Course Description

This course is designed to provide students with a survey of the legislative branch of the American government. Through your participation in this course we will discuss the development of the legislative process as a function of changes within both chambers of the U.S. Congress and the role of the Presidency. We will also discuss the role of elections, committees, inter-branch interactions, as well as the influence of party effects and budgetary politics. This course is also designed to provide a description of how these topics matter within state legislatures.

Learning Objectives

The course is designed with the objective that by the end the semester each student will have a comprehensive knowledge of the workings of Congress, understand the complexities of how legislation is enacted, and comprehend what trade-offs are necessary in the legislative process. Students who will do the best the course will have an understanding of how changes in the political context or institution will effect those complexities and trade-offs. Also you should find yourself thinking carefully about the politics behind passing legislation and the difficulties that stand in the way of enacting legislation.

Required Books

All texts can be found in the bookstore or online.


Additional required readings can be found on the course page.

Student Evaluation

Participation in Class Discussions

I believe active participation in discussion is an important part of a class, which is why participation will make up 150 points of your final grade. The participation grade is a proportion of the high quality contributions to class discussion throughout the class meetings, or engaging beyond the minimum activities on the discussion board (i.e. posts, responses, and replying to a response). Note: Incorrect answers during class discussion will not count against you, but you should not expect points in those cases. Students attentively taking notes each day, but not engaging in discussions or helping their peers should expect to receive 113 of the 150 points. Texting, email, and “researching trends in public opinion” via social networks detracts from your participation in class and this score.
Congressional Simulation

Experiencing the complexities of decision making in a legislative setting is one way to study the legislative process. Throughout the class, meetings will be dedicated to participatory activities that apply what we learn in practice. Pay attention to the instructions and due dates that are provided online, because it is imperative that we stay on schedule.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Member &amp; Committee Requests Due (Sept 11)</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electoral Connection Activity (Sept 21)</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choose Topic for a Bill (Sept 25)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduce Bill (Upload Online - Oct 9)</td>
<td>90</td>
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<tr>
<td>Committee Mark-Up (Oct 21)</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draft Amendment (Oct 21)</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constituent Letter (Nov 20)</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voting Day 1 (Dec 2)</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Voting Day 2 (Dec 4)</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>425</strong></td>
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Exams

The three exams during the term will each be worth 100 points. The final (75 points) will be cumulative in that it will ask you to draw connections across topics covered throughout the class. Each exam will offer different types of short-answer, matching, and multiple choice questions. Each question will hold different point values. *Missing an exam without the confirmation of an alternative test date will result in a zero.*

Grading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report on Who is in Congress? (Sept 9)</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congressional Simulation</td>
<td>425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam I (Sept 23)</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam II (Oct 23)</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam III (Nov 16)</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>75</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>1000</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Student Conduct

I have high expectations for each student in this class, which are based on your academic performance to get to this point and my belief that you will treat each of your fellow classmates with respect. My goal is to facilitate a supportive and engaging classroom for everyone and one part of that is eliminating disruptive behavior. I will allow computers in-class for note taking. However, it is unacceptable to use your cell phone or computer during class to chat, surf the web, talk, or text. Using technology in this way during class is distracting to others and demonstrates a lack of respect for the instructor.

Academic Honesty

It is your responsibility to avoid plagiarism, cheating, and dishonesty. The University of Texas at Tyler Policies and Procedures for Student Affairs will be strictly followed and can be found here at: [http://www.uttyler.edu/mopp/documents/8Student%20Conduct%20and%20Discipline.pdf](http://www.uttyler.edu/mopp/documents/8Student%20Conduct%20and%20Discipline.pdf). Tests and assignments are designed to assess your understanding of the material—do not reference another student’s answers.

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¹Should the class schedule need to be amended, I will advise the class in advance by email and via the course page.
Violations of academic integrity are serious and will have a negative consequence on your classroom performance. In each instance a violation occurs, a failing grade will be assigned for the assignment or the course, require work to be redone, and have you identify what the cause of the violation was. The matter will be referred to the Dean of Students if institutional action is necessary. Reference the rights and responsibilities of students: http://www.uttyler.edu/wellness/rightsresponsibilities.php.

