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.

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 *Expectations for all work*

All work must be original - including only direct quotes without any analysis will result in a 0. Work that largely summarizes or only paraphrases work from other sources will not receive more than a B-. A papers must synthesize arguments and facts to build justifications for the author’s main point (or argument).

All missed in-class activities will be counted as a zero, if not excused beforehand.

Should it be necessary for a student to make up either of the first two exams, that will be done toward the end of the term.

All out of class assignments are due at the beginning of the class. Failure to turn in an assignment on time will result in a penalty of one letter grade per day. Assignments not received within two days of the deadline will no longer be accepted.

All readings are expected to be completed before class. Although not all readings will be discussed in class, this does not negate your responsibility to know the assigned material.
Participation in Class Discussions

I believe active participation in discussion is an important part of a class, which is why participation will make up 100 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 75 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 Staff 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.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Member Office Requests Due (Sept 8)</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td>Member Bio &amp; District Summary (Sept 22)</td>
<td>75</td>
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<td>Choose a Bill to Reintroduce (Sept 25)</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td>Bill Details, Summary, &amp; Co-Sponsor Request (Upload Online - Oct 11)</td>
<td>75</td>
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<td>Submit an Amendment (Oct 25)</td>
<td>50</td>
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<td>Decision Memo (Nov 8)</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td>Constituent Letter (Nov 17)</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td>Voting Day 1 (Dec 6)</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td>Voting Day 2 (Dec 8)</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>500</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\(^1\)

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<tr>
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<th>Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Staffer Assignments (9 total)</td>
<td>500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam I (Sept 18)</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td>Exam II (Oct 9)</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td>Exam III (Nov 13)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam (Dec 15)</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>1000</td>
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\(^1\)Should the class schedule need to be amended, I will advise the class in advance by email and via the course page.
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.

UT Tyler Honor Code

Every member of the UT Tyler community joins together to embrace: Honor and integrity that will not allow me to lie, cheat, or steal, nor to accept the actions of those who do. Students Rights and Responsibilities To know and understand the policies that affect your rights and responsibilities as a student at UT Tyler, please follow this link: http://www.uttyler.edu/wellness/rightsresponsibilities.php.

Concealed Handgun Campus Policy

We respect the right and privacy of students 21 and over who are duly licensed to carry concealed weapons in this class. License holders are expected to behave responsibly and keep a handgun secure and concealed. More information is available at http://www.uttyler.edu/about/campus-carry/index.php.

Tobacco-Free University

All forms of tobacco will not be permitted on the UT Tyler main campus, branch campuses, and any property owned by UT Tyler. This applies to all members of the University community, including students, faculty, staff, University affiliates, contractors, and visitors. Forms of tobacco not permitted include cigarettes, cigars, pipes, water pipes (hookah), bidis, kreteks, electronic cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chewing tobacco, and all other tobacco products. There are several cessation programs available to students looking to quit smoking, including counseling, quitlines, and group support. For more information on cessation programs please visit http://www.uttyler.edu/tobacco-free.

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. Tests and assignments are designed to assess your understanding of the material—do not reference another student’s answers.

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 (Sept 12th) 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 with official documentation 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.

Student Standards of Academic Conduct:

Disciplinary proceedings may be initiated against any student who engages in scholastic dishonesty, including, but not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.

i. Cheating includes, but is not limited to:
   - copying from another student's test paper;
   - using, during a test, materials not authorized by the person giving the test;
   - failure to comply with instructions given by the person administering the test;
   - possession during a test of materials which are not authorized by the person giving the test, such as class notes or specifically designed crib notes. The presence of textbooks constitutes a violation if they have been specifically prohibited by the person administering the test;
   - using, buying, stealing, transporting, or soliciting in whole or part the contents of an unadministered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program;
   - collaborating with or seeking aid from another student during a test or other assignment without authority;
   - discussing the contents of an examination with another student who will take the examination;
   - divulging the contents of an examination, for the purpose of preserving questions for use by another, when the instructors has designated that the examination is not to be removed from the examination room or not to be returned or to be kept by the student;
   - substituting for another person, or permitting another person to substitute for oneself to take a course, a test, or any course-related assignment;
   - paying or offering money or other valuable thing to, or coercing another person to obtain an unadministered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program or information about an unadministered test, test key, home solution or computer program;
   - falsifying research data, laboratory reports, and/or other academic work offered for credit;
   - taking, keeping, misplacing, or damaging the property of the University of Texas at Tyler, or of another, if the student knows or reasonably should know that an unfair academic advantage would be gained by such conduct; and
   - misrepresenting facts, including providing false grades or resumes, for the purpose of obtaining an academic or financial benefit or injuring another student academically or financially.

   ii. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, the appropriation, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another's work and the submission of it as one's own academic work offered for credit.

   iii. Collusion includes, but is not limited to, the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any
section of the rules on scholastic dishonesty.

iv. All written work that is submitted will be subject to review by plagiarism software.

