POS 3424
Congress and the Legislative Process
Fall 2011
Wednesday 6:00-8:50
Business Administration, Room 220

Instructor: Nathan Ilderton
Office: 313 Howard Phillips Hall, 328 Valencia West Building 11
Office Hours: Main Campus: 10:00am-noon Wednesday, or by appointment
West Campus: 1:00-3:00 Tuesday and Thursday
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Course Description:

This course is an examination of the politics of the United States Congress. During the semester we will examine the election of members of Congress, the legislative process, and the place of Congress in the broader context of the American government and democracy. This will mean exploring the rules, norms, individuals, and historical events that have shaped the Congress. We will also discuss the development of the modern Congress and where it is heading in future.

Course Objectives:

This course will equip you not only to describe how Congress operates, but analyze why it operates in the manner it does. Students will become familiar with the theories posited by political scientists to explain congressional process and evaluate the rigor of these theories. At the end of the course, students will be better able to understand and analyze political outcomes within Congress and in the American political system in general.

Required Reading:

There are three books and a course pack required for this class. Each is available at the University Bookstore and through the usual off campus and internet outlets.

- Roger H. Davidson, Walter J. Oleszek, and Francis E. Lee. *Congress and Its Members,* 13th edition (Sage CQ Press)
- Jacobson, Gary C. *The Politics of Congressional Elections,* 7th edition. (Pearson Longman).
- POS 3424-1 Course Pack

If you purchase the text books online please insure that you are purchasing the correct editions of the required texts. This course will adhere to the listed editions; students who purchased the wrong editions are responsible for acquiring any new or changed material.

Assignments, Exams and Grading:
Students will be graded on the basis of two exams (one in class exams and one during the final exam period) and a paper. Final grades will be calculated using the following formula:

Paper: 30%
First Exam: 35%
Second Exam: 35%

Exams will consist of multiple choice and short answer questions. The exams will cover reading and lecture material from their section of the course calendar. Exam 2 will be administered during the final exam period, but will not be cumulative.

The paper will consist of a 5-7 page (double space, 12 pt font) paper on the job performance of a United States Senator. The paper will not be biographical, but an evaluation of the current and historic job performance of the chosen Senator based on standards discussed in class. A list of Senators you may write about will be distributed in class and on webcourses during the second week of class. You must inform me either by email or written note which Senator you will write about by class time in the third week of class (September 7th). Papers will be due in class Wednesday, November 30th. Papers not handed in on time will be docked 10% of the potential grade for each calendar day it is late. All papers must be submitted as hard copies, I will not accept papers submitted by email. Papers must include proper citations of sources, if you have questions about how to properly cite a source please consult the instructor.

The grading scale for final grades is as follows:

A: 89.5% or above
B: 79.5% to 89.4%
C: 69.5% to 79.4%
D: 59.5% to 69.4%
F: 59.4% or below

Final grades are just that, final. I will not reconsider them except in a case where I made a computational error in calculating them (I have taught for several years and have yet to miscalculate a final grade). Please do not email or call me asking for a grade change for another reason, it will not happen.

Attendance Policy:
Attendance at lectures is recommended, but not required. I will not be taking roll. However, you are reminded that you are responsible for lecture material on exams. Further, there is no substitute for attending class and engaging in the course materials for full comprehension. In the past, the students who did best in the course were the ones who regularly attended class sessions.

Makeup Work:
I will not allow missed assignments to be made up without a documented university excused absence. If you know ahead of time that you will miss a scheduled exam please inform me prior to the exam period. If you cannot inform me ahead of time, please inform me within one business day of the scheduled exam period that you need to make up the exam either via phone or email. Date and time of makeup exams will be determined by the instructor on a case by case basis. I reserve the right to change the format and questions of makeup exams at my discretion.

Webcourses
A webcourse section has been created for this class and is accessible through the myUCF web portal at my.ucf.edu. This space will be used to post the syllabus, lecture notes, grades, and important class notices.

