

POLS 317: The Legislative Process: Spring 2007

MWF 10:00-10:50 a.m., room TBD

Dr. Christopher Lawrence <clawren6@slu.edu>

Office: 109 Fitzgerald Hall—(314) 977-3006

Hours: MW 2:30–4:00 p.m., or by appointment.

This course examines the evolution and current state of the U.S. Congress, from both institutional and behavioral perspectives. In addition to talking about what happens in Congress, this course will examine the connections between members and their constituents, most notably what political scientist David Mayhew termed “the electoral connection” between Congress and voters.

The course will also look at the policy outputs of Congress, its oversight of the executive branch and the bureaucracy, and the increased centralization of power in Congress, particularly in the House of Representatives, in the hands of the leadership over the past few decades.

Finally, this course also serves as an introduction to the *rational choice* approach to analyzing politics, an approach derived from economic theory that seeks to explain both why institutions are designed the way they are and why certain policy outcomes are more likely to come about than others.

Texts: Readings will be taken from the following books:

- Davidson, Roger H. and Walter J. Oleszek. 2005. *Congress and Its Members*, 10th ed. Washington: CQ Press. ISBN 1-56802-935-7.
- Dodd, Lawrence C. and Bruce I. Oppenheimer, eds. 2005. *Congress Reconsidered*, 8th ed. Washington: CQ Press. ISBN 1-56802-859-8.
The above two books are bundled as ISBN 0-87289-334-0.
- Fenno, Richard F. Jr. 2000. *Congress at the Grassroots: Representational Change in the South, 1970–1998*. Chapel Hill, N.C.: UNC Press. ISBN 0-8078-4855-7.
- Jacobson, Gary C. 2003. *The Politics of Congressional Elections*, 6th ed. New York: Longman. ISBN 0-321-10040-9.
- Sinclair, Barbara. 2000. *Unorthodox Lawmaking: New Legislative Processes in the U.S. Congress*, 2nd ed. Washington: CQ Press. ISBN 1-56802-572-6.
- Stewart, Charles III. 2000. *Analyzing Congress*. New York: Norton. ISBN 0-393-97626-2.

These textbooks should be available at the SLU bookstore (if they aren't, please let me know!). You may also be able to order them from retailers on the Internet at a discount.

Additional readings, as noted on the syllabus, will be made available either on reserve at the library, online, or as handouts.

Assignments and Grading: Your grade in this course will be based on the following elements:

Participation	10%
Quizzes and Short Assignments	10%
Research Papers (2)	30%
Examinations (2)	50%

Examinations: There will be two take-home, open-book essay exams covering the material presented in the course. Each exam will count for 25% of your final grade in the course. Each exam will include a small number of essay questions.

Research Papers: There will be two research papers of approximately five pages in length (each); further details on these paper assignments will be given in class.

For some useful tips on researching Congress, see Appendix A of Stewart's *Analyzing Congress*.

Quizzes and Short Assignments: Reading quizzes and a few short out-of-class assignments will be given at regular intervals throughout the semester. Your two lowest quiz grades will be dropped in computing the final quiz average.

Policies: Attendance at class is required, and is a component of your "participation" grade. Please discuss any planned absences with me as soon as practicable. Regular attendance and participation are essential for understanding the material; if you don't come to class, you will probably be hurting your grade.

All students are expected to be prepared for class, including having completed the relevant readings *prior to class*. Asking thoughtful or insightful questions is just as important as answering questions posed by others in the class. Absences, tardiness, cell phone disruptions and abuse of Internet technologies (e.g., web browsing/IMing during class) will adversely affect your participation grade.

Please arrive at class *on time* and mute (or switch off) all pagers, cell phones, and alarms during class.

Make-up examinations must be scheduled two weeks in advance in the case of an **unavoidable** planned absence; otherwise, make-ups will be given only in the case of an illness or emergency that is **documented** with a doctor's note dating from *prior* to the exam. Should you have three final exams scheduled for one day, please consult with me to arrange an alternative time to take your final. Other assignments may be made up at the discretion of the professor.

Students are expected to demonstrate basic proficiency in communicating using the English language, as defined by Strunk and White's *The Elements of Style* and other references. Poorly-written assignments and responses to essay questions may receive reduced credit.

Consistent with departmental policy, your written assignments are expected to conform with the latest revision of *The Style Manual for Political Science* published by the American Political Science Association. This requirement particularly applies to the use of citations and references in your written work.

This syllabus is subject to revision by the professor.

Academic Integrity and Honesty: The University is a community of learning, whose effectiveness requires an environment of mutual trust and integrity. Academic integrity is violated by any dishonesty such as soliciting, receiving, or providing any unauthorized assistance in the completion of work submitted toward academic credit. While not all forms of academic dishonesty can be listed here, examples include copying from another student, copying from a book or class notes during a closed book exam, submitting materials authored by or revised by another person as the submitter's own work, copying a passage or text directly from a published source without appropriately citing or recognizing that source, taking a test or doing an assignment or other academic work for another student, securing or supplying in advance a copy of an examination without the knowledge or consent of the instructor, and colluding with another student or students to engage in academic dishonesty.

