

# The Legislative Process

Political Science 4035

Fall 2015

Dr. Hogan  
TTH 1:30-2:50  
229 Tureaud Hall

Office Hours: Mon. 9-11 (or by appt.)  
238 Stubbs Hall  
Telephone: 578-3217  
e-mail: rhogan1@lsu.edu

## Course Description

This course is designed to provide students with an understanding of various aspects of the legislative process as practiced in the United States. A variety of topics are examined ranging from institutional development and candidate emergence to representation and the conditions that influence roll-call voting. Our goal is to better understand how the legislative process works and how this process produces public policies. While much of our focus is on the U.S. Congress, significant attention is also given to legislatures in the states where differences in institutional characteristics, electoral incentives, and political conditions provide analytical leverage for addressing important theoretical and practical questions. To the extent that the course has a theme, it is focused on how institutional rules and procedures, contextual features, and election practices shape what legislatures do and the policies they produce.

In addition to our substantive focus on legislatures, we will also give attention to the methods used by scholars in answering empirical questions about these institutions. One of our objectives is to assess the evidence uncovered by scholars. How do these findings comport with common perceptions or media accounts? While this is not a course on political science methodology, issues involving research design and analysis will play prominently in many of our class discussions.

## Time Requirements

Please keep in mind the university's definition of work required for each credit hour: "not less than one hour (50 minutes) of lecture/classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours out-of-class student work across 15 weeks for one semester." Given that this is a 3-hour course, this means that students are expected to devote a total of 9 hours of work each week: 3 hours in the classroom and an additional 6 hours of course related work outside the classroom (for this class it means reading, studying, and working on the course assignments).

## Required Reading Materials

There is one textbook available for purchase in the bookstore: *Congress and Its Members* by Roger H. Davidson, Walter J. Oleszek, Frances E. Lee, and Eric Schickler (14<sup>th</sup> edition, Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press). However, the bulk of the readings are individual articles listed on the course schedule below. Each is available for download from the class Moodle site. Note a few of these readings are newspaper articles that will only take a few minutes to read, but most are lengthy pieces from academic journals that will take an hour or more to fully digest. These journal articles will often form the central part of our class discussions so it is imperative that you carefully read and take notes on these pieces. I also strongly recommend printing most of the articles given that I will often make reference to their tables and graphs (NOTE: there are a few exceptions where the reading is quite lengthy and much color ink is required for printing – "Ink Warnings" are indicated). Reading constitutes a substantial portion of the work for this course, so make certain that you plan accordingly for each class. I conduct class in a manner that assumes students have read the course materials assigned for the day, so come prepared.

## Course Requirements

The grade for the course is determined by a student's performance in the following areas:

|                              |      |
|------------------------------|------|
| Participation and Attendance | 15%  |
| Representation Project       | 30%  |
| Mid-Term Exam                | 25%  |
| Final Exam                   | 30%  |
| <hr/>                        |      |
| TOTAL                        | 100% |

Letter grades are assigned as follows based on a student's final numerical average:

|                 |                    |                   |                    |                    |                   |                    |                    |                   |                    |                    |                   |                   |
|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| <b>F</b><br><60 | <b>D-</b><br>60-62 | <b>D</b><br>63-66 | <b>D+</b><br>67-69 | <b>C-</b><br>70-72 | <b>C</b><br>73-76 | <b>C+</b><br>77-79 | <b>B-</b><br>80-82 | <b>B</b><br>83-86 | <b>B+</b><br>87-89 | <b>A-</b><br>90-92 | <b>A</b><br>93-96 | <b>A+</b><br>97 ≥ |
|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|

### *Participation and Attendance*

Classes are generally conducted using a lecture-discussion format so it is necessary to keep up with the readings and to come prepared for every class. Students are strongly encouraged to take part in class discussions. In order to do so, it is necessary to complete the readings *in advance* and to spend time thinking about them in a critical manner. Also, please keep up with current political developments since these will often be used as examples in our discussions. Participation comprises a relatively large portion of your grade (15% total) and will be determined by three equally weighted components:

