

## FALL 2012

Government 370L  
Congress and the Presidency  
Unique number 38835  
Room: Mezes BO.306  
Meets MWF, 11 to 11:50  
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THE PURPOSES OF THIS CLASS: To help students become better scholars and citizens by helping them to understand how to apply the concepts of political science to an understanding of the functioning of the American political system, and by showing them how to compare the normative concepts of the public interest and democratic theory to the actual functioning of national institutions. I am interested in facts about American politics not only for their own sake, but because they allow us to compare the actual practice of our politics to the ideal of democracy.

CLASS PREREQUISITE: Upper-division standing in Government.

### ASSIGNED READING:

- Lawrence Dodd and Bruce Oppenheimer (eds.) Congress Reconsidered ninth edition (CQ Press, 2009; see note below)
- Michael Nelson (ed.) The Presidency and the Political System ninth edition (CQ Press, 2010; see note below)
- Roger Davidson, Walter Oleszek, and Frances Lee, Congress and Its Members, 13th edition (CQ Press, 2012; see note below)
- Andrew Wroe and Jon Herbert, eds. *Assessing the George W. Bush Presidency* (Edinburgh University Press, 2009) [Notice that this book is not published by CQ Press, and therefore is not excerpted on the CQ Website]
- Some news articles, to be distributed in class

NOTE: Instead of making you buy the three CQ Press books, and then assigning you to read only some of the chapters, I have chosen the relevant chapters for each and put them into an electronic textbook, which you can access through the CQ Website. The cost to download all the chapters will be considerably less than the cost of the three paperback books. Notice, however, that you must buy or otherwise acquire a copy of the Wroe and Herbert book, which is not published by CQ Press.

DIRECTIONS FOR ACCESSING THE ETEXTBOOKS:

- 1) To access the custom ebook for this course, please use the following link:  
[www://store.vitalsource.com/show/978-1-60871-893-1](http://www://store.vitalsource.com/show/978-1-60871-893-1)

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You may also search for the ebook in the Vitalsource online store – store.vitalsource.com – by using the ISBN, author, or custom book title. Once you have purchased the e-text, you will be given instructions to register for a free Vitalsource account and download their free Bookshelf software. You will have access to your ebook in the following ways: through the online version of Vitalsource from any computer; through the Bookshelf reader to download and read offline; or through your apple mobile device.

- 2) Consult the printed handout that accompanies this syllabus to get directions on how to access and pay for the assigned articles.

COURSE SCHEDULE

**Section I: Congress as an institution**

ASSIGNED READING

From Davidson, Oleszek, and Lee: Chapter 1, “The Two Congresses;”  
 From Dodd and Oppenheimer, Chapters One (Sinclair), “The New World of U. S. Senators;” 4 (Erikson and Wright), “Voters, Candidates, and Issues in Congressional Elections;” 6 (Sulkin), “Promises Made and Promises Kept;” 7 (Smith and Gamm), “The Dynamics of Party Government in Congress;”  
 From Nelson, Chapter 14: (Dickenson), "The President and Congress"

LECTURES

**Section I: Congress as an Institution**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>
August 29	Place of Congress in the American polity
31	On representation
September 3	LABOR DAY; NO CLASS
5	Elections
7	Elections, continued
September 10	Local service and publicity
12	Structure of power, I: Institutional positions

14	Structure of power, I, continued
17	Structure of power, II: Parties
19	Legislating
21	Legislating, continued
24	Policy consequences
26	Test review
28	FIRST TEST—FIRST ESSAY DUE

## **Section II: The Presidency as an institution**

### ASSIGNED READING

From Nelson: Chapters One (Tulis), “The Two Constitutional Presidencies;” 2 (Ragsdale), “Studying the Presidency;” 7 (Edwards), “The Faulty Premises of the Electoral College;” 8 (Miroff), “The Presidential Spectacle;” 11 (Milkis), “The Presidency and Political Parties;” 17 (Polsky), “The Presidency at War”

