Political Science 3424.0W61: Congress and the Legislative Process
University of Central Florida
Spring 2020
Instructor: John Hanley
Syllabus v. 1.0

Class Meetings: online
Office Hours: MWF 1:30-3:30pm; or by appointment.

COURSE OVERVIEW

Examination of the Congress as an institution undergoing dynamic change; emphasis upon recruitment of legislators, institutional and informal rules, the committee system, legislative procedures. (*UCF Course Catalog*)

This course is a comprehensive survey of the contemporary U.S. Congress. We begin by analyzing the design of Congress, congressional elections, the connections between elections and governance, and how members of Congress represent their states and districts. We then turn to the organization of Congress, focusing on the interplay between political parties and congressional committees. We will take stock of the changes in the operation of the House and Senate, especially problems associated with extended debate in the Senate. We will then analyze the legislative process, congressional budgeting, interest group influence, and the interaction between the Congress and the White House. The place of Congress in the U.S. separation of powers system will be a theme throughout the course.

Class sessions will include both lecture and discussion. It is important that you keep up with the assigned reading in order to understand the lectures and participate in class discussions. Political science scholarship will help us to interpret and explain current congressional politics, so you should follow current events involving Congress. We will often begin class with a discussion of "what's happening in Congress." I recommend reading a good daily news source such as *The New York Times* or *Washington Post*.

<u>Prerequisites, Co-requisites, other enrollment requirements</u>
None.

<u>Student Learning Outcomes</u>

1. Understand and become conversant in the concepts, theories, institutions, programs that comprise and describe Congress.
2. Critically assess alternatives in institutional and policy design through thoughtful use of empirical data. *Especially*: (1) conceptualize and develop measurement strategies to describe and test hypotheses about social phenomena; (2) develop causal explanations for the operation of American politics in a manner that facilitates the understanding of other political systems.
3. Identify the appropriate venues and strategies for pressing claims in the political system. *Especially*: predict and explain the behavior of political actors with reference to their interests and environment.

COURSE TEXT
Available at the campus bookstore and online booksellers:
Davidson, Roger H., Walter J. Oleszek, Frances E. Lee, and Eric Schickler. 2020. *Congress and Its Members*. 17th ed. Washington, DC: CQ Press. ISBN 978-1544322957
You may prefer to purchase a used copy of a recent edition—this will likely suffice for the purposes of the course, but you are responsible for any and all deviations from the 17th edition.

In addition to the textbook, other readings and audiovisual materials will be made available to you on webcourses. You will be examined on these materials.

There are also additional readings, which will be made available in pdf on webcourses.

GRADING
Grades will be based on weekly quizzes, weekly discussion posts, short papers, and a final exam. These will be weighted as follows:

• Module quizzes	24
• Review exercises	12
• Written assignments (3)	36
• Group Discussions	13
• Final Exam	15
	100 %

Grades will be awarded as follows:

A $\geq 93\frac{1}{3}$ %	C+ $\geq 76\frac{2}{3}$
A- $\geq$ 90	C $\geq 73\frac{1}{3}$
B+ $\geq 86\frac{2}{3}$	C- $\geq$ 70
B $\geq 83\frac{1}{3}$	D $\geq$ 60
B- $\geq$ 80	F $<$ 60

Quizzes (24%)
Each module will include a quiz. The quiz will require you to understand and be familiar with the readings and audiovisual materials in the module as well as how they fit together and illustrate theory and historical fact. The lowest quiz will be dropped.

Review Exercises (12%)
For each module there will be a short, web-based exercise such as a crossword puzzle or matching activity to help you review reading material. These will be graded, and the lowest two grades dropped.

Written Assignments (36%) There will be three papers, each 4-6 pages in length, requiring you to analyze and present information. These will be submitted via webcourses.

Group Discussions (12%) - Each module you will be responsible for selecting and commenting on a current events story about Congress, and replying to a colleague's post. These will be graded satisfactory/unsatisfactory.

Final Exam (13%)
The final examination will be composed of multiple choice, true/false, and short answer questions. It will be cumulative.

Written Assignments will be submitted via a Turnitin submission tool on webcourses. Late assignments will be deducted one third of a letter grade for each day late or portion thereof.

COURSE POLICIES

If you wish to have an assignment re-assessed due to a possible grading error, it is your obligation to compose a short memo identifying the alleged mistake(s).

Incomplete grades, changes in exam dates, and extensions of written assignments will be approved only upon evidence of extenuating circumstances, religious holidays, or participation in approved university activities.

Academic Integrity
The Center for Academic Integrity (CAI) defines academic integrity as a commitment, even in the face of adversity, to five fundamental values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. From these values flow principles of behavior that enable academic communities to translate ideals into action.
http://academicintegrity.org/

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

1. Integrity: I will practice and defend academic and personal honesty.
2. Scholarship: I will cherish and honor learning as a fundamental purpose of my membership in the UCF community.
3. Community: I will promote an open and supportive campus environment by respecting the rights and contributions of every individual.
4. Creativity: I will use my talents to enrich the human experience.
5. Excellence: I will strive toward the highest standards of performance in any endeavor I undertake.