- **Self-Reported Class Participation:** During each class period I will ask questions about the day's readings and will expect to receive answers. If you have questions about the readings or comments about the substantive topics in the course, please ask them. I will track your participation based upon your self-reported participation. If you have participated in the day's class either in asking questions, answering questions, or providing comments, please hand in a sheet of paper at the end of class indicating what your contribution was for that day (briefly restating your question, answer, or comment). It is expected that you will participate on 6 different days during the course of the semester. If you provide substantive comments or ask questions (that a reasonable person would say enlightened the discussion) on 6 separate days, you will receive 100% for this portion of your participation grade (if you participate 5 times your score will be 83%, 4 times 67%, and so on).
- **Class Activities:** Several times during the semester I will ask you to provide written comments about a topic, answer a brief question, take a quiz, or take part in a class exercise. Your performance on these activities will be counted as a component of your overall participation grade. There will be many of these opportunities throughout the semester and your grade is determined by your successful completion of each. If you satisfactorily complete all of them, you will receive 100% for this component of your participation, complete 90% and your grade is 90, 80% is a grade of 80, etc.
- **Attendance:** Attending class is important and your presence will be checked regularly with a sign-in sheet or by other mechanisms. Please make certain that you come to class on time so that you will be counted as present for the day. As with the other forms of participation, if you attend 100% of the time when I have checked attendance, your grade is 100, attend 90% of the time and it is 90, etc.

### *Representation Project*

Each student will write a report on an assigned member of Congress, the district represented by the member, and an assessment of his or her recent activities both at home and in Washington. The project counts for 30% of the course grade. Students will make brief presentations to the class in early November and a final report is due at the beginning of class on Thursday, November 12. Details concerning the project will be provided in an additional handout during the second week of classes.

### *Exams*

There is a midterm and a final exam (dates are listed on the syllabus). These tests will consist of multiple-choice, short-answer, and/or brief essay questions. Note that makeup exams are all-essay exams and will only be administered when a student can produce a valid written excuse. If you anticipate a problem, please let me know as soon as possible. Also, for anyone who has special needs or who requires accommodations through Disability Services, please advise me of your situation in advance of the exams so arrangements can be made.

## **General Policies**

### *Academic Honesty*

Students are required to abide by the academic conduct policies outlined in the LSU Code of Student Conduct (<http://www.lsu.edu/judicialaffairs>). Examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to: cheating on exams, plagiarizing, buying or selling assignments, altering grades, intentional deception, and collaborating with others without permission. I reserve the right to investigate when I suspect a violation of any of these policies. All violations of the university's academic conduct policies are turned over to the Dean of Students.

### *Classroom Rules*

Please be respectful to those around you who are trying to listen, take notes, and participate in the class. Please make every effort to be on time to class. Be seated and ready to begin at 1:30 and leave early only for emergencies. Turn cell phones and pagers to silent. Most importantly, do not talk during class. Disruptive students will be asked to leave immediately.

Absolutely no audio or video recording devices are allowed to be used unless special permission is granted. Please do not take photographs of the overheads. Photography or videography of any kind is forbidden. This rule is strictly enforced during exams and during review of exam materials. All violators of this policy will be asked to leave the classroom immediately and the incident will be reported to the Dean of Students. These restrictions are in place to ensure the integrity of testing materials and to protect student privacy.

You are free to use laptop computers and other electronic devices for class purposes (e.g., taking notes, looking up relevant information, etc.). But please do not simply play on the internet, check e-mail, or use social networking sites.

