

The Congress
Political Science 382
Fall 2007

Professor: Dr. DuBose Kapeluck
PSCI 382-090
Tr 5:30-8:15
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Office and Office Hours: I will hold office hours after the class each evening and by appointment.

This purpose of this course is to provide a broad overview of the state of knowledge in the area of legislative behavior. There are generally two perspectives that have governed the study of legislative behavior. The first of these suggests that behavior is influenced by internal characteristics of Congress such as the committee system. The second perspective links behavioral change within Congress to extra-institutional factors such as elections and representation, and interest groups. Though we will examine both perspectives in this course, the course will have a primary focus on the impact of external forces on the behavior of individual members of Congress.

Required Text

Davidson, Roger H. and Walter J. Oleszek. 2006. *Congress and Its Members*, 11th ed. Washington: Congressional Quarterly Press.

There will also be a number of other readings that will be available on WebCT. You must print these out as they will be discussed in class and will be covered on the test.

Grading and Class Policy

Course grades are based on three components:

- 1) Two tests and a final exam. Students will be given a review sheet that highlights the essential concepts that will be addressed in the exam(s).
- 2) You will prepare a major research paper that will be an analysis of the constituency and congressional record of a single U.S. congressman. This will be a piece of original research, with about 15 double-spaced, typed pages of text. **This is due on November 29th, which is the last class meeting before the final exam.**
- 3) You will complete a series of 10 short assignments throughout the semester, which will involve gathering information on the member of Congress about whom you will write your paper. A sheet listing these assignments will be handed out at the beginning of the semester, and no late assignments will be accepted. They will be graded on a +/- basis. The information you gather will be used both in class for discussions, and as part of the data you use in your research paper.

Grading:

First Test	24.17%
Second Test	24.17%
Final Exam	24.17%
Research paper	25.00%
Short assignments	<u>2.50%</u>
Total	100.00%

In accordance with the +/- grading scale system adopted by the college, grades for individual assignments (excluding homework) and the final grade in the course will be based on the following scale: 93-100 A; 90-92 A-; 88-89 B+; 83-87 B; 80-82 B-; 78-79 C+; 73-77 C; 70-72 C-; 68-69 D+; 63-67 D; 60-62 D-; below 60 F.

Special Notes:

Attendance – missing over one-fifth of the substantive classes will result in being dropped from class. There are ten such classes—therefore do not miss more than 2 classes. The first day is not a substantive class and test days are also not substantive classes (of course you do not want to miss a test day!) Plagiarism will not be tolerated.

If you have any kind of special circumstances that I should be aware of, please let me know right away. If you have SNAP accommodations of any kind, please make the appropriate notifications and arrangements with the Center for Students with Disabilities within the first week of class. Alternatively, if you have any sort of undiagnosed learning disability, a physical impairment of any kind that will require special arrangements for exams or papers, if you are an athlete or member of any club or organization that will travel, let me know. I will keep the information you share with me strictly confidential, but in order to create the best environment for your academic success, I need to know if there are circumstances that may interfere with your performance in the course. I will provide you with an information sheet and you can include the information there or you are welcome to schedule an appointment with me to talk about any extenuating circumstances.

Course Outline

(Please note that these are only my hopes for what we will cover on each date. It could very well be that we zip through one chapter and group of readings only to spend an extended time on another topic. I also anticipate including at least some lecture on the two test evenings.)

August 23: Course Introduction

August 30: Chapter 2—Evolution of the Modern Congress

Polsby, “Institutionalization in the U.S. House of Representatives,” *APSR* (March 1968: 144-68)

Squire, “The Theory of Legislative Institutionalization and the California Assembly: *JOP* (November 1992: 1026-54)

Cook and Hibbing, “A Not-so-distant Mirror: the 17th Amendment and Congressional Change,” *APSR* (December 1997: 845-853)

September 6: Chapter 3—Going for It: Recruitment and Candidacy

McCubbins and Schwartz, “Congress, the Courts, and Public Policy: Consequences of the One Man One Vote Rule,” *AJPS* (May 1988: 388-415)

Lublin, “Quality, Not Quantity: Strategic Politicians in U.S. Senate Elections, 1952-1990,” *JOP* (February 1994: 214-27)

Cover, “One Good Term Deserves Another: The Advantage of Incumbency in Congressional Elections,” *AJPS* (August 1977: 532-42)

Groseclose and Krehbiel, “Golden Parachutes, Rubber Checks, and Strategic Retirements from the 102nd House Elections,” *AJPS* (February 1994: 75-99)

September 13: Chapter 4—Making It: The Electoral Game

Jacobson, “The Effects of Campaign Spending on Congressional Elections,” *APSR* (June 1978: 469-91)

Green and Krasno, “Salvation for the Spendthrift Incumbent: Reestimating the Effects of Campaign Spending in House Elections,” *AJPS* (November 1988: 884-907)

Abramowitz, “Explaining Senate Election Outcomes,” *APSR* (June 1988: 385-403)

Finkel and Geer, “A Spot Check: Casting Doubt on the Demobilizing Effect of Attack Advertising,” *AJPS* (April 1998: 573-595)