The following definitions of plagiarism and misuse of sources come from the Council of Writing Program Administrators <http://wpacouncil.org/node/9> and have been adopted by UCF's Department of Writing & Rhetoric.

Plagiarism
In an instructional setting, plagiarism occurs when a writer deliberately uses someone else's language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source. This definition applies to texts published in print or on-line, to manuscripts, and to the work of other student writers.

Misuse of Sources
A student who attempts (even if clumsily) to identify and credit his or her source, but who misuses a specific citation format or incorrectly uses quotation marks or other forms of identifying material taken

from other sources, has not plagiarized. Instead, such a student should be considered to have failed to cite and document sources appropriately.

Responses to Academic Dishonesty, Plagiarism, or Cheating
UCF faculty members have a responsibility for your education and the value of a UCF degree, and so seek to prevent unethical behavior and when necessary respond to infringements of academic integrity. Penalties can include a failing grade in an assignment or in the course, suspension or expulsion from the university, and/or a "Z Designation" on a student's official transcript indicating academic dishonesty, where the final grade for this course will be preceded by the letter Z. For more information about the Z Designation, see http://goldenrule.sdes.ucf.edu/zgrade.
For more information about UCF's Rules of Conduct, see http://www.osc.sdes.ucf.edu/.

Unauthorized Use of Class Materials
There are many fraudulent websites claiming to offer study aids to students but are actually cheat sites. They encourage students to upload course materials, such as test questions, individual assignments, and examples of graded material. Such materials are the intellectual property of instructors, the university, or publishers and may not be distributed without prior authorization. Students who engage in such activity are in violation of academic conduct standards and may face penalties.

Unauthorized Use of Class Notes
Third parties may be selling class notes 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.

In-Class Recording Policy
Outside of the notetaking and recording services offered by Student Accessibility Services, the creation of an audio or video recording of all or part of a class for personal use is allowed only with the advance and explicit written consent of the instructor. Such recordings are only acceptable in the context of personal, private studying and notetaking and are not authorized to be shared with anyone without the separate written approval of the instructor.

Course Accessibility Statement
The University of Central Florida is committed to providing access and inclusion for all persons with disabilities. This syllabus is available in alternate formats upon request. Students with disabilities who need specific access in this course, such as accommodations, should contact the professor as soon as possible to discuss various access options. Students should also connect with Student Accessibility Services (Ferrell Commons, 7F, Room 185, sas@ucf.edu, phone (407) 823-2371). Through Student Accessibility Services, a Course Accessibility Letter may be created and sent to professors, which informs faculty of potential access and accommodations that might be reasonable.

Campus Safety Statement
Emergencies on campus are rare, but if one should arise in our class, we will all need to work together. Everyone should be aware of the surroundings and familiar with some basic safety and security concepts.

- In case of an emergency, dial 911 for assistance.
- Every UCF classroom contains an emergency procedure guide posted on a wall near the door. Please make a note of the guide's physical location and consider reviewing the online version at http://emergency.ucf.edu/emergency_guide.html.
- Familiarize yourself with evacuation routes from each of your classrooms and have a plan for finding safety in case of an emergency. (Insert class-specific details if appropriate)
- If there is a medical emergency during class, we may need to access a first aid kit or AED (Automated External Defibrillator). To learn where those items are located in this building, see http://www.ehs.ucf.edu/AEDlocations-UCF (click on link from menu on left). (insert class specific information if appropriate)

- To stay informed about emergency situations, sign up to receive UCF text alerts by going to my.ucf.edu and logging in. Click on "Student Self Service" located on the left side of the screen in the tool bar, scroll down to the blue "Personal Information" heading on your Student Center screen, click on "UCF Alert", fill out the information, including your e-mail address, cell phone number, and cell phone provider, click "Apply" to save the changes, and then click "OK."
- If you have a special need related to emergency situations, please speak with me during office hours.
- Consider viewing this video (https://youtu.be/NIKYajEx4pk) about how to manage an active shooter situation on campus or elsewhere.

Deployed Active Duty Military Students
If you are a deployed active duty military student and feel that you may need a special accommodation due to that unique status, please contact your instructor to discuss your circumstances.