October	1	Place of the Presidency in American society
	3	Nominations and elections
	5	Nominations and elections, continued
	8	Press I: Campaigns
	10	Press, I, continued
	12	Elections of 2008 and 2010
	15	Being President I: Principles
	17	Being President II: Case studies
	19	Case studies, continued
	22	Press II: Press and Presidency
	24	Press, II, continued
	29	Documentary film: "Buying the War"
	31	Reform?
November	2	Reform? continued
	5	Test Review
November	7	SECOND TEST -- SECOND ESSAY DUE

## **Section III: Individual Presidents**

### ASSIGNED READING

From Zelizer reader: chapter 2 (Zelizer); 3 (Dudziak); 5 (Logevall); 6 (Patterson); 9 (Greenberg); 11 (Gerstle); 12 (Kazin)

From Nelson reader, chapter 16 (Rudalevige), “The President and Unilateral Power”

From Dodd and Oppenheimer reader, chapter 12 (Rudder), “Transforming American Politics through Tax Policy”

November	9	Evaluating Presidents
	12	Lyndon Johnson
	14	Lyndon Johnson, continued
	16	Richard Nixon
	19	Jimmy Carter
	21	Carter, continued
	23	THANKSGIVING VACATION—NO CLASS
	26	Ronald Reagan
	28	Reagan, continued
	30	George H. W. Bush
December	3	Bill Clinton
	5	Test review
	7	Overflow
December	12	(Wednesday) FINAL EXAM, 2-5 p. m.

### REQUIREMENTS

Each of the three assignments in this class will be counted equally; that is, each will count one-third toward the final grade. At the end of the semester, the three numerical scores will be averaged, and final grades will be assigned on the basis of the conventional scale: 92.3 and above will receive an "A" in the course, 90 to 92 will receive an "A minus," 88 to 89.7 will receive a "B plus," 82.3 to 87.7 will receive a "B," 80 to 82 will receive a "B minus," 78 to 79.7 will receive a "C plus," 72.3 to 77.7 will receive a "C," 70 to 72 will receive a "C minus," 68 to 69.7 will receive a "D plus," 62.3 to 67.7 will receive a "D," 60 to 62 will receive a "D-minus, and below 60 will receive an "F." Anyone missing a grade (that is, anyone failing to take a test or turn in an essay) will also receive an "F." I may make some small adjustments in these averages to reflect the quality of contribution to class discussion.

The three assignments are due Friday, September 28, Wednesday, November 7, and (the day of the final exam), Wednesday, December 12<sup>th</sup>. The first two assignments are due at the beginning of the class session, while the third is due at the beginning of the final exam, which will be 2 p. m..

For your three assignments, you may choose to write two essays and take one test, or take two tests and write one essay. It is up to you to decide how you mix the tests and essays, and in what order you choose to do them. You may not, however, "load up" by turning in an essay at the same time that you take a test, thus getting two-thirds of the assignments out of the way on the same day.

### ESSAYS

Essays are due the same day as the tests: September 28, November 7, and December 12, although, if you choose to write an essay for the third assignment you may turn it in early. For the first two sections, you will have the option to write on one of two possible topics; all students

choosing the essay option for the third section will write on the same topic. Each essay must be typed, double-spaced, and no more than five letter-size pages long. No legal-size paper. Normal margins. Each must have a cover page giving your name, the class catalogue number (Gov 370L), the semester, and the paper topic in brief.

#### Section #1:

Optional Essay Topic A: Pretend that the United States has just adopted a new Constitution, in which it has reformed its political structure so that it now has a parliamentary system. There are no longer states or Congressional election districts. Instead, each party is assigned seats in the unicameral (only one house) Congress in a manner proportional to its national popular vote. No candidates' names appear on ballots; citizens vote for parties. Party leaders in the Congress determine who will fill the seats allotted to the party by the electoral system. These leaders also control all financing of electoral campaigns, and advancement within Congress. The chief executive is now a prime minister; there is no longer a president. The prime minister is elected by a majority of the members of the Congress. If the prime minister loses an important vote in Congress, he or she must resign. He or she may at any time dissolve Congress and ask for a new election, but in any case must not allow more than five years to elapse between elections.

