

POLS 3320-01 | Spring 2019
Congress & the Legislative Process

Dr. Marcus E. Hendershot,
Assistant Professor

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School of Liberal Arts

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(830) 792-7325

Class Hours

Monday:

Tuesday:

9:25 to 10:40am-Weir 109

Wednesday:

Thursday:

9:25 to 10:40am-Weir 109

Friday:

Office Hours

Monday:

Noon to 1:10pm

Tuesday:

1:30 to 2:30pm

Wednesday

Noon to 1:10pm

Thursday:

11:00 to Noon

Friday:

By Appointment

I. Course Description

This course offers an overview of the political science literature associated with the subfield of legislative politics. As you know, most citizens would consider our Congress less palatable than the plague. However, it represents a crucial institutional process that must create consensual policies to solve difficult collective action problems (e.g., protecting citizens or paying for critical public works). Societies that do not solve these problems regress and eventually fail, so this topic is one of considerable importance.

Our Congress currently exists in a polarized party system wherein Democrats and Republicans are more distant from each other than at any other point in U.S. history. We will be working through some of the sources and implications of this polarity as we move through the semester.

Generally, the course is bifurcated in terms of focus. We will spend the first half of the semester considering electoral aspects and looking at the goals and constituencies of Members of Congress. In particular, we will focus on the 2018 midterm election cycle and its recent outcome. From there, we will move toward topics associated with the legislative process. We will consider representation styles, theories of committee organization and critical institutional processes that govern the passage of laws. Our eventual focus will be upon future fiscal challenges and how our polarized politics hinders solutions of this critical problem.

Our learning objectives are four-fold this semester:

- 1) Gain a reference knowledge of the literature on legislative politics
- 2) Develop analytical skills that allow us to apply abstract theories to concrete problems

- 3) Develop the research skills necessary to collect and analyze legislative roll call data
- 4) Learn how to cogently communicate the knowledge gained in the course

You can and will get frustrated with the course material this semester. However if you stick with it, you will begin to understand how abstract theory helps us better understand real world collective action problems. That type of knowledge has real value.

II. Required Text and Readings

The following text is required and will act as a general resource for course lectures and topics:

Dodd, Lawrence C. and Bruce I Oppenheimer. 2017. *Congress Reconsidered*, 11th Ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage-CQ Press. ISBN: 9781506328782

This text will be supplemented with topical readings from newspapers, journals, and books. These materials will be made available to students in Adobe PDF format through the Schreiner Canvas system, which provides a web-based resource for the course that will act as the current calendar of readings/lectures:

Schreiner Canvas System

<https://schreiner.instructure.com/>

Please make note of the help button on the lower left-hand menu. It will be useful for issues specific to the Canvas system. For other Schreiner technical issues, such as user accounts, email and passwords, you can utilize:

Schreiner Help Desk

(830) 792-7344

helpdesk@schreiner.edu

III. Calendar of Topics

Tuesday	01/15/19	<u>Lecture / Discussion</u> Introduction to the Course
Thursday	01/17/19	<u>Lecture / Discussion</u> Public Perceptions of Congress John R. Hibbing and Christopher W. Larimer 2005. "What the American Public Wants Congress to Be." (SC) Sarah Binder "The shutdown is just the finale." <i>Washington Post</i> , 27 December 2018. (SC) Bill Pascrell Jr. "Why is congress so dumb?" <i>Washington Post</i> , 11 January 2018. (SC)

Tuesday	01/22/19	<p><u>Lecture / Discussion</u></p> <p>Soaking and Poking with the House</p> <p>Richard F. Fenno 1977. "U.S. House Members in Their Constituencies: An Exploration." (SC)</p> <p>John Bresnahan and Rachael Bade "The agonizing, 8-page memo on how to chauffeur a congressman" <i>Politico</i>, 18 August 2017. (SC)</p> <p>Drop-Add deadline (1/22)</p>
Thursday	01/24/19	<p><u>Lecture / Discussion</u></p> <p>The Contemporary Congress</p> <p>Barbara Sinclair "The New World of U.S. Senators." (p.1)</p> <p>John H. Aldrich and David W. Rohde "Lending and Reclaiming Power: Majority Leadership in the House Since the 1950s." (p.29)</p>
Tuesday	01/29/19	<p><u>Lecture / Discussion</u></p> <p>The Contemporary Congress</p> <p>Tim Alberta "John Boehner Unchained" <i>Politico Magazine</i>, 01 November 2017. (SC)</p> <p>Kate Zernike "Nancy Pelosi: demonized or celebrated, she refuses to agonize." <i>New York Times</i>, 4 November 2018. (SC)</p>
Thursday	01/31/19	<p><u>Lecture / Discussion</u></p> <p>Congressional Elections</p> <p>David R. Mayhew. 1974. <i>Congress: The Electoral Connection</i>. Ch 1. (SC)</p> <p>Tiffany Wen "The art and science of being charismatic" <i>BBC News</i>, 27 October 2017. (SC)</p>
Tuesday	02/05/19	<p><u>Lecture / Discussion</u></p> <p>Congressional Elections</p> <p>Robert S. Erikson and Gerald C. Wright. 2017. "Voters, Candidates, and Issues in Congressional Elections." (p.61)</p>
Thursday	02/07/19	<p><u>Lecture / Discussion</u></p> <p>Congressional Elections</p> <p>Gary C. Jacobson. "Partisanship, Money, and Competition: Elections and the Transformation of Congress Since the 1970s." (p. 89)</p>

