

PSC 304, Legislative Politics

Office Hours MF 10-12 or by appt

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Introduction

This course is primarily an introduction to the U.S. Congress, although we may from time to time pay some attention to state legislatures. We will explore the constitutional foundations of Congress, the process of congressional elections, the internal institutions of Congress, the legislative process, and how Congress works and plays well with others (and how it does not).

Requirements and grading

- A midterm, 30% course grade
- Noncumulative final exam, 30% course grade
- Approx. 10 page research paper, 30% course grade
- Class Participation, 10% course grade.

Readings

I have structured this course so that, wherever possible, we discuss and deal with actual, no-kidding, for real political science. This means that some of the readings may be difficult. I will try to remind you of such readings ahead of time, so that you can budget your time accordingly. **REQUIRED BOOKS** (available at the bookstore):

- DOLS : Davidson, Oleszek, and Lee, Congress and Its Members, 15th ed.
- Krehbiel, Pivotal Politics
- Oleszek: Oleszek, Congressional Procedures and the Policy Process 10th Edition
- Occasional articles or book excerpts TBA

Academic Integrity

UB's academic integrity policy is available at <http://undergrad-catalog.buffalo.edu/policies/course/integrity.shtml>. You should familiarize yourself with it if you have not already.

The paper outline and sources are due March 28, and the completed paper due May 2. Govern yourself accordingly.

Policy for Makeup Exams or Paper Extensions:

All exams must be taken at the scheduled time and each assignment must be turned in at the end of class on the day it is due. No makeup exam or paper extension will be granted unless accompanied by a written justification. In all cases, the reason must be documented (such as a doctor's letter on official letterhead for a serious illness). Light illness *will not* be a sufficient condition for a make-up exam or paper extension. Students without a legitimate excuse will receive a 0 on the exam or the assignment. If you are anticipating a legitimate reason to request a makeup/extension (e.g., approved sporting competition; religious observance), then it is incumbent upon you to make a request ahead of time. I will not grant an extension or a makeup to a student who waits until right before the exam/due date to make a request.

I will grant an incomplete (I) only in legitimate instances and you must discuss it with me before the final exam (see <http://undergrad-catalog.buffalo.edu/policies/grading/explanation.shtml#incomplete>)

Accommodations and Make-Up Exams

Students with any sort of disability or other condition that requires accommodation should consult with the Office of Disability Services to find the appropriate accommodation.

There is a midterm exam scheduled for the Wednesday following spring break. In general, I offer make-up exams only for circumstances that legitimately prevent a student from attending. Documented medical conditions, legal requirements to be elsewhere, official university functions, and so on.

Accessibility Resources:

If you require classroom or testing accommodations due to a disability, please contact Accessibility Resources, located at 25 Capen Hall. AR can be reached by phone at (716) 645-2608 or by email at stu-accessibility@buffalo.edu. Please inform me as soon as possible about your needs so that we can coordinate your accommodations. For more information, visit <http://www.studentaffairs.buffalo.edu/ods/>

Communication Policy:

If I need to communicate with the class I will do so using UBlerns. It is therefore imperative that you check the email under which you are registered (i.e., your @buffalo.edu email).

Technology Policy:

The use of smartphones, is prohibited during lectures and exams. If I catch you using

an electronic device during lecture, I will ask you to stop immediately. The second time I catch you, I may ask you to leave the room. I put this policy in place because there is ample evidence that the use of electronic devices distracts not only the user, but those around him/her.

Class Outline:

The following outline is NOT definitive. We may move more quickly than anticipated in some sections, and more slowly in others. Announcements regarding schedule changes will be made in class and on Ublearns. Students are responsible to stay abreast of these changes.

In addition to the readings below, I might occasionally post articles or book chapters on Ublearns. You will be notified of these additional readings and will be responsible for downloading and reading them.

Week 1 – Introduction: Jan. 30 - Feb. 1 - Feb. 3
DOLS: Chapters 1 & 2

Week 2 – Elections: Feb. 6 - Feb. 8 - Feb. 10
DOLS: Chapters 3 and 4

Week 3 – Elections: Feb. 13 - Feb. 15 --Feb. 17
DOLS: Chapter 5 and 13

Week 4 – Committees: Feb. 20 - Feb. 22 - Feb. 24
DOLS: Chapter 7
Oleszek: Chapter 3

Week 5 – Committees: Feb. 27 - Mar. 1 - Mar. 3
Reading TBD – Articles

Week 6 Parties - Mar. 6 -- Mar. 8 -- Mar. 10
DOLS: Chapter 6
“War for the Floor: Partisan Theory and Agenda Control In the U.S. House of Representatives” David Rohde and Charles Finocchiaro

Week 7 - Parties: Mar. 13 - Mar. 15 - Mar. 17
Krehbiel: Chapter 1, 2, 8, and 9
March 17 - Mid-term

Week 8 -NO Classes - Break

Week 9 - Scheduling House: Mar. 27 - Mar. 29 - Mar. 31
DOLS: Chapter 8
Oleszek: Chapter 4
Paper Topic Due – Mar. 29th

Week 10 - Scheduling: Senate - Apr. 3 - Apr. 5 - Apr. 7
DOLS: Chapter 8
Oleszek: 6

Week 11 - Floor Procedure, House: Apr. 10 – Apr. 12 – Apr. 14
DOLS: Chapter 8
Oleszek: Chapter 5

Week 12 - Floor Procedure, Senate: Apr. 17 – Apr. 19 – Apr. 21
DOLS: Chapter 8
Oleszek: Chapter 7

Week 13 - Voting Post Floor reconciliation: Apr. 24 – Apr. 26 – Apr. 28
DOLS: Chapter 8 and 9

Week 14 - Congress and the President: - May 1 - May 3 - May 5
DOLS: Chapter 10 and 11
Krehbiel: Chapters 3,4,5,6,7

Week 15 - Congress and the Courts/ TBD -- May 8 -- May 10 -- May 12
DOLS: Chapter 12
PAPER DUE

Week 16 – Noncumulative final