### *Late Assignments and Missed Work*

In an effort to provide a level playing field, I take deadlines very seriously and hold everyone to an identical standard. Make every effort to take scheduled exams and hand in work on time. However, I recognize there are legitimate reasons for missing a deadline or an exam. The following reasons are some, but probably not all, of the excuses that are considered acceptable: a documented illness, a family emergency, some severe mechanical failure (related to transportation, computing, etc.), or a scientifically documented anomaly in the space-time continuum. Please note that most job-related issues are not considered acceptable excuses (although see university regulations concerning military duties, official university-sponsored events, etc.). A penalty for handing in the paper late is assessed based upon the circumstances, but will generally involve a substantial loss of points (5 points for missing the deadline, and 5 points for each 24-hour period thereafter). Recognize that for reasons of fairness to other students in the class, credit cannot be given at the end of the semester for missed exams or papers not handed in. In other words, when you experience a significant problem that prevents you from meeting a deadline or taking a test, it is your responsibility to let me know about it in a timely manner and to make arrangements to make up the missed work. Excuses must be provided within one week of your return, NOT at the end of the semester. Excuse forms are available on this course's Moodle site where they must be submitted along with any other accompanying documentation (a doctor's note, etc.).

### *Graded Work*

I do not make grades available on Moodle and I will not e-mail grades. I will return the representation project and your midterm exam to you in class. During office hours I am happy to review grades with you and talk with you about ways to improve your performance. Please note, however, I will not estimate your current grade for you (the percentage that each grade counts toward your final average is provided above).

### *Graduate Credit or Honors Credit*

For students taking this course for graduate credit or for those who wish to receive special Honors credit, it is the student's responsibility to contact me at the beginning of the semester to make appropriate arrangements.

### *Special Needs*

For students who have special needs or require accommodations through Disability Services, please advise me of your situation so arrangements can be made.

## Course Schedule

### August 25 *Introduction to the Course*

- No reading assignment.

### August 27 *Studying the Legislative Process in the United States*

- Text: Davidson, et al. Chapter 1.
- Reading #1: Klein, Ezra. 2012. "Fourteen Reasons Why This Is the Worst Congress Ever," *Washington Post* July 13.
- Reading #2: Izadi, Elahe. 2013. "Is Congress Simply No Fun Anymore?" *National Journal*, August 8.
- Reading #3: Thompson, Mark. 2014. "A Congressional Insider on Why the U.S. Political System Is Broke," *Time* August 13.
- Reading #4: Dugan, Andrew. 2015. "U.S. Congress and Its Leaders Suffer Public Discontent," *Gallup Poll Report*, August 12.

### September 1 *How to Study Legislatures*

- Reading #5: Chapters from *Everything is Obvious Once You Know the Answers: How Common Sense Fails Us* by Duncan J. Watts, 2011, New York: Crown Publishing (Preface, Chapters 1 & 2).
- Reading #6: Berry, William D., and Mitchell S. Sanders. 2000. (Chapter 1) *Understanding Multivariate Research: A Primer for Beginning Social Scientists*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Reading #7: "Political Science Research Fundamentals: Some Important Concepts and Definitions."
- Reading #8: Griffin, John D., and Claudia Anewalt-Rensburg. 2013. "Legislator Wealth and the Effort to Repeal the Estate Tax," *American Politics Research* 41: 599-622.

### September 3 *Legislative Institutions: National Level*

- Text: Davidson, et al. Chapter 2.
- Reading #9: U.S. Constitution and Amendments.
- Reading #10: Federalist Papers #10 and #51.

### September 8 *Legislative Institutions: State Level*

- Reading #11: Squire, Peverill. 2006. "Historical Evolution of Legislatures in the United States," *Annual Review of Political Science* 9: 19-44.
- Reading #12: Squire, Peverill. 2007. "Measuring State Legislative Professionalism: The Squire Index Revisited," *State Politics and Policy Quarterly* 7: 211-227.
- Reading #13: Richardson, Lilliard E., David M. Konisky, and Jeffrey Milyo. 2012. "Public Approval of US State Legislatures," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 37: 99-116.

### September 10 *Who Runs for Congress and Why*

- Text: Davidson, et al. Chapter 3.
- Reading #14: Carnes, Nicholas. 2012. "Does the Numerical Underrepresentation of the Working Class in Congress Matter," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 36: 5-34.

