
UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO
Political Science 4310: American Legislatures
Spring 2019

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Course Registration Number: 28163
Classroom: Quinn Hall 203
Date/Time: MW 1-2:20pm
Office Hours: MW 12-1pm

Course Overview

This course outlines and examines the development of the modern U.S. Congress. We will first focus on key theoretical developments in the literature concerning the legislative branch an institution and how the behavior of legislators and other trends over time have shaped the legislative process. We will also analyze the relationship between Congress and the presidency (as well as other institutions), exploring how changes in the level of polarization, politicization, and executive unilateralism, among other trends, have affected these institutions and their respective influence on the policy making process. Throughout this course, we will concentrate on relationships that affect the policy process because we want to explain how legislative behavior matters and what its consequences are. Please note that course assignments and assessments are developed in line with UTEP's "Edge Advantages" goals. In line with UTEP's Edge mission, portions of the class will deal with civic engagement issues and the prospects for key policy reforms in the current political environment, as well as provide opportunities for students to engage in their communities to affect change through voter registration efforts or other means. I look forward to working with you during the course of the semester and encourage you to be active in our in-class activities and discussions.

Course Objectives

Learning outcomes relevant to Social and Behavior Sciences (SBS) and in line with UTEP's Edge Mission - Students can expect to learn the following by the end of this course:

- (1) to define, understand, and use concepts and terms relevant to the study of the U.S. Congress (Targeted Edge Advantages: Critical thinking, Problem solving)
- (2) to apply a body of factual knowledge directly relevant to understanding the role of legislators and how their behavior impacts the policy making process (Targeted Edge Advantages: Communication, Critical thinking, Problem solving, Leadership, Confidence, Social responsibility)
- (3) to apply a body of factual knowledge and to critique and apply major theses directly relevant to analyzing the effects of historical, social, political, economic, and global forces on the institution of Congress and its relation to the presidency (Targeted Edge Advantages: Communication, Critical thinking, Problem solving, Leadership, Confidence, Global Awareness, Social responsibility)
- (4) to recognize and think critically about testable hypotheses relevant to the study of Congress (Targeted Edge Advantages: Critical thinking, Problem solving)

- (5) to develop and communicate knowledge and general theories from the literature to evaluate the current events and social conditions related to Congress and politics more broadly (Targeted Edge Advantages: Communication, Leadership, Confidence, Global Awareness, Social responsibility)

Objectives for Good Citizenship

As a member of this classroom it is vital that you to adhere to the following principles of professionalism:

- interpret the consequences of one’s own actions (unprofessional conduct will be dealt with swiftly through the university),
- have responsible civic engagement—that is,
 - respect different points of view and different cultures
 - work effectively as a leader and/or member of the class
 - articulate the value of a diverse and global perspective in the workplace and society
- It is essential that the utmost respect and professionalism be adhered in all exchanges between class members. This is a political science course and we will be discussing at times sensitive and controversial topics. Avoid any unnecessary arguments with other class members, such as political polemical arguments (e.g., negative partisan talking points targeting those of opposing ideological perspectives or particular political figures) or, even worse, personal attacks on others for having different views.
- No inappropriate behavior will be tolerated. Unprofessional conduct will be dealt with swiftly through the university and it is at the professor’s full discretion to have a student dropped from the course for any inappropriate behavior.

Grades

Grades will be based on in-class attendance and participation counting for 10% of the grade, three projects (the first is worth 10% of the final grade and the second and third are worth 15%), and two exams each counting 25%. Please note that I do not give out grades over the phone.

Grading/Exams	
In-Class Attendance and Participation	10%
Project #1	10%
Midterm Exam	25%
Project #2	15%
Project #3	15%
Final Exam	25%
Total	100%

Final grades are based on accumulated weighted points, rounded to the 2nd decimal:

Final Grade Scale
≥ 89.50% = A
89.49 – 79.50% = B
79.49 – 69.50% = C
69.49 – 59.50% = D
≤ 59.50% = F

I will not change grades. You have the opportunity to earn extra credit in this class so there is no reason to consider grade changes. If you are concerned about your grade, please come and see me during my office hours. This is particularly important if your grade on the first exam is not what you expected. I will not change the grade, but I can give you feedback and suggestions on how to improve your performance in the class.

Required Texts

The course includes two required textbooks, each of which are listed below. Each of these texts should be available at the university bookstore. However, I encourage students to seek out these books online and look for the best deals to save money. The reading load will range from about 50-80 pages per week.

Required Texts:

Davidson, Roger H., Walter J. Oleszek, Frances E. Lee, and Eric Schickler. 2018. *Congress and its Members, 16th Edition*. Thousand Oaks, CA: CQ Press.

- ISBN 978-1-5063-6973-0

Pika, Joseph A., John Anthony Maltese, and Andrew Rudalevige. 2018. *Understanding a New Presidency: in the Age of Trump*. Thousand Oaks, CA: CQ Press.