Class Topics and Reading Assignments:
Students are expected to complete the assigned reading by the beginning of each week. Please note that I reserve the right to change the lecture and readings schedule as necessary to adequately cover all topics. I also reserve the right to add or subtract readings from the course. Any changes to the schedule or assigned readings will be announced in class. All readings not listed as chapters in a textbook can be found in the course pack.

Week 1: Introduction; The Two Congresses. August 24
Readings: DOL Chapter 1

Week 2: Origins and Development of Congress; The Electoral Connection. August 31
Readings: DOL Chapter 2
Congress: The Electoral Connection by David Mayhew

Week 3: Congressional Elections: Context, Candidates. September 7
Readings: Jacobson: Chapters 1, 2, 3
Suggested: DOL Chapter 3

Week 4: Congressional Elections: Campaigns, September 14
Readings: Jacobson Chapter 4

Week 5: Congressional Elections: Voters, National Politics. September 21
Readings: Jacobson Chapter 5, 6
Suggested: DOL Chapter 4

Week 6: Representation, and Home Style and Hill Style. September 28
Readings: DOL Chapter 5
"Constituency Influence in Congress." by Warren E. Miller and Donald Stokes.
"U.S. House Members in Their Constituencies." by Richard Fenno

Exam 1: Wednesday, October 5th

Week 8: Unorthodox Lawmaking/Parties. October 12
Readings: DOL Chapters 6
"Multiple Paths: The Legislative Process the House of Representatives." by Barbara Sinclair
"Institutional Context and Leadership Style." by Joseph Cooper and David Brady
"The Changing Role of and Impact of Parties and Leaders." by David Rohde

Week 9: Committees. October 19
Readings: DOL Chapters 7
Congress from the Inside, Chapter 3 by Sherrod Brown

Week 10: Rules, Norms, and Procedures, Decision Making and Roll Call Voting. October 26
Readings: DOL Chapters 8 and 9
"Models of Legislative Voting" by John Kingdon
"Strategies for Coalition Builders." by R. Douglas Arnold

Week 11: Congress and the President and the Bureaucracy November 2.
Readings: DOL Chapter 10 and 11

Week 12: Congress and the Courts. November 9
Readings: DOL Chapter 12

Week 13: Congress and Organized Interests. November 16
Readings: DOL Chapters 13

Week 14: Congress and Policymaking. November 23
Reading: DOL Chapter 14

Week 15: Congress and Policymaking. November 30
Reading: DOL Chapter 15
Paper Due in Class

Exam 2: During Final Exam Period, Wednesday, December 7th, 7:00-9:50pm

UCF Creed and Academic Honesty
Integrity, scholarship, community, creativity, and excellence are the core values that guide our conduct, performance, and decisions.

Integrity
I will practice and defend academic and personal honesty.

Scholarship
I will cherish and honor learning as a fundamental purpose of my membership in the UCF community.

Community
I will promote an open and supportive campus environment by respecting the rights and contributions of every individual.

Creativity
I will use my talents to enrich the human experience.

Excellence
I will strive toward the highest standards of performance in any endeavor I undertake.

As reflected in the UCF creed, integrity and scholarship are core values that should guide our conduct and decisions as members of the UCF community. Plagiarism and cheating contradict these values, and so are very serious academic offenses. Penalties can include a failing grade in an assignment or in the course, or suspension or expulsion from the university. Students are expected to familiarize themselves with and follow the University's Rules of Conduct (see http://www.osc.sdes.ucf.edu/).

Students with Disabilities

The University of Central Florida is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. This syllabus is available in alternate formats upon request. Students with disabilities who need accommodations in this course must contact the professor at the beginning of the semester to discuss needed accommodations. No accommodations will be provided until the student has met with the professor to request accommodations. Students who need accommodations must be registered with Student Disability Services, Student Resource Center Room 132, phone (407) 823-2371, TTY/TDD only phone (407) 823-2116, before requesting accommodations from the professor.

Unauthorized Use of Class Notes

Third parties may be selling class notes and other materials from this class without my authorization. Please be aware that such class materials may contain errors, which could affect your performance or grade. Use these materials at your own risk.