### September 15 *Legislative Districts and Redistricting*

- Text: Davidson, et al. Re-read pages 45-56 in text on "Districting in the House".
- Reading #15: Pages 10-83 only: Levitt, Justin. 2010. "A Citizen's Guide to Redistricting," Brennan Center for Justice at New York University School of Law [INK WARNING – The file contains many unnecessary colored pages between chapters].

### September 17 *Nominations and General Elections*

- Text: Davidson, et al. Chapter 4.
- Reading #16: Herrnson, Paul S., and James M. Curry. 2011. "Issue Voting and Partisan Defections in Congressional Elections," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 36: 281-307.

September 22 ***Financing Congressional Campaigns***

- Reading #17: Chapters 1-4 (pp. 1-70): Tokaji, Daniel P., and Renata E. B. Strause. 2014. "The New Soft Money: Outside Spending in Congressional Elections," A Project of Election Law @ Moritz, Ohio State University College of Law [INK WARNING – This is a very large file with many colored pages].
- Reading #18: Rocca, Michael S., and Stacy B. Gordon. 2010. "The Position-taking Value of Bill Sponsorship in Congress," *Political Research Quarterly* 63: 387-397.

September 24 ***Election Outcomes***

- Text: Davidson, et al. Re-read pages 77-100.
- Reading #19: Highton, Benjamin. 2008. "Job Approval and Senate Election Outcomes in the United States," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 33: 245-261.
- Reading #20: Konisky, David M., and Lilliard E. Richardson. 2012. "Penalizing the Party: Health Care Reform Issue Voting in the 2010 Election," *American Politics Research* 40: 903-926.

September 29 ***Forms of Representation***

- Text: Davidson, et al. Chapter 5.
- Reading #21: Parker, David C.W., and Craig Goodman. 2009. "Making a Good Impression: Resource Allocation, Home Styles, and Washington Work," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 34: 493-524.

October 1 ***Connections with Constituents***

- Reading #22: Butler, Daniel M., Christopher F. Karpowitz, and Jeremy C. Pope. 2012. "A Field Experiment on Legislators' Home Styles: Service versus Policy," *Journal of Politics* 74: 474-86.
- Reading #23: Grimmer, Justin, Solomon Messing, and Sean J. Westwood. 2012. "How Words and Money Cultivate a Personal Vote: The Effect of Legislator Credit Claiming on Constituent Credit Allocation," *American Political Science Review*, 106: 703-19.

October 6 ***Leaders and Parties in the Legislature***

- Text: Davidson, et al. Chapter 6.
- Reading #24: Sherman, Jake, and John Bresnahan. 2015. "Boehner Takes Revenge," *POLITICO* January 6.
- Reading #25: Kanthak, Kristin. 2007. "Crystal Elephants and Committee Chairs: Campaign Contributions and Leadership Races in the U.S. House of Representatives," *American Politics Research* 35: 389-406.

October 8 ***Polarized Political Parties***

- Reading #26: Desilver, Drew. 2014. "The Polarized Congress of Today Has its Roots in the 1970s," *Pew Research Center*, June 12.
- Reading #27: Thomsen, Danielle M. 2014. "Ideological Moderates Won't Run: How Party Fit Matters for Partisan Polarization in Congress," *Journal of Politics* 76: 786-97.
- Reading #28: Barro, Josh. 2014. "Welcome to Rhode Island, America's Least Polarized State," *New York Times*, August 14.

October 13 ***Midterm Exam***

October 15 ***Congress in Moving Pictures***

- No reading assignment.

October 20 ***Legislative Committees***

- Text: Davidson, et al. Chapter 7.
- Reading #29: Overby, L. Marvin, Thomas A. Kazee, and David W. Prince. 2004. "Committee Outliers in State Legislatures," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 29:81-107.

October 22 *Legislative Rules and Procedures*

- Text: Davidson, et al. Chapter 8.
- Reading #30: Binder, Sarah. 2014. "How We Count Senate Filibusters and Why It Matters" *The Washington Post*, May 15.
- Reading #31: Pearson, Kathryn, and Logan Dancy. 2011. "Elevating Women's Voices in Congress: Speech Participation in the House of Representatives," *Political Research Quarterly* 64: 910-923.