- ISBN 978-1-5443-0821-0

Classroom Policies

- In-class attendance and participation counts for 10% of the final grade. Accordingly, you must attend and participate in class to earn an “A.” Students will be asked to sign an attendance sheet for each class meeting. I expect everyone to attend class on the scheduled dates and times. This means coming to class alert, willing to ask and answer questions, and prepared to contribute intellectually to the class discussions. Remember that you are expected to have completed the weekly readings before the class meeting. Coming to the class prepared is important particularly because when calculating your final grade, I will consider your class participation. In addition, exams will cover material from the readings and the lectures, so doing just one or the other will leave you at a disadvantage. If I consistently detect a pattern of only a few students reading, there will be graded “pop-quizzes,” which will account for 10% of the final grade. Note that the class participation portion of each student’s grade is non-negotiable and left solely to the discretion of the instructor.
- I will deduct a full letter grade for a late assignment for each day it is late after the due date (including weekends). For example, a “perfect” assignment turned in two days late would receive an 80 out of a 100.
- If you miss a test due to an emergency or illness, or if you have a university-approved excuse ahead of time, you must notify me *as soon as possible* to arrange a make-up exam. Note that if you miss an exam, I expect you to contact me *immediately* afterward (I expect later that day or the following day at the latest). You may contact me by e-mail, telephone, or visit during office hours to arrange a make-up.
- Make-up exams will only be given if you have a university excused absence and follow university guidelines (see “Excused Absences” section below for more details). If you miss a test due to an emergency or illness, or if you have a university-approved excuse ahead of time, you must notify me *as soon as possible* to arrange a make-up exam. Note that if you

miss an exam, I expect you to contact me *immediately* afterward (I expect later that day or the following day at the latest). You may contact me by e-mail, telephone, or visit during office hours to arrange a make-up. If you miss a test and do not have a university acceptable excuse, you will receive a “0” on the test. Keep in mind that a make-up exam may be of a different format than the original exam.

- If you miss a test and do not have a university acceptable excuse, you will receive a “0” on the test. Keep in mind that a make-up exam may be of a different format than the original exam.

Excused Absences

I will excuse absences and late work *only* when a student participates in an official university-recognized activity, observes a recognized religious holiday of her/his faith that happens to coincide with a class session, is called to and participates in active military service for a reasonably brief period, or confronts a medical emergency. To be excused, you must notify me *in writing* prior to the date of absence. That said, in cases where advance notification is not feasible (e.g. a medical emergency), you must provide notification as soon as possible following your absence. Such notification must include an explanation of why notice could not be sent in advance. You must also provide satisfactory documentation verifying the reason for the absence. In case of an illness, a doctor’s note is the proper documentation required. *For my records, you should e-mail me a scanned copy of the documentation that verifies the reason for your absence (if you don’t have access to a scanner, you can take a photo of the documentation).* *Documentation that is not provided in a timely manner will not be accepted.* Please do not ask me to excuse absences for minor illnesses or scheduling conflicts. I am aware that students have other interests and obligations, but you should nevertheless make this class a priority. If you are likely to have recurring conflicts, please take another course that better fits your schedule.

See the academic regulations in the UTEP Undergraduate Catalogue for a list of excused absences: <http://academics.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=54418>. According to UTEP Curriculum and Classroom Policies, “When, in the judgment of the instructor, a student has been absent to such a degree as to impair his or her status relative to credit for the course, the instructor may drop the student from the class with a grade of “W” before the course drop deadline and with a grade of “F” after the course drop deadline.”

E-mail Protocol

When e-mailing me, please put the course and section number in the subject line. In the body of your e-mail clearly state your question. At the end of your e-mail, be sure to put your first and last name and UIN. Do not e-mail me about information you can obtain from the syllabus. I do not answer substantive material from lectures or readings via e-mail as it is not an effective means of communicating. If there is class material you are confused about, please come and see me during my office hours.

Class Projects

There will be three class projects for this course, the first two will be individual assignments and the last will be a group project presentation. Full instructions for these projects will be provided on the day they are assigned.

Extra Credit

If, during the semester you have zero absences, three bonus points will be added to your final grade. Having only one absence will earn you two extra points and if you have only two absences, you will get one extra point. If you have more than two absences, you will not receive extra credit points. University-excused absences will not be counted against you, so long as you provide documentation the day you return to class. Again, it is your responsibility to document excused absences in a timely fashion.

I will also provide opportunities for extra credit as related to community service opportunities. Students who provide 1-2 hours of community service activities, either through UTEP's Center for Civic Engagement or other approved organizations can earn up to 2 points towards their final averages. Other extra credit opportunities are at the sole discretion of the instructor and will be assigned in-class.

Note: The community engagement activity allows one to put into practice some of the skills being developed for the course that fall in line with UTEP's overall longstanding mission of outreach as well as our current UTEP Edge Advantage mission of engagement, with a particular focus on community leadership, building self-confidence by getting out into the community, global awareness of voter participation needs, social responsibility in helping to fill that need, and communication in engaging others in a nonpartisan manner about active participation in the electoral process. As such, Targeted Edge Advantages for this activity apply particularly to the categories of Leadership, Confidence, Global Awareness, Social Responsibility, and Communication.