Write an essay in which you speculate on how the nation's political system would be different from the Congressional system that has existed over the last few decades. Take into account any major changes that may have been instituted since the Republican takeover of Congress in 1995, the Democratic takeover in 2007, and the Republican takeover of the House in 2011. Do not neglect to discuss relevant points made in the assigned reading.

Consider the following points--

1. The number of parties
2. National versus local orientation of representatives
3. Party voting cohesion in Congress
4. The power of institutional leaders
5. Patterns of national policymaking
6. In your opinion, would the United States be better or worse governed under this reform than it is now?

Optional Essay Topic B: On page 417 of Matthew Dickinson's article, "The President and Congress," occurs this passage:

". . .by the 1990s it was no longer true that, in the words of former House Speaker Thomas 'Tip' O'Neill Jr., 'all politics is local.' Congress had entered a new, more partisan era of increasingly nationalized politics."

Evaluate Dickinson's thesis, in the light of the evidence he provides in his article, and the evidence I provided in lectures. Is Congress now a nationalized legislature? Or is it still a collection of representatives of local and special interests?

In order to help you think about these questions, you may want to consider some or all of the following topics:

1. The power of campaign contributors
2. Party voting cohesion within Congress
3. The power of committees and subcommittees
4. Policy-making
5. The power of institutional leaders
6. Differences between the House and Senate
7. The coalitional bases of the parties.

Note: You will get no points, in your essays, for agreeing with me. Your grade will be based on the competence with which you evaluate evidence, and construct an argument of your own.

## Section II:

Optional Essay Topic A: Assuming you had the power to do so, how would you change (reform) the institution of the American Presidency? In particular, address at least three of these issues:

1. Should the President have more or less Constitutional power? In what policy areas? Why?
2. Should the system of electing Presidents be changed? How?
3. Should the Presidential term be lengthened? Shortened?
4. Should other institutions be reformed to make for a better Presidency?
5. Should there be a Constitutional amendment explicitly permitting Congress to regulate campaign finance?

For each topic, explain briefly what the problem is, and how your proposed change would solve it. Do not neglect to discuss relevant points made in the assigned reading.

Optional Essay Topic B: How would you reform the news media (print and electronic) so as to make them better serve the purpose of creating intelligent election campaigns and wise national government in the United States? Discuss both the ends you wish the media to serve and means to enable them to serve those ends. Consider whether those ends and means would be best served by allowing the media complete freedom under the First Amendment, or whether a Constitutional amendment is needed to allow for more regulation. If you endorse the idea of more regulation, explain who should do the regulating, and what principles they should follow in making their decisions.

Do not neglect to discuss relevant points made in the assigned reading.

## Section III:

Essay Topic: Using the explicit framework of judgment elaborated in this course, evaluate George W. Bush as President. As evidence for your argument, use information that you have gathered from the book *Assessing the George W. Bush Presidency*, edited by Wroe and Herbert, plus class lectures, the assigned essays by Rudder and Rudalevige, and any other source you may care to employ.

NOTE: You will notice that the scheduled final exam for this course, and thus the deadline for the final essay (if you choose to write it) is Wednesday, December 12, five days after the final class

session. You may not want to hang around on campus waiting for the day of the final exam. Therefore, you may decide that you want to write the final essay on *GWB*, *and* turn it in early, so that you may leave town. Such a strategy is perfectly acceptable to me. Notice that I am not assigning you to write the essay instead of taking the test. Nor am I requiring you to turn in the essay before the deadline. I am merely pointing out some information that you may want to consider when planning your semester.

