

U.S. Congress  
Poli100B  
Center Hall 216  
MWF 1-1:50pm  
Winter 2017

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### Course Description

This course focuses on the lawmaking process in the United States Congress. This includes the process of legislating as well as the role of political parties, leaders, and interest groups. We will be discussing the development of Congress over time as well as the election of its members. The course will focus on how and why members of Congress act both in and outside the halls of the Capitol. The course serves as an introduction to the U.S. Congress, and we will be examining these issues from both a researcher and a practitioner perspective.

### Readings

Readings are mandatory. Students are expected to complete all assigned readings PRIOR to class. There are two required textbooks, listed below. All other readings, including excerpts from recommended books, will be available on the TED course site or through the Library's VPN or proxy server on JSTOR.

### Textbooks

#### *Required*

Jacobson, Gary C. and Jamie L. Carson 2015. *The Politics of Congressional Elections*. 9th ed. New York: Pearson Longman.

Mayhew, David R. 1974. *Congress: The Electoral Connection*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

#### *Recommended*

Davidson, Roger H, et. al. 2016. *Congress and Its Members*. 15th ed. Washington: CQ Press.

Dodd, Lawrence C. and Bruce I. Oppenheimer. 2013. *Congress Reconsidered*. 10<sup>th</sup> ed. Washington: CQ Press.

### Assignments

*Attendance* (20%): Attending class and completing in-class assignments are required.

*Policy Paper* (35%): Choose a Member of Congress that is not from California. Describe a policy change they want, the other key policymakers, and relevant interest groups. Who is likely to support or oppose your policy both in and outside of Congress? What strategies will you employ to move it along the legislative process? What is the largest obstacle to passing your policy? Be concise and direct, 5-6 pages. Must be double-spaced, 12-point font, Times New Roman, 1-inch margins. Due at the beginning of class on Friday February 17.

*Final Exam* (45%): The final exam is scheduled for Friday March 24 at 1130-230.

### Course Schedule

#### Week 1: Introduction, Origins, and the Constitution

United States Constitution - <https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/constitution-transcript>

Madison, James. 1787. *The Federalist: No. 10*.

*Congress and Its Members* – Chapter 2

#### Week 2: Development over Time

Brady, David, Kara Buckley, and Douglas Rivers. 1999. “The Roots of Careerism in the U.S. House of Representatives.” *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 24(4): 489–510.

Kernell, Samuel, and Michael P McDonald. 1999. “Congress and America's Political Development: The Transformation of the Post Office from Patronage to Service.” *American Journal of Political Science* 43(3): 792–811.

Polsby, Nelson W. 1968. “The Institutionalization of the U.S. House of Representatives.” *American Political Science Review* 62(1): 144–168.

#### Week 3: Organization, Procedures, and Committees

*Congress and Its Members* – Chapters 8-9

*Congress Reconsidered* – Chapter 7

#### Week 4: Policymaking: Part I

*Congress and Its Members* – Chapter 14

[Chapters 5-6] Sinclair, Barbara. 2012. *Unorthodox Lawmaking: New Legislative Processes in the U.S. Congress*. 4th ed. Washington: CQ Press.

*Congress Reconsidered* – Chapter 8

Week 5: Policymaking: Part II  
*Congress and Its Members* – Chapter 10

*Congress Reconsidered* – Chapter 14

McCubbins, Mathew D., and Thomas Schwartz. 1984. “Congressional Oversight Overlooked: Police Patrols versus Fire Alarms.” *American Journal of Political Science* 28(1): 165–179.

Week 6: Policymaking: Part III  
*Policy Paper Due Friday February 17*

Mayhew, David R. 1974. *Congress: The Electoral Connection*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Lee, Frances E. 2000. “Senate Representation and Coalition Building in Distributive Politics.” *American Political Science Review* 94(1): 59–72.

Week 7: Members in Their Districts  
Fenno’s Homestyle – Chapters 3-4

Week 8: Congressional Elections: Part I  
*Politics of Congressional Elections* – Chapters 1-5

Week 9: Congressional Elections: Part II  
*Politics of Congressional Elections* – Chapter 6

Bafumi, Joseph, Robert S Erikson, and Christopher Wlezien. 2010. “Balancing, Generic Polls and Midterm Congressional Elections.” *Journal of Politics* 72(3): 705–719.

[Chapter 3] Jacobson, Gary C, and Samuel Kernell. 1983. *Strategy and Choice in Congressional Elections*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Week 10: Representation and Democracy  
*Politics of Congressional Elections* – Chapter 7

Jones, David R. 2010. “Partisan Polarization and Congressional Accountability in House Elections.” *American Journal of Political Science* 54(2): 323–337.

[Chapter 5] Grose, Christian. 2011. *Congress in Black and White: Race and Representation in Washington and at Home*. Cambridge University Press.

Final Exam: Friday March 24 1130-230

## Course Policies

### *Attendance and Class Readings*

Attendance and all course readings are mandatory. All readings should be completed prior to the specified date. Discussion represents a large portion of the grade, completing the readings ahead of class improves the quality and substance of discussion.

### *Excuse Policy*

Medical documentation is required and must be turned in to apply for an extension or make-up exam. Any extension or make-up exam will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

### *Grades*

Grades will be handed out in class and/or during office hours. Grades will not be communicated via email or any other type of correspondence. It is students' responsibility to retrieve your grades. Please write your name on all assignments and exams as it is officially registered with the University, otherwise grades may not be entered correctly.

### *Academic Honesty*

Cheating, plagiarism and other violations of academic honesty are serious offenses. Graded assignments are not collaborative efforts in this class. You must work independently on all exams and papers. Please refer to the UCSD policy on integrity of scholarship for further details. If you are caught cheating in this course (this includes plagiarism), you will be awarded a letter grade of an F and reported to appropriate authorities.