

COURSE SYLLABUS

Congress and Foreign Policy Spring 2008

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Course Objective/Teaching Methodology

Students will take away from this course an in-depth understanding of the United States Congress, the foreign policy making institutions and process in the United States, and the role played by Congress in that process. Specifically, students will gain an appreciation for:

- The complexity of the legislative process and the obstacles and challenges to enacting legislation;
- the role and influence of various actors, inside and outside of Congress, on the process;
- the annual federal budget and appropriations processes;
- the interaction between Congress and the president, focusing on the conduct of foreign policy and the Constitutional underpinnings;
- the wide range, varying roles and different objectives of the U.S. federal government agencies involved in making, and carrying out, foreign policy;
- the history of congressional involvement in U.S. foreign relations, paying attention to the question of acquiescence/assertiveness relative to the president; and
- congressional involvement in a handful of specific foreign policy issues.

This will be achieved through an intensive volume of reading and an active classroom discussion about both the readings and the experiences and observations of the instructor during 10+ years working on Capitol Hill. During each class one student will be assigned to lead the discussion on that week's readings, based on a list of a dozen or so discussion questions provided in advance by the instructor.

Students will apply what they have learned through reading and class discussions by writing a research paper that tracks a piece of legislation through to enactment, or examines the role played by Congress in shaping policy on a foreign policy issue.

The course will draw upon the experience and expertise of guest lecturers, who will include current and former members of Congress, congressional leadership and committee staff, executive branch employees, and lobbyists (from private lobbying firms and interest groups).

Course Requirements

Reading/Class Participation – 30%

The success of the course, and how much the students learn, depends upon completion of the readings and the active exchange of ideas, opinions and perceptions. As a result, this will account for nearly a third of the semester grade.

Research Paper – 30%

Students will write an 8-10 page research paper either detailing the legislative history of a public law enacted by Congress, or examining congressional involvement and activity on an important foreign policy question. The assignment will rely heavily upon primary sources including floor debate from the Congressional Record, the text of legislation and amendments, hearing transcripts and committee reports, press releases, and lobbyist/interest group documents. The assignment will provide students a more practical understanding of the workings of the United States Congress, and the complexities of both the legislative process and foreign policy making process.

Final Exam – 40%

The final exam will be comprehensive, and a combination of short answers and essays. The exam questions will be taken directly from the assigned readings and classroom discussions, and a lengthy and detailed study guide will be provided to ensure the students are prepared for the exam.

Course Outline

Week 1: Introduction/Course Overview

The discussion will focus on students' perceptions of Congress, US foreign policy generally, and Congress' role in making foreign policy. We will also discuss students' expectations for the course, review the syllabus, and explain the course requirements -- paper, exam and classroom participation.

Week 2: Historical and Constitutional Context

The readings and classroom discussion will examine the Continental Congress, the 1787 Constitutional Convention, the Federalist papers, and the U.S. Constitution.

- *U.S. Constitution*: Article I (Available online)
- *The Federalist Papers*: 48, 52, 53, 55, 62, 63
- Stewart: "The Constitutional Origins of Congress" *Analyzing Congress*, Ch. 2
- Davidson & Oleszek: "Evolution of the Modern Congress" *Congress and Its Members*, Ch. 2

Week 3: Legislative Process

The readings and discussion will provide a general framework of the organization of Congress and a broad overview of the stages of the legislative process.

- Davidson & Oleszek: “Congressional Rules and Procedures” *Congress and Its Members*, Ch. 8
- Oleszek: “Congress and Lawmaking” *Congressional Procedure and the Policy Process*, Ch. 1
- Sinclair: “Why and How the Legislative Process Has Changed” *Unorthodox Lawmaking: New Legislative Processes in the U.S. Congress*, Ch. 6

Week 4: Committees

The readings and discussion will focus on the importance of Congressional committees in the drafting and enacting of legislation, the different stages of committee and subcommittee consideration of a bill, and the significant influence of chairmen.

- Davidson & Oleszek: “Committees: Workshops of Congress” *Congress and Its Members*, Ch. 7
- Oleszek: “Preliminary Legislative Action” *Congressional Procedure and the Policy Process*, Ch. 3
- Stewart: “Committees in Congress” *Analyzing Congress*, Ch. 8

Week 5: Leadership, Parties and Interest Groups

The readings and discussion will examine the role played by Congressional leaders in shaping legislation and controlling the legislative process, as well as the influence exerted on rank and file members by party leaders, lobbyists and interest groups. Special attention will be paid to the factors that make for an effective lobbyist, and the extent to which they ultimately influence the legislative process.