September 20: Chapter 5—Being There: Hill Styles and Home Styles

Glazer and Robbins, “Congressional Responsiveness to Constituency Change” *AJPS* (May 1985: 259-273)

Hero and Tolbert, “Latinos and Substantive Representation in the U.S. House of Representatives: Direct, Indirect, or Nonexistent?,” *AJPS* (August 1995: 640-652)

Fiorina, “The Case of the Vanishing Marginals: The Bureaucracy Did It,” *APSR* (March 1977: 177-81)

Johannes and McAdams, “The Congressional Incumbency Effect: Is It Casework, Policy Compatibility, or Something Else?” *AJPS* (August 1981: 512-42)

September 27: First Test

October 4: Chapter 6—Leaders and Parties in Congress

Rohde, *Parties and Leaders in the Post-reform House*, Chapter 4

Cooper and Brady, “Institutional Context and Leadership Style: The House from Cannon to Rayburn,” *APSR* (June 1981: 411-425)

Sinclair, “The Speaker’s Task Force in the Post-Reform House of Representatives,” *APSR* (June 1981: 397-410)

October 11: Chapter 7—Committees: Workshops of Congress

Munger, “Allocation of Desirable Committee Assignments: Extended Queues versus Committee Expansion,” *AJPS* (May 1988: 317-344)

October 11: Chapter 7—Committees: Workshops of Congress (cont.)

Krehbiel, “Are Congressional Committees Composed of Preference Outliers?,” *APSR* (March 1990: 149-163)

King, “The Nature of Congressional Committee Jurisdictions,” *APSR* (March 1994: 48-62)

October 18: Chapter 8—Congressional Rules and Procedures; Chapter 9—Deliberation in Congress

Binder, “The Partisan Basis of Procedural Choice: Allocating Parliamentary Rights in the House, 1789-1990,” *APSR* (March 1996: 8-20)

Munger, “Democratic Decisions and ‘Government Failure’: The Limits of Choice by the People,” in *Analyzing Policy* (Norton 2000: 162-99)

Jenkins and Munger, “Investigating the Incidence of Killer Amendments in Congress,” *JOP* (May 2003: 498-517)

Krehbiel, “Cosponsors and Wafflers from A to Z,” *AJPS* (November 1995: 906-923)

Binder, Lawrence, and Maltzmann, “Uncovering the Hidden Effect of Party,” *JOP*, (August 1999: 815-831)

October 25: Second Test

November 1: Chapter 10—Congress and the President; Chapter 11—Congress and the Bureaucracy

Copeland, “When Congress and the President Collide: Why Presidents Veto Legislation,” *JOP* (August 1983: 696-710)

McCubbins and Schwartz, “Congressional Oversight Overlooked: Police Patrols versus Fire Alarms,” *AJPS* (February 1984: 165-179)

November 8: Chapter 12—Congress and the Courts; Chapter 13—Congress and Organized Interests

Overby, Henschen, Walsh, and Strauss, “Courting Constituents? An Analysis of the Senate Confirmation Vote on Justice Clarence Thomas,” *APSR* (December 1992: 997-1003)

Wright, “PACs, Contribution, and Roll Calls: An Organizational Perspective,” *APSR* (June 1985: 400-414)

November 15: (Conference)

November 29: Chapter 14—Congress, Budgets, and Domestic Policy Making

Roberts, “A Dead Senator Tells No Lies: Seniority and the Distribution of Federal Benefits,” *AJPS* (February 1990: 31-58)

Final Exam is on Thursday, December 6th from 7:30 to 10:30.

Research Paper Assignment: Analysis of Constituency and Congressional Activity

Using what you have learned in this course about Congress and its members, and data you compile largely from documentary sources, you will do an in-depth analysis of a selected member of the **House of Representatives'** constituency and his/her policy-related activities in Congress. Is there a relationship between these? If so, what is that relationship? If not, why not?

Among those questions you will address about the constituency are: What are its demographic characteristics? How does it vote (e.g., turnout and party predispositions)? Are there politically distinct regions within it? What is the history of that congressional seat, in terms of who wins it and its apportionment? What are the major economic forces and groups in the district? Who gave the member money to run for office? Who gives it to his/her opponents? From the answers to these questions, and any documentary sources you can find, what can you say about the policy preferences of these citizens, and how do these vary across the district?

Among the questions you will address about the member's congressional activities are: On which committees and sub-committees does he/she sit? What positions of leadership does he/she hold? To which congressional groups does he/she belong? How did he/she vote on key issues, on the floor and in the committee? What bills has he/she introduced? What questions does he/she ask in committee hearings? Does he/she speak on the floor, and if so, on which bills and what does he/she say?

The key to the paper is linking the constituency to the congressional activities. You are to explain why this member behaves as he/she does, using the characteristics of the constituency. And if there are obvious incongruities between his/her legislative activity and the constituency, discuss them and explain how he/she gets away with it and why he/she does it.

The text of this paper will be approximately 15 double-spaced, typewritten pages in length. You will reference (either in footnotes, endnotes or in-text references) all factual assertions in your paper, and provide a bibliography of all materials you used in your research.