Grade Replacement/Forgiveness and Census Date Policies:

Students repeating a course for grade forgiveness (grade replacement) must file a Grade Replacement Contract with the Enrollment Services Center (ADM 230) on or before the Census Date of the semester in which the course will be repeated. Grade Replacement Contracts are available in the Enrollment Services Center or at http://www.uttyler.edu/registrar. Each semester’s Census Date can be found on the Contract itself, on the Academic Calendar, or in the information pamphlets published each semester by the Office of the Registrar. Failure to file a Grade Replacement Contract will result in both the original and repeated grade being used to calculate your overall grade point average. Undergraduates are eligible to exercise grade replacement for only three course repeats during their career at UT Tyler; graduates are eligible for two grade replacements. Full policy details are printed on each Grade Replacement Contract.

The Census Date is the deadline for many forms and enrollment actions that students need to be aware of. These include:

- Submitting Grade Replacement Contracts, Transient Forms, requests to withhold directory information, approvals for taking courses as Audit, Pass/Fail or Credit/No Credit.
- Receiving 100% refunds for partial withdrawals. (There is no refund for these after the Census Date)
- Schedule adjustments (section changes, adding a new class, dropping without a “W” grade)
- Being reinstated or re-enrolled in classes after being dropped for non-payment
- Completing the process for tuition exemptions or waivers through Financial Aid

State-Mandated Course Drop Policy:

Texas law prohibits a student who began college for the first time in Fall 2007 or thereafter from dropping more than six courses during their entire undergraduate career. This includes courses dropped at another 2-year or 4-year Texas public college or university. For purposes of this rule, a dropped course is any course that is dropped after the census date (See Academic Calendar for the specific date).

Exceptions to the 6-drop rule may be found in the catalog. Petitions for exemptions must be submitted to the Enrollment Services Center and must be accompanied by documentation of the extenuating circumstance. Please contact the Enrollment Services Center if you have any questions.

Disability Services:

In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA) the University offers accommodations to students with learning, physical and/or psychiatric disabilities. If you have a disability, including non-visible disabilities such as chronic diseases, learning disabilities, head injury, PTSD or ADHD, or you have a history of modifications or accommodations in a previous educational environment you are encouraged to contact the Student Accessibility and Resources office and schedule an interview with the Accessibility Case Manager/ADA Coordinator, Cynthia Lowery Staples. If you are unsure if the above criteria applies to you, but have questions or concerns please contact the SAR office. For more information or to set up an appointment please visit the SAR office located in the University Center, Room 3150 or call 903.566.7079. You may also send an email to cstaples@uttyler.edu.
Student Absence due to Religious Observance:

Students who anticipate being absent from class due to a religious observance are requested to inform the instructor of such absences by the second class meeting of the semester. Student Absence for University-Sponsored Events and Activities If you intend to be absent for a university-sponsored event or activity, you (or the event sponsor) must notify the instructor at least two weeks prior to the date of the planned absence. At that time the instructor will set a date and time when make-up assignments will be completed.

Social Security and FERPA Statement:

It is the policy of The University of Texas at Tyler to protect the confidential nature of social security numbers. The University has changed its computer programming so that all students have an identification number. The electronic transmission of grades (e.g., via e-mail) risks violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act; grades will not be transmitted electronically.

Emergency Exits and Evacuation:

Everyone is required to exit the building when a fire alarm goes off. Follow your instructors directions regarding the appropriate exit. If you require assistance during an evacuation, inform your instructor in the first week of class. Do not re-enter the building unless given permission by University Police, Fire department, or Fire Prevention Services.

If you have any questions or concerns about what is expected or permissible in this course or about academic integrity in general, please contact me.