A SAMPLE OF ONLINE RESOURCES

U.S. House of Representatives http://www.house.gov
U.S. Senate http://www.senate.gov
Library of Congress http://www.loc.gov
THOMAS – Legislative Information http://thomas.loc.gov
http://thomas.loc.gov/home/legbranch/legbranch.html
Congressional Research Service reports:
http://www.rules.house.gov/archives/crs_reports.htm
Federal Election Commission http://www.fec.gov
C-SPAN http://www.cspan.org
http://www.c-span.org/resources/congress.asp
CQ Weekly Report http://library.cqpress.com/cqweekly/ (through UCF library)
News Coverage:
New York Times: http://www.nytimes.com
Washington Post: http://www.washingtonpost.com
Politico: http://www.politico.com
Party Organizations:
DSCC: http://www.dscc.org/
NRSC: http://www.nrsc.org/
DCCC: http://www.democraticaction.org/
NRCC: http://nrcc.org/
Campaign Finance:
FEC: http://www.fec.gov/
Open Secrets: http://www.opensecrets.org/
Campaign Finance Institute: http://www.cfinst.org/
Political Money Line: http://politicalmoneyline.com/
Brookings Institution: http://www.brookings.edu/gs/cf/cf_hp.htm

I. Organizational Meeting and Constitutional Background

1/11-1/22 Module 1-2: Course introduction and Evolution of the Modern Congress

- Davidson et al., chapters 1-2
- Herbert J. Storing, ed. *The Anti-Federalist*. Letter from the Federal Farmer to the Republican, #7; and Melancton Smith address, pp. 338-47. [P]

- Federalist papers 10, 35, 57 [P]
- Davidson et al., Chapter 1.

II. Congressional Elections and Representation

1/22-1/29 Module 3: Recruitment, Incumbency, and Campaign Finance
- Davidson et al., Chapter 3 and pp. 69-85.
- Ryan Grim and Sabrina Siddiqui. 2013. "Call Time For Congress Shows How Fundraising Dominates Bleak Work Life," *Huffington Post*.

1/29-2/5 Module 4: Voting and the Representative
- Davidson et al., pp. 85-135
- Richard Fenno. *Home Style: Members in Their Districts*, pp. 136-169.
- David Mayhew, *The Electoral Connection* (excerpts published in *The American Congress Reader*, edited by Steven Smith and Jason Roberts).

III. Congressional Organization: Parties and Committees

2/5-2/12 Module 5: Leaders and Parties in Congress
- Davidson et al., Chapter 6
- Sean Illing. 2020. "Mitch McConnell's shameless pursuit of power, explained." *Vox.*

Friday February 12 – Paper #1 due

2/12-2/19 Module 6: Committees, Workshops of Congress
- Davidson et al., Chapter 7
- John H. Aldrich and David W. Rohde, "Congressional Committees in a Continuing Partisan Era," in Dodd and Oppenheimer, *Congress Reconsidered*, 9th ed., pp. 217-40. [P]

2/19-2/26 Module 7: Congressional Rules and Procedure
- Davidson et al., Chapter 8
- Joshua Huder. 2017. "The Housification of the Upper Chamber." *Legbranch.com*. http://www.legbranch.com/theblog/2017/12/21/the-housification-of-the-upper-chamber-the-115th-senate-is-basically-unrecognizable

2/26-3/5 Module 8: Decision Making in Congress
- Davidson et al., Chapter 9

IV. Congress and Policy-making

3/5-3/12 Module 9: Congress and the President
- Davidson et al., Chapter 10
- Sarah A. Binder. "Elections and Congress's Governing Capacity," *Extensions*,

Fall 2005.

Friday March 12 – Paper #2 due

3/12-3/19 Module 10: Congress, the Bureaucracy, and the Courts

- Davidson et al., Chapters 11-12
- Max Rust. 2020. "How Trump Reset the Federal Judiciary," *Wall Street Journal.*

3/19-3/26 Module 11: Congress and Organized Interests

- Davidson et al., Chapter 13
- Richard L. Hall and Frank W. Wayman, "Buying Time: Moneyed Interests and the Mobilization of Bias in Congressional Committees," in *The American Congress Reader*, Steven S. Smith, Jason M. Roberts, and Ryan J. Vander Wielen, eds., pp. 401-13.

3/26-4/2 Module 12: Congress, Budgets, and Domestic Policy Making

- Davidson et al., Chapter 14
- James McBride et al. 2020. "The National Debt Dilemma" *Council on Foreign Relations.* https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/national-debt-dilemma
- Drew Desilver. 2020. "The U.S. budget deficit is rising amid COVID-19, but public concern about it is falling." *Pew Research Center.* https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/08/13/the-u-s-budget-deficit-is-rising-amid-covid-19-but-public-concern-about-it-is-falling/

4/2-4/9 Module 13: Congress and National Security Policies

- Davidson et al., Chapter 15
- Aaron Wildavsky. 1966. "The Two Presidencies." *Trans-Action* IV.
- George F. Will. 2014. "Obama is defying the Constitution on war." *Washington Post*. https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/george-will-obama-needs-congress-to-approve-this-war/2014/09/17/26de9d3e-3dc9-11e4-b0ea-8141703bbf6f_story.html

4/9-4/16 SPRING BREAK

4/16-4/23 Conclusion

- Davidson et al., Chapter 16

Friday April 23 – Paper #3 due

Friday April 30 – Final Exam due