October 27 *Roll Call Voting and Its Consequences*

- Text: Davidson, et al. Chapter 9.
- Reading #32: Uscinski, Joseph E., and Casey A. Klofstad. 2013. "Determinants of Representatives' Votes on the Flake Amendment to End National Science Foundation Funding of Political Science Research," *PS: Politics and Political Science*, July: 557-61.
- Reading #33: Bovitz, Gregory L., and Jamie L. Carson. 2006. "Position-Taking and Electoral Accountability in the U.S. House of Representatives," *Political Research Quarterly* 59: 297-312.

October 29 **Fall Break**

November 3 *Interest Groups: Lobbyists*

**\*\*\* Presentations: Set #1 \*\*\***

- Text: Davidson, et al. Chapter 13.
- Reading #34: Fang, Lee. 2014. "Where Have all the Lobbyists Gone?" *The Nation*, February 19.
- Reading #35: Lipton, Eric, and Ben Protess. 2014. "Law Doesn't End Revolving Door on Capitol Hill," *New York Times* February 1.

November 5 *Interest Group Money*

**\*\*\* Presentations: Set #2 \*\*\***

- Reading #36: Gordon, Stacy B. 2001. "All Votes Are Not Created Equal: Campaign Contributions and Critical Votes," *Journal of Politics*, 63: 249-69.
- Reading #37: Fellowes, Matthew C., and Patrick J. Wolf. 2004. "Funding Mechanisms and Policy Instruments: How Business Campaign Contributions Influence Congressional Votes," *Political Research Quarterly* 57: 315-324.

November 10 *Gauging Interest Group Influence*

- Reading #38: Baumgartner, Frank R., Jeffrey M. Berry, Marie Hojnacki, David C. Kimball, and Beth L. Leech. 2014. "Money, Priorities, and Stalemate: How Lobbying Affects Public Policy," *Election Law Journal* 13: 194-209.
- Reading #39: Chapters 5-6 (pp. 71-104): Tokaji, Daniel P., and Renata E. B. Strause. 2014. "The New Soft Money: Outside Spending in Congressional Elections," A Project of Election Law @ Moritz, Ohio State University College of Law [INK WARNING – This is a very large file with many colored pages].

November 12 *Assessing Interest Group Influence*

**\*\*\*\*\* Printed copy of Representation Project due at the beginning of class \*\*\*\*\***

- No Reading Assignment.

November 17 *Legislatures and Executives*

- Text: Davidson, et al. Chapters 10 and 15.
- Reading #40: Eshbaugh-Soha, Matthew. 2010. "How Policy Conditions the Impact of Presidential Speeches on Legislative Success," *Social Science Quarterly* 91: 415-435.

November 19 ***Legislative Connections with the Bureaucracy and the Courts***

- Text: Davidson, et al. Chapters 11 and 12.
- Reading #41: Parker, David C.W., and Matthew Dull. 2009. "Divided We Quarrel: The Politics of Congressional Investigations, 1947-2004," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 34: 319-345.

November 24 ***Institutional Changes: Term Limits***

- Reading #42: Bowser, Jennie Drage and Gary Moncrief. 2007. "Term Limits in State Legislatures," (Chapter 1) *Institutional Change in American Politics: The Case of Term Limits*, University of Michigan Press.
- Reading #43: Carey, John M., Richard Niemi, Lynda W. Powell, and Gary F. Moncrief. 2006. "The Effects of Term Limits on State Legislatures: A New Survey of the 50 States," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 31: 105-34.

November 26 **Thanksgiving Holiday**

December 1 ***Budgets and Pork Barrel Politics***

- Text: Davidson, et al. Chapter 14.

December 3 ***Conclusions and Reflections***

- Text: Davidson, et al. Chapter 16.

December 8 **Final Exam in this classroom on Tuesday, December 8 from 3:00-5:00 p.m.**