

POLITICAL SCIENCE 301-601
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THE PRESIDENCY AND CONGRESS
Fall 2015
Delivered by Moodle
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This is a course on the creation, evolution, selection, organization and behavior of Congress and the executive branch. We will examine these institutions and their members. We will also look at the interactions between Congress and the Presidency, as well as national policymaking.

Purposes of the Course

The course has three main purposes:

- **To educate you about politics, government and policymaking at the national level.**

The specific topics to be covered are described in the introductory paragraph of the syllabus and in the schedule below.

Studying the Presidency and Congress also requires you to become skilled social scientists. I shall therefore teach you skills connected to this such as formulating hypotheses (predictions), testing these hypotheses, using appropriate data and methods and analyzing results. We are in a political *science* class and I will therefore be developing your ability to use the scientific method.

- **To present to you the virtues of public life and leadership and to make you better citizens.** I want to get you to reject this description of politics that Bill Clinton gave at the 1993 Gridiron dinner: “The word comes from ‘poli’, which in Greek means many, and ‘tics’ which are blood-sucking leeches.” Public service is a noble profession and we need talented and dedicated people to serve our neighborhoods, communities, cities, state, nation and world.

This class will teach you that service is valuable and I hope to persuade some of you to take on positions of public leadership. Short of that, I want to make you aware of your responsibilities, as citizens, to participate in public life.

- **To provide you with a variety of skills that you need to be successful in today’s economy.** The two skills I will emphasize here writing and analysis.

- Writing. Whatever you do in life, strong, clear and grammatically-correct writing is a must. You will constantly be asked, for example, to write memos to colleagues and reports and proposals for superiors and clients. Poor writing prevents good ideas from being disseminated.

There is more on how to write well in the term paper instructions. Let me just add to that by saying the best writers are the people who read the most. So read, read, read! And read good stuff. Of course, do the reading for this course,

but also read novels, biographies, histories and good journalism—such as the *Wall Street Journal* and the *New York Times*.

- Analysis. To be a player in this economy, you can no longer just be good at taking orders and regurgitating facts. We have machines to do that now. You need to generate and add value to information. You need analytical skills. What do this year's sales figures, the state of the economy and your competitors' current production woes (three pieces of factual information) tell you about how many dollars' worth of raw materials your company should buy next year?

Political science is a great training device for this because it is a social science. These disciplines force you not only to collect information, but evaluate it too.

Integrity Statement

You are advised to check the university's policies with regards to academic integrity because they apply in this class. I have zero tolerance for **cheating** and will fail any student who cheats. The student will also be subject to further administrative disciplinary action. Students are expected to work within the letter and spirit of the university Student Code of Conduct. (See: <http://policies.ncsu.edu/policy/pol-11-35-01>). **Plagiarism** is considered to be cheating. It will result in a penalty ranging from a 0 for the assignment to an F for the course. I may also report you to university authorities.

Copying from the text, the Internet, or other sources is considered plagiarism. You must use your own words so that I know you understand the material. If I suspect but cannot prove plagiarism, I may ask you to come in to my office or call me so we can discuss your work. I'll then be able to ascertain that you really understand what you are writing.

Students With Disabilities

Reasonable accommodations will be made for students with verifiable disabilities. In order to take advantage of available accommodations, students must register with Disability Services. For more information on NC State's policy on working with students with disabilities, please see: <http://dso.dasa.ncsu.edu/>

Presentation of the Course

The course has been recorded on Mediasite in front of students who were taking it "face-to-face" in the Fall 2012 semester. Lectures are organized using a Power Point outline. Both Mediasite and Power Point files are available on the course Moodle page. You should watch the Mediasite lectures and consult the Power Point files on the dates suggested on the Moodle site and by the course schedule below.

I have a page for the course on my website but everything you need is on the Moodle page.

Course Material

You are expected to watch all of the lectures in Mediasite. There are also two books for the course. They are:

Roger H. Davidson, Walter J. Oleszek, and Frances E. Lee, *Congress and Its Members*, 15th ed. (Washington DC: Congressional Quarterly Press, 2016).

George C. Edwards III and Stephen J. Wayne, *Presidential Leadership: Politics and Policy Making*, 9th ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth 2013).

Assignments (done on Moodle with the exception of the 2 “term” papers, the member of Congress biography, and the political science project proposal which are submitted in MS Word or PDF to me by e-mail).