Academic Dishonesty and Misconduct

Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures. It includes, but is not limited to cheating, collusion, and plagiarism. Cheating may involve copying from or providing information to another student and possessing unauthorized materials during a test. Collusion involves collaborating with another person to commit any academically dishonest act. *One example of collusion is signing in for another person (or having someone sign for you) on the class attendance sheet.*

Plagiarism is commonly defined as passing off the ideas, works, writing, etc., of another person as your own. Accordingly, you are committing plagiarism if you copy the work of another person and turn it in as your own work, even if you have the permission of that person. If you are unsure whether a citation is required, err on the side of caution and provide one. A document detailing different forms of plagiarism is provided on Blackboard. Here is an informative webcast on plagiarism: <http://www.plagiarism.org/resources/webcasts>.

Be aware, just as the internet has made it easier to find material, it has also made it easier to trace the source of any written work. All written work submitted for this course will be checked by the instructor for originality via *SafeAssign*—an online originality checking service made available by UTEP.

Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Violations will be taken seriously and will be referred to the Dean of Students Office

for possible disciplinary action. Students may be suspended or expelled from UTEP for such actions. Refer to <http://studentaffairs.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=4386> for further information.

ADA Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you require specific accommodations and support services, please contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS). Please keep in mind that accommodations need to be requested at least two weeks (or a month if advance planning, such as the acquisition of books-on-tape, is required) prior to the beginning of the semester. Here is the contact information for CASS: web: <http://sa.utep.edu/cass/>; phone: (915) 747-5148; fax: (915) 747-8712; e-mail: cass@utep.edu; location: UTEP Union Building East Room 106.

Copyright Statement for Course Materials

The course materials used in this course are copyrighted. By course materials, I mean all materials generated for this class, which include but are not limited to syllabi, quizzes, exams, lecture notes and PowerPoint slides, in-class materials, review sheets, and additional problem sets. This also includes any information posted on the course webpage. Because these are copyrighted, you do not have the right to distribute the course materials, unless I expressly grant permission.

Course Schedule

<p>Note: This is a provisional schedule of our course. With advanced notice, I may introduce specific changes based on progress in class.</p>		
Monday	1/21	Martin Luther King Holiday (NO CLASS)
Wednesday	1/23	Course Introduction Discuss Syllabus, Course Schedule, & Assignments
Monday	1/28	The Two Congresses Davidson et al. 2018, Ch. 1
Wednesday	1/30	Evolution of the Modern Congress Davidson et al. 2018, Ch. 2
Monday	2/4	Going for It: Recruitment and Candidacy Davidson et al. 2018, Ch. 3
Wednesday	2/6	Making It: The Electoral Game Davidson et al. 2018, Ch. 4
Monday	2/11	Being There: Hill Styles and Home Styles Davidson et al. 2018, Ch. 5
Wednesday	2/13	Leaders and Parties in Congress Davidson et al. 2018, Ch. 6
Monday	2/18	Committees: Workshops of Congress Davidson et al. 2018, Ch. 7
Wednesday	2/20	STATA Conference (No Class)
Monday	2/25	Congressional Rules and Procedures Davidson et al. 2018, Ch. 8
Wednesday	2/27	Decision Making in Congress Davidson et al. 2018, Ch. 9
Monday	3/4	Review for Midterm Exam
Wednesday	3/6	MIDTERM EXAM
Monday	3/11	Shirley Chisholm '72: Unbought & Unbossed Class Project #1 (assignment)

Wednesday	3/13	Shirley Chisholm '72: Unbought & Unbossed (Continued) Class Project #1 (assignment) *May submit project if finished in-class
Monday	3/18	Spring Break (NO CLASSES)
Wednesday	3/20	Spring Break (NO CLASSES)
Monday	3/25	Congress and the President Davidson et al. 2018, Ch. 10 *Class Project #1 Final Due
Wednesday	3/27	Congress and the President Pika et al. 2018, I-III Class Project #2 (assignment)
Monday	4/1	Congress and the President Pika et al. 2018, IV-VI Class Project #2 (assignment)
Wednesday	4/3	Congress and the Bureaucracy Davidson et al. 2018, Ch. 11
Monday	4/8	Congress and the Courts Davidson et al. 2018, Ch. 12
Wednesday	4/10	Congress and Organized Interests Davidson et al. 2018, Ch. 13 *Class Project #2 Final Due
Monday	4/15	Congress, Budgets, and Domestic Policy Making Davidson et al. 2018, Ch. 14
Wednesday	4/17	Congress and National Security Policies Davidson et al. 2018, Ch. 15
Monday	4/22	The Two Congresses and the American People Davidson et al. 2018, Ch. 16
Wednesday	4/24	Group Work for Project #3 (Lab Day)
Monday	4/29	Class Project #3 - Presentations (Day 1)
Wednesday	5/1	Class Project #3 - Presentations (Day 2)

Monday	5/6	Class Project #3 - Presentations (Day 3)
Wednesday	5/8	Review for Final Exam
TBA		FINAL EXAM TBA