## TESTS

There are three tests in this class, September 28, November 7, and December 12. Each test consists of two parts. In the first part, there will be twenty-five multiple-choice questions, mostly dealing with concepts to be listed shortly. A correct answer on each of these counts two points. In the second part, you will be given a group of ten words or phrases, also chosen from the lists provided below. You will be asked to define each word or phrase, and then explain why it is important to the study of Congress and the Presidency, all in sixty or fewer words. A correct definition is worth two points, and correct explanation is worth three points, for a total of five points per term. Thus, each test offers a possible perfect score of one hundred, fifty from the multiple-choice questions and fifty from the short-answer questions.

Because it is impossible to predict the direction of every conceptual discussion ahead of time, I may make a few additions to and subtractions from the following list of concepts during the course of the semester. Basically, however, the following list contains all, or almost all, of the concepts that you will be expected to know.

Because I may slightly fiddle with the concept list over the course of the semester, you should remember that the “official” list of concepts that might appear on a test is the one that I put on the screen during lecture. The concept list on this syllabus is advisory only, and may not be complete.

### Section I--

Concepts from the reading:

(from Davidson, Oleszek, and Lee, chapter One)-----the two Congresses; Edmund Burke; Israel and the Netherlands

(from Dodd and Oppenheimer)----SINCLAIR: hostage-taking, 43 vs. 27 percent; ERICKSON AND WRIGHT: swing ratio; policy mood; ideological representation; SULKIN: seniority and promise-keeping; future vote shares; SMITH AND GAMM: collegial pattern; "a never-ending process of parliamentary maneuvering"

(from Nelson)----DICKENSON: “majority-minority” districts; a postpartisan Presidency?

Concepts from the lectures: Congress’s existential dilemma; Harry Reid; the most powerful branch; ambition to counteract ambition; Fenno’s Paradox; sausages and laws; turnout in Congressional elections; proportional representation; geographic representation; gerrymander; Constitutional gerrymander; Alaska; Tip O’Neill; GOPAC; Contract With America; electoral trends, 1960s to 2010; religiosity; Linda McMahon; characteristics of political contributors; Jim Nicholson; incumbency re-election rates; Tom Foley; pork barrel; military bases; constituency service; term

limits; "conditional party government" theory; "pivotal voter" theory; Rules Committee; Speaker Newt Gingrich; Silvestre Reyes; Senate majority leader; Trent Lott; Bill Frist; Presidential success rate; whips; Blue Dog Coalition; 90% rule; 50% rule; party ideology; earmarks; riders; filibuster; line-item veto; conference committee; logrolling; the distributive tendency; African drought bill; Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2005; NAFTA; Emergency Economic Stabilization Act; individual rationality; collective rationality; structural irresponsibility; balanced budget amendment; Jim Wright and Tom DeLay

## Section II--

Concepts from the reading:

From Nelson----TULIS: original constitution, second constitution, Woodrow Wilson vs. the Founders; RAGSDALE: single executive image; "quiescence;" presidency advisers; EDWARDS: political equality; "candidates are not fools;" direct election; MIROFF: spectacle, Grenada, "Mission Accomplished;" MILKIS: Executive Reorganization Act; John Macy; "the first national party machine;" POLSKY: "presidentialists" vs. "congressionalists," the last remaining inhibition; the better argument

Concepts from the lectures: Head of State; Head of Government; the transformation of George W. Bush; "rally 'round the flag" effect; "energy in the executive;" Constitutional position of the President; executive orders; dialogue of democracy; demagoguery; "The Bear;" primary; Guantanamo Bay Detention Camp; Electoral College; Quadpac; the Big L; valence issues; condensational issues; referential issues; attack ads; job of the press in democratic theory; First Amendment; harlot's prerogative; sound-bites; horse-race; Rathergate; a liberal bias? Reagan coalition; Democratic coalition; retrospective voting; McCarthyism; a good democratic election?; Tea Party; commander-in-chief clause; War Powers Act; "high Crimes and Misdemeanors;" Deepwater Horizon; the Presidential dilemma; unitary executive theory; signing statements; 15%; Robert Bork; capital gains taxes; health care reform (1993-94); ANWR; U. S. v. Belmont; Cuban Missile Crisis; opening to China; Iran-Contra affair; landing troops; Imperial Presidency; Korematsu v. United States; USA PATRIOT ACT; How do we know when the war is over?; bully pulpit; spin doctors; (personalization, dramatization, and fragmentation); "balance;" leak; Wikileaks; Robert Novak; killing bin Laden; F. E. C. A.; 20th Century Fund Task Force on Reform of the Presidential Election Process; "Clean Elections" laws; PatriotCo; Central Elections Committee; CAO; Senate Rules committee; AIRC; six-year Presidency; "liberated time;" "break up the big media corporations"