- In 14 of the weeks I will post a discussion question on Moodle. So as to be eligible for full credit, you must produce, to each question, at least one intelligent answer that is about 250 words long. Because the discussion is ongoing between you, me, and fellow students, you can always contribute more than that. You can get additional points (if your initial contribution does not get you the maximum) for participating in colloquies that are thoughtful, deliberative, and civil. Your contribution(s) must be submitted by 5 p.m. on Friday at the latest. Please limit your comments to the discussion question at hand and abide by all usual rules of decorum.
- There are 3 “short answer” exams. For each you will have to provide a description of 10 terms/concepts/events out of about 15 that I will present to you. The descriptions should be about two paragraphs long and explain the subject and place it into the context of the course.
These exam dates are: **September 16** (Wednesday), **November 2** (Monday), and **December 7** (Monday). You will have 75 minutes to do each one. You can do the exams starting anytime between 4 p.m. and 11 p.m. on the scheduled days. They will be administered in Moodle.
- You must do two short “term” papers, one from each half of the course. A document explaining these assignments can be found on the Moodle site and my website. The first paper is due **October 16**, the second paper **November 30**.
- As is required of the students in the face-to-face class, you must write a biography of a member of Congress. A document explaining this assignment can be found on the Moodle site and my website. The paper is due **September 9**.
- As is required of the students in the face-to-face class, you must write a short paper called the “political science project proposal”. A document explaining this assignment can be found on the Moodle site and my website. The paper is due **October 5**.

Grades

The final grades will be calculated as follows:

- Discussion—evaluated holistically, but you must contribute to all 14 to be eligible for maximum score=20%
- Exams 3 x 10%=30%
- Two “term” papers 2 x 15%=30%
- Member of Congress biography=10%
- Political Science project proposal=10%

Communication With Me

You can communicate with me in several ways

- There is a “General Discussion” board on the Moodle site. Please remember, however, that all students in the class can see this. You should only use it if you are asking a question of me or your classmates and you think others would benefit from reading it and the answer.
- E-mail: ataylor@ncsu.edu
- Face-to-face: Office hours are at the top of the syllabus, I’m happy to arrange a meeting at a time of our convenience if you cannot make them or you’d like to meet sooner.
- Phone: 919-515-8618.

Class Schedule

Assigned reading code: D&O=Congress and Its Members, E&W=Presidential Leadership. I will assign other readings during the course of the semester.

Dates indicate approximately when you should watch the lectures. Since the class is in the MWF-style (i.e. lectures are 50 mins. long) you might want to watch the lectures on those days. The dates reflect this logic. At the very least you should aim to watch three a week. Numbers in parentheses indicate lecture number.

A. FOUNDATIONS

1. 8/19 Introduction (1)
2. 8/21 – 8/28 The Constitutional Setting (2,3,4,5) (E&W Chapter 1, Appendix C)
3. 9/2 – 9/7 The Evolution of the Modern Presidency (6,7,8)
4. 9/9 – 9/11 The Evolution of the Modern Congress (9,10) (D&O Chapter 2)

B. THE PRESIDENCY, CONGRESS, AND DEMOCRACY

1. 9/11 – 9/16 The Presidential Selection Process—Nominations (10,11,12) (E&W Chapter 2)

2. 9/21 – 9/26 The Presidential Selection Process—General Elections (13,14,15) (E&W Chapter 3)
3. 9/28 – 9/30 The President, The Public, and Governing (16,17) (E&W Chapters 4&5)
4. 10/5 – 10/14 Congressional Elections (17,18,19,20,21) (D&O Chapters 3&4)
5. 10/14 – 10/19 Congress, The Public, and Governing (21,22,23) (D&O Chapter 5)

C. INTERNAL ORGANIZATION

1. 10/21 – 10/26 The Presidency (24,25,26) (E&W Chapters 6,7 & 8; pps. 416-22, 445-50, 476-80)
2. Congress
 - a. 10/26 – 10/30 Leaders and Parties (26,27,28) (D&O Chapter 6)
 - b. 11/4 – 11/9 Committees (29,30,31) (D&O Chapter 7)

D. INTERBRANCH RELATIONSHIPS

1. 11/11 – 11/16 President and Congress (32,33,34) (D&O Chapters 10&11; E&W Chapter 9)
2. 11/16 – 11/18 The Elected Branches and the Courts (34,35) (D&O Chapter 12; E&W Chapter 10)

E. NATIONAL POLICY MAKING

1. 11/20 – 12/4 The Legislative Process (36,37,38,39) (D&O Chapters 8 and 9 & pp. 412-29; 437-61)

Exam and Assignment Schedule

1. 8/28—Discussion 1
2. 9/4—Discussion 2
3. 9/9—Member of Congress biography
4. 9/11—Discussion 3
5. 9/16—Exam 1
6. 9/18—Discussion 4
7. 9/25—Discussion 5
8. 10/2—Discussion 6
9. 10/5—Political Science Project Proposal
10. 10/9—Discussion 7
11. 10/16—“Term” Paper 1
12. 10/16—Discussion 8

13. 10/23—Discussion 9
14. 10/30—Discussion 10
15. 11/2—Exam 2
16. 11/6—Discussion 11
17. 11/13—Discussion 12
18. 11/20—Discussion 13
19. 11/30—“Term” Paper 2
20. 12/4—Discussion 14
21. 12/7—Exam 3