

Spring 2012

University of Texas at Austin

Government 370L

The United States Congress

Unique #: 38849
MW, 3:30 – 4:45
GSB 2.126

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Course Description

This course takes an in-depth look at lawmaking in the modern Congress. Through this systemic approach, we'll analyze various factors influencing the legislative process including presidents, the public, parties, and pivots. We'll also examine explanations for the legislative process and party polarization in Congress.

Special Needs

The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. To determine if you qualify, please contact the Dean of Students at 471-6259 (471-4641 TTY). If they certify your needs, I will work with you to make appropriate arrangements.

Course Format

Although this class will have a lecture format, it will revert to seminar more than you would probably think possible. As such, students are expected to come to class ready to actively contribute to classroom discussions.

Grades

Grades will be determined according to the following formula:

- 20% Class Participation. Throughout the class, I reserve the right to take attendance, to give pop quizzes, and to assign homework projects.
- 20% Midterm Exam I (February 8)
- 20% Midterm Exam II (March 7)
- 20% Midterm Exam III (April 25)
- 20% Class Project

Because of the demand for this class, I will not give a Q-drop to a student unless he or she is passing the course. I frown on issues of academic dishonesty and will severely punish any student caught plagiarizing, cheating, or engaged in unethical classroom practices. I will not accept late assignments. I will not accept excuses for missing pop quizzes. I do not offer make-up exams. All grade disputes must be type written and turned in within 1 week of receiving the grade. I will use plusses and minuses in this class, with the 0.7 and 0.3 at cutoffs. So, an 82.9 is a B- and an 83.1 is B; an 86.9 is a B and an 87.1 is a B+.

Course Readings

The course readings consist of the following:

- Available at Speedway Copy and Printing (in Dobie Mall): A Course Packet
- Available at the UT Co-op: Theriault, Sean M. 2008. *Party Polarization in Congress*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Available at the UT Co-op: Roger H. Davidson, Frances E. Lee, Walter J. Oleszek. 2011. *Congress and Its Members*, 13th edition. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.