## Section III--

Concepts from the reading:

From Nelson reader—RUDALEVIGE: efficiency vs. accountability; recess appointments; IEEPA; U. S. v. Curtiss-Wright

From Zelizer reader: ZELIZER (Chapter Two only)--William Buckley; FISA; Dick Cheney; DUDZIAK: John Yoo; "illegal enemy combatants;" Federalist Society;

LOGEVALL: neoconservatives; "selling of the war;" "Bush's War?"  
PATTERSON: Americans for Tax Reform; 45%; Glass-Steagall Act;  
GREENBERG: "reality-based community;" Heritage Foundation; Terry Schiavo;  
GERSTLE: a multiculturalism of the godly; "affirmative access;" No Child Left Behind Act;  
KAZIN: Peggy Noonan; Mitt Romney, Rudy Giuliani, and Mike Huckabee; Southern Baptist Convention and Fox News

Concepts from the lectures: Presidential personality; Iraq wars; Carter and Iran; leadership test; character test; success test; intelligence test; primacy of politics; mendacity; Tonkin Gulf Resolution; Great Society; credibility gap; Joseph Alsop; classical tragedy; wage-and-price controls; democratic psychopath; Bismarck; The Other; Watergate; The Paradox of Nixon; structural problem of the Presidency; The Carter Paradox; Andrew Young; "Jimmy the Engineer;" stagflation; The genial dunce; "The Great Communicator;" Americanism; King Hussein; Mike Royko; 1982 Defense budget; "voodoo economics;" new political coalition; redistribution upwards; "Have Half;" Pledge of Allegiance issue; "Read my lips;" Desert Storm; "faithful son;" "I feel your pain;" Slick Willie; William the Waffler; New Democrats; don't ask, don't tell; the universal liar

#### Miscellaneous Useful Information

- A. Study questions that may help you understand what is important about the terms/phrases/concepts:
1. How does this term help us to understand a causal, moral, or interpretive argument in the lectures or reading?
  2. How does this term illustrate/exemplify an important principle discussed in the class?
  3. How does this term help me to understand how American democracy differs from foreign democracies?
  4. How does this term help me to understand how American democracy has changed over time?
- B. Answers to common questions about the tests:
1. Is it important to know dates? YES
  2. Will I be penalized if I go over the 60 word limit? YES
  3. Must I write in complete sentences? NO, BUT IF WE CANNOT UNDERSTAND YOUR ANSWER, IT IS WRONG
- C. Any disabled student may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities, 471-6259. <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>
- D. Dishonesty: I hope it goes without saying that cheating will be dealt with in a merciless manner. But because the University requires me to say it anyway, let me direct you to the UT Honor Code (or statement of ethics) and an explanation or example of what constitutes plagiarism (Link to University Honor Code: <http://registrar.utexas.edu/catalogs/gi09-10/ch01/index.html>)

- E. Religious Holidays: By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, you will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

Because I do not take roll, you do not need to “notify” me if you are simply going to miss an ordinary class session, for religious reasons, because you are ill, or for any other cause. (You should, of course, get the lecture material from a friend or from some other source, but you do not have to tell me of your absence in advance). You only need to let me and the TA know of your absence if it will interfere with your taking of a test or completing some other assignment .