527; issue advocacy; electioneering communication; super PAC

Readings

- Herronson, chs 5-6 and 10-11 [103 pages]

Resources Show additional resources


DUE Assignment 5 (see term paper instructions)

Terms Recall vs recognition; rolloff; coattail; incumbent; challenger; open seat; incumbency advantage; frank; Chaffetz; Hyer; Hatch; Lee

Readings

- Herronson, chs 3-4 and 7-9 [135 pages]

Mon, Mar 31st, 2014. Woohoo!

DUE Midterm (in testing center; no class)

FYI The midterm will be in the testing center one day only, TODAY. That's the nature of a half-semester course, I guess.
Unit 4: Organization. Who Runs This Place?

Wed, Apr 2nd, 2014, Part 1: Congressional committees. Why do we have committees? When are committees most autonomous? What powers do committees have (negative, positive)? What are the limits on these powers? Which committees are most powerful? Part 2: Parties and leadership. If committees are really autonomous, what four things would you expect to observe? What evidence is there that party leaders are more powerful than committees? What makes some leaders more powerful than others?

Terms
Committee; floor; chamber; committee-dominant model; party-dominant model; informational (chamber-dominant) model; standing committee; joint committee; select committee; conference committee; negative power vs positive power; discharge petition; multiple referral; reciprocity; unrepresentativeness; preference outliers; seniority; continuity; self-selection; specialization; conditional party government; coolies; cartel theory; the Johnson treatment

Readings
• Loomis and Schiller, chs 5 and 8 [43 pages]
• Green (2010), Assessing Pelosi (several parts): intro, part 1, part 2 (Pelosi and health care), part 3 (origins of Pelosi's power), part 4 (Pelosi's future). If the links don't work, download PDF versions here. [11 pages]
• Review Mayhew pp 81-180

Resources
Show additional resources

Fri, Apr 4th, 2014, Part 1: Parties and leadership continued. Part 2: Rules and procedures. Why do rules matter? How do structural (Constitutional) differences between the Senate and House influence the types of procedures that each chamber adopts? What role does the Rules committee play in the House? Given that it has no Rules committee, how does the Senate control floor time?

DUE
Assignment 6 (see term paper instructions)

Terms
Arrow's paradox; transitivity; Powell amendment; Rules committee; open rule, closed rule, etc.; unanimous consent agreement; filibuster; cloture

Readings
• Loomis and Schiller, ch 7 [15 pages]
• Sinclair, chs 1-4 [90 pages]

Resources
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Unit 5: The Legislative Process

Mon, Apr 7th, 2014, Voting decisions. What kind of information do members of Congress like best? What sources do they look to the most? How important is content relative to source? Why do members of Congress sometimes ignore district opinion? What incentives do members of Congress have to vote sincerely or strategically?

Terms
Brevity; political relevance; evaluative; gatekeepers; "revolving door"; intensity; Powell amendment; strategic voting; sincere voting

Readings
• Very few readings; finish up your term paper.

**DUE** Term paper (for review). Bring a complete copy of your paper. It should be final draft quality. You will exchange with another student for peer reviews.

**Terms** Delegate vs trustee (Burke); crafted talk; pandering; false consensus; democratic ideals; democratic practice

**Readings**

Fri, Apr 11th, 2014. Interbranch conflict. What are the president's formal and informal legislative powers? What sorts of authority does Congress delegate to the executive branch? Why? What tools do members of Congress have at their disposal to ensure that delegated authority is not abused?

**DUE** Assignment 7 (see term paper instructions). Bring two copies of your review—one for me to grade, and one for the student whose paper you reviewed.

**Terms** Bully pulpit; veto; signing statement; bureaucracy; police patrol; fire alarm; the Federal Register; oversight

**Readings**
- Loomis and Schiller, ch 6 [15 pages]
- Sinclair, chs 5-6 [47 pages]

Mon, Apr 14th, 2014. The budget and policy process. How do Congressional politics vary by policy type?

**DUE** Term paper (final draft; see term paper instructions)

**Terms**
- distributive; regulatory; redistributive; iron triangle; earmark

**Readings**
- Sinclair, ch 12 [20 pages]
- Loomis and Schiller, ch 10 [20 pages]
- Davidson @ Deseret News (2009), "Chaffetz may end full earmark ban" (or PDF) [2 pages]
- Davidson @ Deseret News (2009), "Chaffetz ends personal ban on earmarks" (or PDF) [1 page]
- SLT editorial (2009), "Kosher pork: Chaffetz sets his own earmark rules" [1 page]
- NY Times (2010), "House leaders bar earmarks to for-profit companies" [2 pages]
- Salt Lake Tribune (2011), "Utah cities scale back D.C. lobbying" (or PDF) [2 pages]
- Washington Post (Aug 2011), "Origins of the debt showdown" (or PDF) [10 pages]
Plagiarism

While all students sign the honor code, there are still specific skills most students need to master over time in order to correctly cite sources, especially in this new age of the internet, as well as deal with the stress and strain of college life without resorting to cheating. Please know that as your professor I will notice instances of cheating on exams or plagiarizing on papers. General information about the honor code can be found at http://honorcode.byu.edu. Details about Academic Honesty are found at http://saas.byu.edu/catalog/2013-2014ucat/GenerallInfo/AcademicHonesty.php

Writing submitted for credit at BYU must consist of the student's own ideas presented in sentences and paragraphs of his or her own construction. The work of other writers or speakers may be included when appropriate (as in a research paper or book review), but such material must support the student's own work (not substitute for it) and must be clearly identified by appropriate introduction and punctuation and by footnoting or other standard referencing.

The substitution of another person's work for the student's own or the inclusion of another person's work without adequate acknowledgment (whether done intentionally or not) is known as plagiarism. It is a violation of academic, ethical, and legal standards and can result in a failing grade not only for the paper but also for the course in which the paper is written. In extreme cases, it can justify expulsion from the University. Because of the seriousness of the possible consequences, students who wonder if their papers are within these guidelines should visit the Writing Lab or consult a faculty member who specializes in the teaching of writing or who specializes in the subject discussed in the paper. Useful books to consult on the topic include the current Harbrace College Handbook, the MLA Handbook, and James D. Lester's Writing Research Papers.

Discrimination

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination against any participant in an educational program or activity that receives federal funds. The act is intended to eliminate sex discrimination in education. Title IX covers discrimination in programs, admissions, activities, and student-to-student sexual harassment. BYU's policy against sexual harassment extends not only to employees of the university but to students as well. If you encounter unlawful sexual harassment or gender based discrimination, please talk to your professor; contact the Equal Employment Opportunities Office at 422-5895 or 367-5689 (24-hours); or contact the Honor Code Office at 422-2847.

Disabilities

Brigham Young University is committed to providing a working and learning atmosphere which reasonably accommodates qualified persons with disabilities. If you have any disability which may impair your ability to complete this course successfully, please contact the University Accessibility Center (801-422-2767). Reasonable academic accommodations are reviewed for all students who have qualified documented disabilities. Services are coordinated with the student and instructor by the UAC office. If you need assistance or if you feel you have been unlawfully discriminated against on the basis of disability, you may seek resolution through established grievance policy and procedures. You should contact the Equal Employment Opportunity Office at 422-5895, D-282 ASB.