Late papers will be penalized 5% a day from the total, beginning at the end of class on November 29th (e.g., a paper turned in November 30th and scored at 80% would receive a reported grade of 75%).

There are two criteria to observe when selecting a member for study:

- 1) Only one person in class may do any given member of the House, so reserve the one you want early. Everyone will have to select a member by August 30th.
- 2) In order for the "paper trail" behind your member to be sufficiently clear, select a member who has been in the House for **at least** a few terms. (This should not be hard!)

This paper will require a lot of work, so those who wish to do well on it will begin gathering information soon! Also, you may want to correspond with your member's office, especially to ask him/her about the bills he/she has introduced. This will take some time, so do it early. I have found

that many congressmen have this sort of information on their website. The short assignments you complete throughout the year are designed to be useful in developing your paper.

The following reference books/periodicals will be among those useful to you in finding the information you need for your paper and the short assignments:

- The Almanac of American Politics* (Barone and Ujifusa)
- Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*
- Congressional Quarterly Almanac*
- Congressional Quarterly Guide to Congress*
- Congressional Quarterly Congress and Nation*
- Congressional Quarterly Politics In America*
- Congressional Research Service, CRS Bill Digest
- Congressional Information Service, CIS Index
- America Votes* (Scammon and Scammon)
- Roll Call*

Electronic Resources:

U.S. Census	http://www.census.gov
Thomas	http://thomas.loc.gov
House of Representatives	http://www.house.gov
Senate	http://www.senate.gov
White House	http://www.whitehouse.gov
Library of Congress	http://lcweb.loc.gov
New York Times	http://www.nytimes.com
Washington Post	http://www.washingtonpost.com
Roll Call	http://www.rollcall.com

Short Assignments

The following are the short assignments and the dates they are due throughout the semester. While you may be reminded about when these are due as the semester goes along, it is your responsibility to submit them in class on the date assigned. Late assignments will not be accepted. Grading will be on a +/-0 basis.

Short Assignment #1: DUE September 6

Using the member of the House of Representatives you have cleared with me, bring to class a Xeroxed map of his/her state showing his/her congressional district within it.

Short Assignment #2: DUE September 13

Bring in the following data on your congressman's district voter turnout:

- % of the population who voted in the last off-year primary
- % of the population who voted in the last presidential year primary
- % of the population who voted in the last off-year general election
- % of the population who voted in the last presidential year general election

You may need to calculate these from the raw voting and population figures.

Short Assignment #3: DUE September 20

Bring in:

- a) Two or three paragraphs briefly describing your congressman's district, touching on its demographics, economics, voting patterns in presidential elections, distinctive regions, towns, etc.
- b) The percentage of the vote your member got in the last two primary and general elections, and the number of terms he/she has served.
- c) A list of the political positions he/she held before being elected to the House.

Short Assignment #4: DUE September 27

Bring in a list of the congressional committees and sub-committees upon which your congressman serves.

Short Assignment #5: DUE October 4

Bring in a list of the party leadership positions your member holds in the House (e.g., floor leader, whip, Speaker, party caucus or conference positions). If he/she holds no party leadership position, simply state this.

Short Assignment #6: DUE October 11

Bring in a list of the informal congressional groups to which your congressman belongs (e.g., the Mushroom Caucus, the Democratic Study Group, the Northeast-Midwest Congressional Coalition, etc.). Also, note any leadership positions your member holds in these groups.

Short Assignment #7: DUE October 18

In the Congressional Research Service's CRS Bill Digest, Part II, the bills a member has sponsored and co-sponsored are listed in the "Sponsors Index." Each bill is abstracted in the same volume. In the bill abstracts, the first representative listed as sponsor is the principal sponsor. For example, for HR 5582, sponsorship may be listed as "Rep. Durbin, et al.," so Rep. Durbin is the principal sponsor of HR 5582.

Use this resource to collect the following information, which you will bring to class:

- a) Five bills of which your congressman was the principal sponsor, noting:
 - a brief description of each bill, and
 - the committee to which it was referred.
- b) The total number of bills your congressman sponsored and co-sponsored in the most recent congress covered by the current CRS Bill Digest, and the percentage of these that are asterisked to indicate that they have "received action."

**As mentioned earlier in the syllabus, it may be that this information can be found on the congressman's website.

Short Assignment #8: DUE October 25

Bring the following information:

- a) Your congressman's Party Unity scores for the most recent three years available.
- b) Three bills/votes on which he/she deviated from his/her normal party voting pattern (e.g., if he/she voted 80% of the time with his/her party, find three votes on which he/she voted against the majority of the party) (from the Congressional Quarterly Almanac).

-Bring in the name of these bills, a brief description of them, and the committee to which they were referred. (This is a rather hard assignment—might want to start early on this one.)

Short Assignment #9: DUE November 1

Bring in the rating of your congressman by the following interest groups for the most recent three years available:

CCUS (or COC), COPE, ACLU, CFA, LCV, NTLC, NSI, ACU, ADA.

Make sure that you find out what these initials stand for as you find out these scores.

Short Assignment #10: DUE November 8

Bring in the Presidential Support scores for your member for the most recent three years available.