Tuesday	02/12/19	<u>Lecture / Discussion</u> Redistricting and the Gerrymander Vann R. Newkirk II. "How Redistricting Became a Technological Arms Race" <i>The Atlantic</i> , 28 October 2017. (SC)
Thursday	02/14/19	<u>Lecture / Discussion</u> 2018 Midterms Lawrence C. Dodd and Bruce I. Oppenheimer "Congress in the Age of Trump: The 2016 National Elections and their Aftermath." (p.451) David Weigel and Michael Scherer "The 2018 midterms are fast approaching" <i>Washington Post</i> , 6 January 2018. (SC) <i>Four week grades due (02/14)</i>
Tuesday	02/19/19	<u>Lecture / Discussion</u> 2018 Midterms Stuart Rothenberg "Two electorates, two outcomes" <i>Rollcall</i> , 7 November 2018. (SC) Walter Shapiro "Tuesday night's wave came with an undertow for the GOP" <i>Rollcall</i> , 7 November 2018. (SC) Nate Silver "Trump's base isn't enough" <i>FiveThirtyEight</i> 20 November 2018. (SC)
Thursday	02/21/19	<u>Lecture / Discussion</u> [Open Date]
Tuesday	02/26/19	Midterm Exam
Thursday	02/28/19	<u>Lecture / Discussion</u> Representation Styles Warren E. Miller and Donald E. Stokes 1963. "Constituency Influence in Congress." <i>American Political Science Review</i> 57. (SC)
Tuesday	03/05/19	<u>Lecture / Discussion</u> Representation Styles Soren Jordan, Kim Quaille Hill and Patricia A Hurley "Constituency Representation in Congress: In General and in Periods of Higher and Lower Partisan Polarization." (p.119)

Thursday	03/07/19	<p>Congressional Voting Projects [working day] <i>Midterm grades due (03/07)</i></p>
Tuesday	03/12/19	Spring Break
Thursday	03/14/19	Spring Break
Tuesday	03/19/19	<p><u>Lecture / Discussion</u> Congressional Committees Tim Groseclose and David C. King "Committee Theories Reconsidered." (SC)</p>
Thursday	03/21/19	<p><u>Lecture / Discussion</u> Congressional Committees Craig Volden and Alan E. Wiseman "Legislative Effectiveness and Problem Solving in the U.S. House of Representatives." (p.259) <i>Drop deadline (03/21 @ 1pm)</i></p>
Tuesday	03/26/19	<p><u>Lecture / Discussion</u> Leadership & Institutional Rules Steven S. Smith and Gerald Gamm "The Dynamics of Party Government in Congress." (p.163) Rachael Bade "Ryan breaks record for shutting down floor debate" <i>Politico</i>, 7 November 2017. (SC)</p>
Thursday	03/28/19	<p><u>Lecture / Discussion</u> Leadership and Institutional Rules Peter C. Hanson "The Endurance of Nonpartisanship in House Appropriations." (p.285) Christopher M. Davis "The Legislative Process on the House Floor: An Introduction," <i>Congressional Research Service</i>, 9 December 2006. (SC)</p>
Tuesday	04/02/19	<p><u>Lecture / Discussion</u> Leadership & Institutional Rules Gregory Kroger "Filibusters and Majority Rule in the Modern Senate." (p.311) Christopher M. Davis "How measures are brought to the Senate floor: a brief introduction" <i>Congressional Research Service</i>, 6 April 2017. (SC)</p>