Class Schedule

Week One
Aug 24 Class Introduction and Expectations
Aug 26 Role of Congress
Readings: American Congress, Ch. 1
Aug 28 Bicameral Framework
Readings: U.S. Constitution, Article I

Week Two
Aug 31 Congressional History
Readings: American Congress, Ch. 2
Partisan Divide, Ch. 1
Sept 2 No Class: Write a Report on Who is in Congress?
Readings: CRS Report on the 114th Congress
Partisan Divide, Ch. 2
Sept 4 No Class

Week Three
Sept 7 No Class: Labor Day
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept 9</td>
<td>Congressional History</td>
<td><em>American Congress</em>, Ch. 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept 11</td>
<td>Congressional Elections</td>
<td><em>American Congress</em>, Ch. 3</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week Four</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 14</td>
<td>Congressional Elections</td>
<td><em>American Congress</em>, Ch. 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 16</td>
<td>Resources a Member of Congress Needs</td>
<td><em>American Congress</em>, Ch. 4</td>
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<td><em>Partisan Divide</em>, Ch. 6</td>
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<td>Sept 18</td>
<td>Strategies Members of Congress</td>
<td><em>American Congress</em>, Ch. 4</td>
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<td><em>Partisan Divide</em>, Ch. 7-9</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week Five</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 21</td>
<td>Decisions of an Ambitious Candidate</td>
<td>Simulation Participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 23</td>
<td>Exam I: Congress and How to Get In</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 25</td>
<td>Workshop: Drafting Legislation</td>
<td>Simulation Participation</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week Six</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 28</td>
<td>Party Leadership in the U.S. House</td>
<td><em>American Congress</em>, Ch. 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 30</td>
<td>Party Leadership in the Senate</td>
<td><em>American Congress</em>, Ch. 5</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Oct 2</strong></td>
<td>Congressional Committees</td>
<td><em>American Congress</em>, Ch. 6</td>
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<td><strong>Week Seven</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Oct 5</strong></td>
<td>Selecting Leaders assigning Leaders</td>
<td><em>Partisan Divide</em>, Ch. 14</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Oct 7</strong></td>
<td>Congressional Oversight</td>
<td><em>American Congress</em>, Ch. 6</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Oct 9</strong></td>
<td>Lawmaking Process</td>
<td><em>American Congress</em>, Ch. 7</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Final Draft of Bill Due</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Week Eight

Oct 12  Strategies in Passing Legislation  
  Readings:  Partisan Divide Ch. 13

Oct 14  U.S. House: Voting on the Floor  
  Readings:  American Congress, Ch. 8

Oct 16  U.S. Senate: Voting on the Floor  
  Readings:  American Congress, Ch. 8

Week Nine

Oct 19  Regulating the Floor: Strategies in History  
  Readings:  Carson, Madonna, and Owens (2015)

Oct 21  Committee Mark-Up Meeting  
  Actions:  Rank Legislation  
           Draft Amendments  
           Attach Committee Report to Each Bill
  Simulation Participation

Oct 23  Exam II: The Legislative Process

Week Ten

Oct 26  Can Parties Use Rules to Bias Policy Outcomes?  
  Class Exercise

Oct 28  Congress & the President  
  Readings:  American Congress, Ch. 9

Oct 30  Divided Government: New Normal  
  Readings:  Partisan Divide, Ch. 3

Week Eleven

Nov 2  Check: Appointments & Institutional Design  
  Readings:  American Congress, Ch. 9

Nov 4  Check: Treaty Confirmation  
  Readings:  American Congress, Ch. 9

Nov 6  Check: Power of the Purse  
  Readings:  American Congress, Ch. 12

Week Twelve

Nov 9  Congress & Courts  
  Readings:  American Congress, Ch. 10

Nov 11  Influence: Courtesy and Confirmation  
  Readings:  American Congress, Ch. 10
Nov 13  Check: Size and Budget of the Courts
   Readings:  American Congress, Ch. 11

Week Thirteen

Nov 16  Exam III: Inter-Branch Relations

Nov 18  Role of Lobbyists and Interest Groups
   Readings:  American Congress, Ch. 11

Nov 20  Staff Research & Policy Recommendations
       Simulation Participation

Week Fifteen

Nov 30  Politics and Geography
   Readings:  Partisan Divide, Ch. 5 & 16

Dec 2   Congressional Simulation: Floor Action
       Simulation Participation

Dec 4   Congressional Simulation: End of Session
       Simulation Participation

Exam Week

Dec TBA  Final Exam