

Y319: The United States Congress
Fall, 2016
TR, 4-5:15 PM, Room: Jordan Hall A106

Instructor: Alex Badas, abadas@indiana.edu

Office Hours: Woodburn Hall 329, by appointment

Course Description: This class will analyze legislatures and legislators, with a focus on the U.S. Congress. Topics covered will include congressional elections, polarization in congress, explanations of congressional voting behavior, and how Congress interacts with the executive and the courts.

Required texts: The following textbooks are required for this course. Additional readings will be posted to the course site.

- Davidson, R. H., Oleszek, W. J., Lee, F. E., and Schickler, E. (2015). *Congress and Its Members*. Congressional Quarterly Press
- Dodd, L. C. and Oppenheimer, B. L., editors (2012). *Congress: Reconsidered*. Congressional Quarterly Press

Course Requirements:

- Three exams: 10% for the first exam, 15% for the second and third exams.
 - o Students will complete three exams. Exams will not be cumulative. Exams will be a mixture of multiple choice and short response. Exams are designed to test students' underlying understanding of the concepts discussed. A review session will be held before each exam.
 - Exam 1 date September 22
 - Exam 2 date October 27
 - Exam 3 date December 8
- Four Article Summaries 5% each
 - o Part of what I hope you take away from this class is an understanding of what political scientists do when they are not teaching. To this end, you will find and summarize four academic journal articles related to United States Congress. These articles cannot be articles that are assigned for the course. A good starting point in your search for articles will likely be the journal *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, which is available **electronically** through the library. A handout will be distributed with further details.
 - Article Summary 1 due date September 13
 - Article Summary 2 due date October 11
 - Article Summary 3 due date November 10
 - Article Summary 4 due date December 1

– Research Design Paper 25%

- Students will write a research design paper. This paper must be between 6-8 pages. The paper should identify a research question related to congressional politics and put forth a hypothesis which answers this research question and explains why the question is relevant to understanding congressional politics. We will have a session dedicated to research design after the first exam. Students are allowed to work in groups of up to three for their research design papers. Students also have the opportunity to give a five minute presentation on their research design during the last week of class. Students who give presentations will receive extra credit on their research design papers.

- Due date December 8

– Participation 15%

- Students are expected to be active participants in class discussion. Active participation does not simply mean “talking a lot.” Participation means reading the materials, coming to class prepared to ask and answer questions about the reading, and offering your opinion on the material when appropriate.

– Attendance

- Students are expected to attend each class session. However, I understand things do come up. Therefore, each student will be granted two excused absences for the semester. After your two excused absences, for each class you miss your final grade will be reduced by 1%. If you make an appointment to meet with me during office hours and do not show up, this is counted as an absence.

Late Assignments:

Late assignments will not be accepted. Students who do not submit work on time will receive zero credit for the assignment. Students who are absent on a day which we have an exam and do not have a university approved excuse will receive zero credit the exam.

Course Schedule and Readings

August 23 - Introduction to the course

Readings: The Syllabus. Seriously.

August 25 - Historical Institutional Background

Readings:

- Members, Chapter 1 and 2

August 30 - Historical Institution Background

Readings:

- Reconsidered Chapters 1,2,3

September 1 - Recruitment Of Congressional Candidates

Readings:

- Members, chapter 3
- Fox, R. L. and Lawless, J. L. (2004). Entering the arena? gender and the decision to run for office. *American Journal of Political Science*, 48(2):264–280

September 6- Congressional Elections

Readings:

- Members, chapter 4

September 8 - Congressional Elections

Readings:

- Reconsidered, chapters 4,5,6

September 13 - Homestyles

Readings:

- Members, chapter 5
- Niven, D. and Zilber, J. (2001). Do women and men in congress cultivate different images? evidence from congressional web sites. *Political Communication*, 18(4):395–405

Assignment:

- First article summary due. Upload to canvas before class.