- Davidson & Oleszek: “Leaders and Parties in Congress” *Congress and Its Members*, Ch. 6
- Stewart: “Parties and Leaders in Congress” *Analyzing Congress*, Ch. 7.
- Davidson & Oleszek: “Congress and Organized Interests” *Congress and Its Members*, Ch. 13

Week 6: Floor Procedure and Strategy

The readings and discussion will provide an understanding of the House and Senate rules that govern the consideration of legislation on the floor of each chamber, and how different they are – with particular attention paid to Special Rules in the House, and the ability to filibuster legislation in the Senate.

- Oleszek: “House Floor Procedure” *Congressional Procedure and the Policy Process*, Ch. 5
- Oleszek: “Senate Floor Procedure” *Congressional Procedure and the Policy Process*, Ch. 7
- Congressional Research Service: *House and Senate Rules of Procedure: A Brief Comparison*

Week 7: Budget and Appropriations

The readings and discussion will provide an understanding of the federal budget process, the difference between authorization and appropriations bills, and the annual appropriations process.

- Oleszek: “The Congressional Budget Process” *Congressional Procedure and the Policy Process*, Ch. 2
- Schick: “The Congressional Budget Process” *The Federal Budget: Politics, Policy, Process*, Ch. 6
- Schick: “The Appropriations Process” *The Federal Budget: Politics, Policy, Process*, Ch. 9

Week 8: Interaction with the President

The readings and discussion will focus on the constitutional separation of powers between the executive and legislative branches, the role of Congressional oversight of the President, and the influence of the administration in the legislative process.

- *U.S. Constitution*: Article II (Available online)
- Fisher: “Constitutional Underpinnings” *The Politics of Shared Power: Congress and the Executive*, Ch. 1
- Oleszek: “Legislative Oversight” *Congressional Procedure and the Policy Process*, Ch. 9
- Fisher: “President as Legislator” *The Politics of Shared Power: Congress and the Executive*, Ch. 2

Week 9: Congress and Foreign Policy: Overview

The readings and discussion will examine the inherent constitutional conflict between the President and Congress in the conduct of defense and foreign policy, the historical balance of power between the two branches in this area, and whether it is effective, efficient or desirable to have the Congress involved in shaping foreign policy.

- Fisher: “War Powers and Foreign Affairs” *The Politics of Shared Power: Congress and the Executive*, Ch. 6
- Lindsay: “Foreign Policy on Capitol Hill” *Congress and the Politics of U.S. Foreign Policy*, Ch. 1
- Crabb: “Conclusion and Analysis” *Congress and the Foreign Policy Process: Modes of Legislative Behavior*, Ch. 6

Week 10: World Wars I and II

The readings and discussion will examine the circumstances surrounding the United States’ entrance into WWI, the failure of the U.S. to ratify the League of Nations, U.S. foreign policy

in the inter-war years, Congressional opposition to Roosevelt's Lend-Lease program for the allies, and Congress' ultimate declaration of war in 1941.

- Readings TBD

Week 11: Korea and Vietnam

The readings and discussion will examine the circumstances surrounding the United States' entrance into each of these conflicts, the relative acquiescence of the Congress to the President in each instance, and the implications for subsequent Presidential-Congressional relations.

- Readings TBD

Week 12: War Powers Resolution

The readings and discussion will examine the factors that led to the War Powers Resolution, the specific details of its enactment (Overriding President Nixon's veto), its implementation and implications for subsequent military conflicts, and whether it is necessary and how effective it has been.

- Readings TBD

Week 13: Funding for the Nicaraguan *Contras*

The readings and discussion will explore the details surrounding repeated Congressional activity during the 1980s to first limit, and then prohibit, the Reagan administration from providing assistance to the Nicaraguan *Contras* in their

- Readings TBD

Week 14: Policy Toward Israel and Cuba: The Role of Interest Groups

The readings and discussion will first examine the historical development of US policy toward these two countries, and then focus specifically on the role of domestic interest groups in shaping that policy, particularly in Congress.

- Readings TBD

Week 15: International Trade Policy

The readings and discussion will focus on the role of Congress in the development and implementation of international trade policy in the U.S. Specific agreements and procedures will be examined, including Trade Promotion Authority, Permanent Normal Trade Relations, NAFTA, CAFTA and the World Trade Organization.

- Readings TBD

Final Exam