Thursday	04/04/19	<p><u>Lecture / Discussion</u></p> <p>Leadership & Institutional Rules</p> <p>Jeff Davis "The rule that broke the Senate" <i>Politico Magazine</i>, 15 October 2017. (SC)</p> <p>John Hudak "Congress in 2019: why the first branch should bring back earmarks" <i>Brookings Institution</i>, 27 December 2018.</p>
Tuesday	04/09/19	<p><u>Lecture / Discussion</u></p> <p>Measurement in Congress</p> <p>Keith T. Poole and Howard Rosenthal. 2001. "D-Nominate after 10 Years: A Comparative Update to Congress: A Political-Economic History of Roll Call Voting." <i>Legislative Studies Quarterly</i> 26. (SC)</p>
Thursday	04/11/19	<p><u>Lecture / Discussion</u></p> <p>Measurement in Congress</p> <p>Joshua D. Clinton and John S. Lapinski. 2005. "Measuring Legislative Accomplishment, 1877-1994" <i>American Journal of Political Science</i> 50. (SC)</p> <p>Student Achievement Showcase</p>
Tuesday	04/16/19	<p><u>Lecture / Discussion</u></p> <p>Fiscal Politics</p> <p>Peter G. Peterson Foundation - Readings TBA</p>
Thursday	04/18/19	<p><u>Lecture / Discussion</u></p> <p>Fiscal Politics</p> <p>Damian Paletta "As tax plan gained steam, GOP lost focus on the middle class." <i>Washington Post</i>, 9 December 2017. (SC)</p> <p>Jeff Stein "A Republican deficit hawk flies alone." <i>Washington Post</i>, 28 December 2017. (SC)</p> <p>+ Reading TBA</p>
Tuesday	04/23/19	<p><u>Lecture / Discussion</u></p> <p>Politics of Polarization</p> <p>Sarah Binder "Legislating in Polarized Times" (p.189)</p> <p>David Weigel "How the Clinton-Gingrich years became 'the good old days': Republicans revisit 1994" <i>Washington Post Magazine</i>, 4 January 2018. (SC)</p>

Thursday	04/25/19	<u>Lecture / Discussion</u> Politics of Polarization Lawrence C. Dodd and Scot Schraufnagel "Moderate Polarization and Policy Productivity in Congress: From Harding to Obama" (p.207) + Reading TBA
Tuesday	04/30/19	<u>Lecture / Discussion</u> [Open Date]
Monday	05/06/19	<u>Final Exam</u> 8:00 to 10:00am

IV. Course Requirements / Grading

Roughly half of the final course grade will be associated with a midterm and final examination. These exams will take an essay form and will require you to apply theoretical frameworks and knowledge of institutional rules to a political scenario.

In addition to these two examinations, we will be conducting an empirical roll call analysis. You will be identifying a series of roll call votes associated with a public law and creating a database of member voting positions. You will then use coding rules to align member votes in a uniform direction and create an aggregate measure of support for the bill. This measure of support will be evaluated with some simple empirical tools to gain leverage on the properties of the underlying issue type (i.e., whether it is a polarized-partisan-delegate issue or a more consensual-nonpartisan-trustee issue).

Attendance will be recorded for each class session. An excused absence will be allowed per university guidelines, *but prior notice is mandatory*. Attendance will begin with the first class session. I will post a complete attendance policy to the online system with additional detail.

Occasionally, a student will be traveling for academic or athletic events during a regularly scheduled examination period. Please contact me the week before the examination, so that we can arrange an alternative time/format.

Students with a documented medical excuse that conflicts with a course assignment should likewise contact me to establish an alternative time for submission / completion. All others that miss an assignment or exam deadline potentially are subject to a late penalty. Typically, I will assess a 5% penalty for each school day that it is delayed.

The breakdown of the course grade will be the following:

	Requirement	Weight
1.	Attendance / Participation	5%
2.	Project 1 Case Selection	13%
3.	Project 2 Coding Data	15%
4.	Midterm Exam	22%
5.	Project 3 Roll Call Analysis	20%
6.	Final Exam	25%
		100%

Numerical	Letter
100-90	A
89-80	B
79-70	C
69-60	D
59-0	F

V. Policies and Guidelines

Academic Integrity and Student Conduct Policies

Activity in this course is subject to the *Schreiner University Academic Code of Conduct* and the *Student Code of Conduct*, both of which are located within the *Student Handbook*:

<http://www.schreiner.edu/student-life/student-handbook.aspx>

Schreiner University Academic Code of Conduct

These rules govern the standards and penalties for violations of academic integrity, such as cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, collusion and other questionable practices. Broadly speaking, an incident of *academic dishonesty* occurs when a student presents another's work (in whole or part) as his or her own. More specifically, *plagiarism* is the act of stealing or using the ideas or written text of another and representing them as one's own.

These types of behaviors can occur within exam answers, research papers, and other course assignments.