September 15 - Homestyles

Readings:

- Butler, D. M. and Broockman, D. E. (2011). Do politicians racially discriminate against their constituents? a field experiment on state legislators. *American Journal of Political Science*, 55(3):463–477
- Broockman, D. E. (2013). Black politicians are more intrinsically motivated to advance blacks interests: A field experiment manipulating political incentives. *American Journal of Political Science*, 57(3):521–536
- Broockman, D. E. (2014). Distorted communication, unequal representation: Constituents communicate less to representatives not of their race. *American Journal of Political Science*, 58(2):307–321

September 20-Exam 1 Review

September 22-Exam 1

September 27 - Leadership

Readings:

- Members,chapter 6

September 29 - Committees and Rules

Readings:

- Members, chapters 7 and 8

October 3 - Committees and Rules

Readings:

- Reconsidered, chapters 7, 8, 9, 10

October 6 - Decision-Making in Congress

Readings:

- Members, chapter 9
- Swers, M. L. (1998). Are women more likely to vote for women’s issue bills than their male colleagues? *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 23(3):435–448
- Kastellec, J. P., Lax, J. R., and Phillips, J. H. (2010). Public opinion and senate confirmation of supreme court nominees. *The Journal of Politics*, 72(3):767–784

October 11 - Congress and the Executive

Readings:

- Members, chapter 10

Assignment:

- Second article summary due. Upload to canvas before class.

October 13 - Congress and the Executive

Readings:

- Reconsidered, chapters 11, 13, 14, 15

October 18 - Congress and the Courts

Readings:

- Members, chapter 12

October 20 - Congress and the Courts

Readings:

- Clark, T. S. (2009). The separation of powers, court curbing, and judicial legitimacy. *American Journal of Political Science*, 53.4:971–989
- Ignagni, J. and Meernik, J. (1994). Explaining congressional attempts to reverse supreme court decisions. *Political Research Quarterly*, 47(2)(2):353–371
- Blackstone, B. (2013). An analysis of policy-based congressional responses to the us supreme court’s constitutional decisions. *Law & Society Review*, 47(1):199–228

October 25 - Exam 2 Review

October 27 - Exam 2

November 1 - Introduction to Research Design

Readings:

- TBA

November 3 - Congress and the Bureaucracy

Readings:

- Members, chapter 11
- Reconsidered, chapter 12

November 8 - Congress and Organized Interests

Readings:

- Members, chapter 13
- Kalla, J. L. and Broockman, D. E. (2015). Campaign contributions facilitate access to congressional officials: A randomized field experiment. *American Journal of Political Science*

November 10 - Congress and Policy Making

Readings:

- Members, chapter 14

Assignment:

- Third article summary due. Upload to canvas before class.

November 15- Congress and National Security Policy

Readings:

- Members, chapter 15

November 17 - Congress and Political Change

Readings:

- Reconsidered 16, 17, 18
- Members, chapter 16

November 22 and November 24—NO CLASS THANKSGIVING

November 29 - US State Legislatures: Professionalism

Readings:

- Squire, P. (2007). Measuring state legislative professionalism: The squire index revisited. *State Politics & Policy Quarterly*, 7(2):211–227
- Squire, P. (1993). Professionalization and public opinion of state legislatures. *The Journal of Politics*, 55(2)(02):479–491
- Miller, S. M., Ringsmuth, E. M., and Little, J. M. (2015). Pushing constitutional limits in the us states legislative professionalism and judicial review of state laws by the us supreme court. *State Politics & Policy Quarterly*, 15(4):476–491

December 1 - US State Legislatures: Term Limits

Readings:

- Karp, J. A. (1995). Explaining public support for legislative term limits. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 59(3)(3):373–391
- Sarbaugh-Thompson, M., Thompson, L., Elder, C. D., Comins, M., Elling, R. C., and Strate, J. (2006). Democracy among strangers: Term limits' effects on relationships between legislators. *State Politics & Policy Quarterly*, 6(4):384–409

Assignment:

- Fourth article summary due. Upload to canvas before class.

December 6 - Student Presentations and Exam 3 Review

Come to class with your questions.

December 8 - Exam 3

Assignment:

- Research paper due. Submit to canvas site before class.

Academic Integrity:

As a student at IU, you are expected to adhere to the standards and policies detailed in the Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct (Code). When you submit a paper with your name on it in this course, you are signifying that the work contained therein is all yours, unless otherwise cited or referenced. Any ideas or materials taken from another source for either written or oral use must be fully acknowledged. If you are unsure about the expectations for completing an assignment or taking a test or exam, be sure to seek clarification beforehand. All suspected violations of the Code will be handled according to University policies. Sanctions for academic misconduct may include a failing grade on the assignment, reduction in your final grade, a failing grade in the course, among other possibilities, and must include a report to the Dean of Students.

Disabilities:

If any student will require assistance or academic accommodations for a disability, please contact me after class, during my office hours, or by individual appointment. You must have established your eligibility for disability support services through the Office of Disability Services for Students in Wells Library W302, 812-855-7578.

Last updated August 1, 2016