Syllabus

POS 3424 Congress and the Legislative Process
Summer 2011

Instructor Contact

Instructor	Nathan Ilderton
Office	328 UCF Valencia West Building 11
Office Hours	Tuesday and Thursday 3:00-4:00
Phone	407-582-5611
E-mail	Please contact me via the email function within webcourse for all class related emails. If webcourses is down and you need to reach me, my University email is: nathan.ilderton@ ucf.edu
Chat	I will be available twice a week in the course's chat room to answer questions. Keep in mind that the chat room is a public forum. Personal concerns and questions should be handled via email or over the phone. Monday and Wednesday 2:00 to 4:00. (May be subject to change certain weeks- watch course announcements for updates).

Course Information

Course Name	Congress and the Legislative Process
Course ID & Section	POS 3424 Section 1
Credit Hours	3 Credit Hours
Semester/Year	Summer 2011
Location	Online

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.

Prerequisite POS 2041 or consent of the instructor.

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 Text

- Roger H. Davidson, Walter J. Oleszek, and Francis E. Lee. *Congress and Its Members,* 12th edition (CQ Press)
- Jacobson, Gary C. *The Politics of Congressional Elections,* 7th edition. (Pearson Longman).

Course Requirements

Each week you will be expected to complete two modules (see course schedule). The first module of the week will open at midnight every Monday. The second module will open when you complete the assignments for the first module. Both modules will close at 11:59pm on Sunday night. Modules will not be reopened except for instances listed below.

Missed Assignments/Make-Ups

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 be unable to complete a module on time please inform me prior to the closing time. If you cannot inform me ahead of time, please inform me within one business day of the closing of the module either via phone or email. Date and time of makeup modules will be determined by the instructor on a case by case basis. I reserve the right to change the format and questions of makeup modules at my discretion.

Evaluation and Grading

Each module will consist of reading and lecture materials you will be required to read or watch. At the end of the module you will be required to take a quiz or participate in a discussion. Quizzes consist of true/false, multiple choice, and short answer questions. A short answer question should be answered in the form of a paragraph. Short answer questions will be graded on a ten point scale per question. True/false and multiple choice questions will be worth one point each. Your quiz grade will be computed by dividing the total points earned during the semester by the total quiz points available.

Each discussion contribution will be graded on a 100 point scale based on the accuracy of the answer to the question posed and the quality of the interaction with fellow students.

Modules 4, 8, and 12 substitute an internet assignment for the quiz. These will be assignments that require you to find or examine materials related to Congress on the web and respond to them. These assignments will be graded on a 100 point scale.

The final module will consist of a cumulative question that must be answered with a 750-1000 word essay (approximately 2½ to 3½ double spaced pages). The essay will be due the final day of class (July 15th). The final module will open early (July 8th) to give you a full week to complete the assignment This will not affect the amount of time you are given to complete the previous modules, however, keep in mind that you must complete all the modules in the course. The essay will be graded on a 100 point scale.

Assignments will be weighted in the following manner for calculating the final grade.

Assignment	Percentage of Grade
Quizzes	35%
Discussions	20%
Internet Assignments	20%
Essay	25%
Total	100%

Final grades will be awarded according to the following scale.

Letter Grade	Points
A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
D	60-69
F	59 or below

Academic Honesty

Plagiarism and Cheating of any kind on an examination, quiz, or assignment will result at least in an "F" for that assignment (and may, depending on the severity of the case, lead to an "F" for the entire course) and may be subject to appropriate referral to the Office of Student Conduct for further action. See the UCF Golden Rule for further information. I will assume for this course that you will adhere to the academic creed of this University and will maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. In other words, don't cheat by giving answers to others or taking them from anyone else. I will also adhere to the highest standards of academic integrity, so please do not ask me to change (or expect me to change) your grade illegitimately or to bend or break rules for one person that will not apply to everyone.

Disability Statement

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.

Copyright

This course may contain copyright protected materials such as audio or video clips, images, text materials, etc. These items are being used with regard to the Fair Use doctrine in order to enhance the learning environment. Please do not copy, duplicate, download or distribute these items. The use of these materials is strictly reserved for this online classroom environment and your use only. All copyright materials are credited to the copyright holder.

Third-Party Software and FERPA

During this course you might have the opportunity to use public online services and/or software applications sometimes called third-party software such as a blog or wiki. While some of these could be required assignments, you need **not** make any personally identifying information on a public site. Do not post or provide any private information about yourself or your classmates. Where appropriate you may use a pseudonym or nickname. Some written assignments posted publicly may require personal reflection/comments, but the assignments will not require you to disclose any personally identity-sensitive information. If you have any concerns about this, please contact your instructor.

Schedule

Note: Weekly modules stay open until 11:59pm of the date listed. Weekly modules open midnight Monday and stay open for 7 days.

Week/Dates	Topic	Modules	Readings	Open Date	Close Date
Week 1	Introduction, Origins and Development of Congress The Electoral Connection	1 2 (Discussion)	DOL Ch. 1 and 2	May 16th	May 22nd
Week 2	Elections I: Context and Campaigns Elections II: Campaigns	3 4 (Internet Assignment)	Jacobson Ch. 1-3 Jacobson Ch. 4	May 23rd	May 29th
Week 3	Elections III: Voters	5	Jacobson Ch. 5	May 30th	June 5th

	Elections IV: National Politics	6 (Discussion)	Jacobson Ch. 6		
Week 4	Introduction to Lawmaking and Representation Parties	7 8 (Internet Assignment)	DOL Ch. 5 DOL Ch. 6	June 6th	June 12th
Week 5	Committees Rules, Norms and Procedures	9 10 (Discussion)	DOL Ch. 7 DOL Ch. 8	June 13th	June 19th
Week 6	Roll Call Voting Congress and the President	11 12 (Internet Assignment)	DOL Ch. 9 DOL Ch. 10	June 20th	June 26th
Week 7	Congress and the Bureaucracy Congress and the Courts	13 14	DOL Ch. 11 DOL Ch. 12	June 27th	July 3rd
Week 8	Congress and Organized Interests Congress and Policymaking	15 (Discussion) 16	DOL Ch. 13 DOL Ch. 14 &15	July 4th	July 10th
Week 9	Final Essay	17		July 8th	July 15th by 11:59pm

Note: All dates and times are subject to change by Dr. Ilderton. Be informed and routinely check the Schedule and Class Discussion topics for any changes or updates.