You should know that plagiarism and any other forms of cheating will not be tolerated and it will be handled according to the appropriate provision within these university regulations. Student papers are subject to review by a plagiarism checking service (e.g., turnitin.com). Violations will be pursued and may result in an F grade for this course and possible expulsion from the University.

Student Code of Conduct

The *Student Handbook* also addresses more general matters of personal conduct, such as violations of criminal law, fraud, alcohol/drug use, student hazing, and sexual misconduct or violence (see also, Title IX below). Although these particular items are less likely to be encountered within a classroom setting, an issue could present itself. To the extent that this set of policies become relevant, we will abide by the intent and purpose of Schreiner University's *Student Code of Conduct*.

Title IX: Sexual Discrimination/Harassment/Misconduct/Assault

Schreiner University is committed to maintaining a learning environment that is free from inappropriate conduct based on gender. As required by *Title IX*, the University does not

discriminate on the basis of sex in its education programs and activities, and it encourages any student or employee who thinks that he or she has been subjected to sex discrimination, sexual harassment (including sexual violence) or sexual misconduct by another student, member of the faculty or staff, or campus visitor or contractor, to immediately report the incident to any of the individuals or offices listed below:

Sarah Campfield
 Director of Residence Life
 (830) 792-7283
scampfield@schreiner.edu

David Geherels
 Director of Student Activities
 (830) 792-7465
dgeherels@schreiner.edu

Dr. Charles Hueber
 Dean of Students
 (830) 792-7278
cmhueber@schreiner.edu

Dr. Diana Comuzzie
 Provost & VP for Academic Affairs
 (830) 792-7371
comuzzie@schreiner.edu

Wendy L. Blaettner, PHR
 Director of Human Resource Services
 (830) 792-7375
wblaettner@schreiner.edu

Schreiner University takes acts of sexual violence and sexual harassment seriously. In an effort to comply with the *Violence Against Women Act* and the Office for Civil Rights federal guidelines, all students are required to complete training on sexual violence prevention. Along these lines, you are already be aware of these policies and understand that you are expected to abide by them.

For those who have confidentiality concerns regarding a Title IX report, you should know that faculty and staff are *Mandatory Reporters* under this act. If you discuss a potential violation with a professor, then he or she *must* report it.

You do have a couple of other options for consultation. First, you may take advantage of Schreiner University Counseling Services, which has stronger confidentiality protections. You may also utilize the Campus Conduct Hotline as an anonymous means of reporting questionable conduct:

Kim Woods
 Director of Counseling Services
 Mountaineer Fitness Center | CMB 6220
 (830) 792-7279 | KJWoods@schreiner.edu
<https://www.schreiner.edu/student-life/counseling.aspx>

Campus Conduct Hotline
 (866) 943-5787

Given this course is in the discipline of political science we will throughout the semester be discussing issues and policies that are discomfoting or controversial in some manner. We will make every attempt to take an academic orientation toward these topics, but students and faculty can and do make errors that can be insulting or off putting to others. Feel free to contact me in a confidential manner and we will address any such issue.

Matters of Accommodation

Schreiner University supports the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and welcomes requests for reasonable accommodation. The University in compliance with Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Executive Order 11246 as amended, Title IX of the

Education Amendments of 1972, Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and other federal laws and regulations, does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, disability or status as a veteran in any of its policies practices or procedures. This includes but is not limited to admissions, employment, financial aid and educational services.

Every effort will be made to make accommodations for those who fall under the *Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990* and the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973*. Students desiring academic adjustments/auxiliary aids should contact:

Dr. Jude Gallik

Director of Learning Support Services/Section 504 Coordinator

(830) 792-7258 | jgallik@schreiner.edu

In terms of accommodations and this particular course, please contact me directly and we will handle it in a discrete manner according to University guidelines.

Unanticipated Events, Incomplete Grades & Withdrawals

On some occasions, a student will come down with an extended illness, or get called up for military duty, etc. These situations will be dealt with on a case by case basis and are often resolved through withdrawal from the course or through an incomplete grade agreement between the student, academic advisor and professor. I am extremely reluctant to go forward with an incomplete grade in any course. In the event that a substantive cause is present to do so, we will proceed through the guidelines found in the *Student Handbook*.

Withdrawal from this course will be governed by the University's procedure and applicable deadlines. Students contemplating withdrawing from the university during the term, or not returning after a break, should contact the Registrar. In addition to discussing reasons for withdrawing, it is very important that the withdrawal policy be followed, so that severe financial problems can be avoided. Please refer to the *Schreiner University Catalog* for more information about withdrawals.