Any clear violation of academic integrity will be met with appropriate sanctions. Possible sanctions for violation of academic integrity may include, but are not limited to, assignment of a failing grade in a course, disciplinary probation, suspension, and dismissal from the University. Students should review the College of Arts and Sciences policy on Academic Honesty, which can be accessed on-line at <http://www.slu.edu/colleges/AS/> under "Quicklinks for Students" or in hard copy form in the Arts and Sciences Policy Binder in each departmental or College office.

Students with Special Needs: Any student who believes that he or she may need academic accommodations in order to meet the requirements of this course—as outlined in the syllabus—due to presence of a disability should contact the Office of Diversity and Affirmative Action. Please telephone the office at 314-977-8885, or visit DuBourg Hall Room 36. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries.

Course Roadmap: An approximate outline of the content of the course is as follows. Revisions to this roadmap may be made throughout the semester as circumstances warrant.

Jan 17, 19 An introduction to the course and rational choice approaches to politics: Stewart, ch. 1.

Jan 22 No Class

Jan 24, 26 Congress in the Constitution: Stewart, ch. 2.

Jan 29, 31 The evolution of Congress and Congress today: Davidson and Oleszek, ch. 1–2; Stewart, ch. 3.
From Dodd and Oppenheimer: Sinclair, “The New World of U.S. Senators”; Hibbing and Smith, “What the American Public Wants Congress to Be.”

Feb 2, 5, 7 Elections (districts and the incumbency advantage): Jacobson, ch. 1–2; Stewart, ch. 4; Davidson and Oleszek, ch. 3–4.
From Dodd and Oppenheimer: Dodd and Oppenheimer, “Prologue”; Oppenheimer, “Deep Red and Blue Congressional Districts”; Fiorina, “*Keystone* Reconsidered.”

Feb 9 No Class: APSA T&LC

Feb 12, 14, 16 Elections (campaigning and contributions): Jacobson, ch. 3–4; Stewart, ch. 6.
From Dodd and Oppenheimer: Herrnson, “The Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act and Congressional Elections.”

Feb 19, 21, 23 Elections (voting behavior and national trends): Jacobson, ch. 5–6; Stewart, ch. 5.
From Dodd and Oppenheimer: Erikson and Wright, “Voters, Candidates, and Issues in Congressional Elections.”
Feb 23: First Research Paper Due

Feb 26, 28 Representation and consequences of electoral processes: Jacobson, ch. 7; Davidson and Oleszek, ch. 5.
From Dodd and Oppenheimer: Haynie, “African Americans and the New Politics of Inclusion.”

Mar 2, 5, 7 Representation in practice: Fenno, *Congress at the Grassroots*.

Mar 9 Midterm Exam Due; No Class

Mar 12, 14, 16 Spring Break: No Class

Mar 19, 21, 23 Parties in Congress: Davidson and Oleszek, ch. 6; Stewart, ch. 7.
From Dodd and Oppenheimer: Smith and Gamm, “The Dynamics of Party Government in Congress”; Schickler and Pearson, “The House Leadership in an Era of Partisan Warfare”; Evans and Lipinski, “Obstruction and Leadership in the U.S. Senate.”

Mar 26, 28, 30 Committees in Congress: Davidson and Oleszek, ch. 7, Stewart, ch. 8.
From Dodd and Oppenheimer: Aldrich and Rohde, “Congressional Committees in a Partisan Era”; Gordon, “The (Dis)Integration of the House Appropriations Committee.”

Apr 2, 4 The Legislative Process in Principle: Davidson and Oleszek, ch. 8–9; Stewart, ch. 9.

Apr 6, 9 Easter Recess: No Class

Apr 11 The Legislative Process in Practice: Sinclair, ch. 1–6, 12.

Apr 13 No Class: Midwest Political Science Association Conference

Apr 16, 18 Congress and the Executive Branch: Davidson and Oleszek, ch. 10–11.
From Dodd and Oppenheimer: Cooper, “From Congressional to Presidential Preeminence.”

Apr 20, 23 Congress and the Courts: Davidson and Oleszek, ch. 12.
From Dodd and Oppenheimer: Binder and Maltzman, “Congress and the Politics of Judicial Appointments.”

Apr 25, 27 Interest Groups, Domestic Policy, and the Budget Process: Davidson and Oleszek, ch. 13–14.
From Dodd and Oppenheimer: Rudder, “The Politics of Taxing and Spending.”
Apr 27: Second Research Paper Due

Apr 30, May 2 Congress and National Security Policy: Davidson and Oleszek, ch. 15.
From Dodd and Oppenheimer: Wolfensberger, “Congress and Policymaking in an Age of Terrorism.”

May 4 Conclusions: Davidson and Oleszek, ch. 16.
From Dodd and Oppenheimer: Dodd, “Re-Envisioning Congress.”

Friday, May 11 Final Exam Due