Syllabus

POS 3424: Congress and the Legislative Process

Spring 2016

Instructor Contact

Instructor	Nathan Ilderton
Office	302 Howard Phillips Hall (Orlando Campus), 328 Building 11 (Valencia West Campus)
Office Hours	3:00-5:00 Monday (Valencia West Campus) and 1:00-3:00 Tuesday (Orlando Campus) or by appointment. During office hours I will be available in a chat room to answer questions. The chat room will be available under the "Chat" tab.
Phone	407-823-2608
E-mail	Please contact me via the email function within webcourses for all class related emails. Click my profile under people and select send message. If webcourses is down you can reach me via my University email: Nathan.Ilderton@ucf.edu.

Course Information

Course Name	Congress and the Legislative Process
Course ID & Section	POS 3424 Section DW59
Credit Hours	3
Semester/Year	Spring 2016
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, Francis E. Lee, and Eric Schickler. Congress and Its Members, 15th edition (CQ Press)
Jacobson, Gary C. The Politics of Congressional Elections, 8th edition. (Pearson Longman).

Course Requirements

The course is divided into three five week segments (the second segment will be six weeks-see course schedule). During these periods five modules will be available. You will be required in each period to complete four quizzes, participate in one discussion, and complete one internet assignment. During the final week of each section an exam will open for you to complete. Modules will open on the Monday at the beginning of the first week and close the Sunday after the fifth week at 11:59 pm. *Note: while the course will be open, I do not count Spring Break as a week on the course calendar. In effect you get a free extra week during Part II of the class.*

Missed Assignments/Make-Ups/Extra Credit

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. Four of five modules in each segment of the class has a quiz associated with it. Quizzes consist of true/false and multiple choice questions. 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 points available. Quizzes are listed under the quizzes tab on the course menu.

Each five week segment of the class will include one discussion question in which you will be asked to interact with your classmates. Each discussion contribution will be graded on a 10 point scale based on the accuracy of the answer to the question posed and the quality of the interaction with fellow students. These are listed under the discussions tab of the course menu.

Each five week segment of the class will include an internet assignment. 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. These will be listed under the assignments tab on the course menu. These assignments substitute for quizzes in Modules 4, 8, and 11.

During the fifth week of each segment of the class, an exam will be available which you are required to complete. Exams consist of five short answer questions from the material covered in the segment. The second and third exams are **not** cumulative. Exam questions should be answered in one or two paragraphs each. Answers should be original (i.e. **not** cut and pasted from course modules). Exams will open at midnight on the Monday of the final week of the segment and close on the following Sunday at 11:59 pm (see course schedule). Exams will be listed under the quizzes tab.

Once you begin a quiz, discussion, or internet assignment there is no time limit for it to be completed. **There is a 60 minute time limit for the completion of exams. Also, be aware that you only get one attempt to complete a quiz or exam, i.e. once you start a quiz or exam you must complete it.**

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

Assignment	**Percentage of Grade**
Quizzes	20
Internet Assignments	10
Discussions	10
Exam 1	20
Exam 2	20
Exam 3	20
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

Student Engagement and Financial Aid

As of Fall 2014, all faculty are required to document students' academic activity at the beginning of each course. In order to document that you began this course, please complete the syllabus quiz by the end of the first week of classes or as soon as possible after adding the course. Failure to do so may result in a delay in the disbursement of your financial aid.

The syllabus quiz is a five question multiple choice quiz and can be found under the "Quizzes" tab. The only purpose of the syllabus quiz is to satisfy the financial aid requirement for this class. It will not be included in the calculation of your final grade.

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 to all persons with disabilities. This syllabus is available in alternate formats upon request. Students who need accommodations must be registered with 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

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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

Modules assignments and exams open at midnight on the open date and close at 11:59pm on the close date.

Weeks	**Topic**	**Readings**	**Assignments**	**Open Date**	**Close Date**
Part I* Weeks 1-5	Module 1: Introduction, Origins and Development of Congress	Congress and Its Members Ch. 1-2	Module 1 Quiz	January 11th	February 14th
	Module 2: The Electoral Connection		Module 2 Quiz Electoral Connection Discussion	January 11th	February 14th
	Module 3: Congressional Elections: Context and Candidates	Jacobson Ch. 1,2, 3	Module 3 Quiz	January 11th	February 14th
	Module 4: Congressional Elections: Campaigns	Jacobson Ch. 4	Campaign Ads Internet Assignment	January 11th	February 14th
	Module 5: Congressional Elections: Voters and National Politics	Jacobson Ch. 5-6	Module 5 Quiz	January 11th	February 14th
Week 5	**Exam 1**			February 8th	February 14th
Part II Weeks 6-10	Module 6: Representation and an Introduction to Lawmaking	C&M Ch. 5	Module 6 Quiz	February 15th	March 27th
	Module 7: Parties	C&M Ch. 6	Module 7 Quiz	February 15th	March 27th
	Module 8: Committees	C&M Ch.7	Committees Internet Assignment	February 15th	March 27th
	Module 9: Rules, Norms, and Procedures	C&M Ch.8	Module 9 Quiz House and Senate Procedures Discussion	February 15th	March 27th
	Module 10: Roll Call Voting	C&M Ch.9	Module 10 Quiz	February 15th	March 27th

Week 10	**Exam 2**			March 21st	March 27th
Part III Weeks 11-15	Module 11: Congress and the President	C&M Ch. 10	Presidential Rhetoric Internet Assignment	March 28th	May 1st
	Module 12: Congress and the Bureaucracy	C&M Ch. 11	Module 12 Quiz	March 28th	May 1st
	Module 13: Congress and the Judiciary	C&M Ch. 12	Module 13 Quiz	March 28th	May 1st
	Module 14: Congress and Organized Interests	C&M Ch. 13	Module 14 Quiz Congress and Organized Interests Discussion	March 28th	May 1st
	Module 15: Congress and the Policy Process	C&M Ch. 14, 15	Module 15 Quiz	March 28th	May 1st
Week 15	**Exam 3**			April 25th	May 1st

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

*Syllabus quiz for financial aid purposes by end of 1st week of class or as soon as possible after adding the class.