**UT Tyler Resources for Students**

- UT Tyler Writing Center (903.565.5995), writingcenter@uttyler.edu
- UT Tyler Tutoring Center (903.565.5964), tutoring@uttyler.edu
- The Mathematics Learning Center, RBN 4021, this is the open access computer lab for math students, with tutors on duty to assist students who are enrolled in early-career courses.
- UT Tyler Counseling Center (903.566.7254)

**Class Schedule**

**Week One**

**Aug 28**  
Class Introduction and Expectations

**Aug 30**  
Bicameral Framework  
*Readings: U.S. Constitution, Article I*

**Sept 1**  
The Legislative Process  
*Readings: Sinclair, Ch. 1*

**Week Two**

**Sept 4**  
Labor Day

**Sept 6**  
Who is in Congress?  
*Readings: CRS Report on the 115th Congress*

**Sept 8**  
Organizing in Congress  
Office Selection Due

**Week Three**

**Sept 11**  
Legislative Activity in the House  
*Readings: Sinclair, Ch. 2*

**Sept 13**  
Power of Partisan Rules  
*Readings: Barrow, John. 2016. “Partisan Rules make Congress much weaker than it has to be.”*

**Sept 15**  
Speakers of the House: Rayburn & Wright  
Week Four

Sept 18  Exam I

Sept 20  Obstacles in the Senate
Readings: Sinclair, Ch. 3
CRS House and Senate Rules of Procedure Comparison

Sept 22  Senate Norms & Open Amendment Process  Member Bio & District Summary Due
Lee, Mike. 2016. “Curing the Cancer of Congressional Dysfunction.”
CRS Report Amending Process in the Senate

Week Five

Sept 25  Congressional Committees  Bill Selection Due

Sept 27  Mark-Up
Readings: Rybicki, Elizabeth. CRS Report

Sept 29  Workshop: Drafting Legislation  Simulation Participation

Week Six

Oct 2  Reconciling Differences
Readings: Sinclair, Ch. 4
Oleszek, Whither the Role of Conference Committees

Oct 4  Omnibus Legislation
Readings: Sinclair, Ch. 5

Oct 6  Senator Lyndon B. Johnson - Master of the Senate & Exam Review

Week Seven

Oct 9  Exam II

Oct 11  Reasons for Procedural Changes in Congress  Upload Bill Summary
Readings: Sinclair Ch. 6

Oct 13  Strategies to Overcome Difficulties in Legislating

Week Eight

Oct 16  Negotiating in Congress

Oct 18  Negotiating in Congress II
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Actions</th>
<th>Simulations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oct 20</td>
<td>Committee Mark-Up Meeting Simulation Participation</td>
<td>Rank Legislation, Draft Amendments, Draft a Committee Report to Each Bill</td>
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<td><strong>Week Nine</strong></td>
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<td>Oct 23</td>
<td>Is Congress Broken?</td>
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<td>Oct 25</td>
<td>Lobbying in Congress Amendment Due</td>
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<td>Oct 27</td>
<td>Staff Research, Policy Recommendations, &amp; Letter Writing Simulation Participation</td>
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<td><strong>Week Ten</strong></td>
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<td>Oct 30</td>
<td>Ideology in Congress &amp; Intra-Party Groups</td>
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<td><strong>Readings:</strong> Jackman et al. “Most Liberal Senator.”</td>
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<td>Nov 1</td>
<td>Tale of Two Stimuli</td>
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<td><strong>Readings:</strong> Sinclair, Ch. 7</td>
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<td>Nov 3</td>
<td>Non-Incremental Policy Change, ACA</td>
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<td><strong>Readings:</strong> Sinclair, Ch. 8</td>
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<td><strong>Week Eleven</strong></td>
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<td>Nov 6</td>
<td>Congressional - Executive Relations</td>
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<td>Nov 8</td>
<td>Congress &amp; Courts</td>
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<td>Decision Memo Due</td>
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<td><strong>Readings:</strong> On Canvas</td>
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<td>Nov 10</td>
<td>Influence: Courtesy and Confirmation</td>
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<td><strong>Readings:</strong> Owens, Mark. 2018. “Changing Senate Norms in a Nuclear Age.”</td>
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<td><strong>Week Twelve</strong></td>
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<td>Nov 13</td>
<td>Exam III: Inter-Branch Relations</td>
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<td>Nov 15</td>
<td>The Many Ways to Herd Cats in Congress</td>
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<td>Nov 17</td>
<td>Campaigning in Congress</td>
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<td>Constituent Letter Due</td>
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<td><strong>Readings:</strong> On Canvas</td>
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Week Thirteen

Nov 19-24    Fall Break

Week Fourteen

Nov 27    Congressional Elections
  Readings: On Canvas

Nov 29    Redistricting in Texas
  Readings: On Canvas

Dec 1    Principles of Redistricting
  Readings: On Canvas

Week Fifteen

Dec 4    Consequences of Unorthodoxed Lawmaking
  Readings: Sinclair, Ch. 10

Dec 6    Congressional Simulation: Floor Action
  Simulation Participation

Dec 8    Congressional Simulation: End of Session
  Simulation Participation

Exam Week

Dec 15    Final Exam