

Syllabus

Political Science 205

Congress and the Presidency

Fall Term, 1997

Room 205 Willis

10:30 a.m. - 12:15 p.m., Tuesdays and Thursdays

Professor Joseph White
403 Willis 646-4118

This course is basically a course on Congress, but considers the presidency from the perspective that, as the current Congressional majority had to learn, the president significantly influences what Congress can accomplish.

More is known about Congress than about virtually any other aspect of American politics. It is easier to study than the presidency because it is far more of an institution, less dependent on the whims of a single individual. So there is a vast literature on Congress, much of it useful and instructive. We can talk about patterns and averages and evolution over time as if there is some logic to those developments.

But there are limits to how much one should believe what one reads or even hears from the Professor about Congress in any course. Congress is still a group of individuals, subject to moods and varied influences and therefore unpredictable. What you will learn may be the best current understanding, and a good basis for developing your own judgments. Yet as members change so does the organization that they help constitute. The election of 1994 put many common understandings of how the House of Representatives worked, developed over forty years of Democratic Party control, into question. Nobody could be sure which patterns would continue, which would change, and which the new majority would change only to discover that there were good reasons for the previous status quo, and so be forced to restore it. I have made some guesses now, and will try to explain why I believe them, but I could be wrong about some of them.

And that is as it should be. Politics is a human activity. In a democracy (of sorts) it is an interaction of relatively free agents with free will, who get to make mistakes or brilliant maneuvers. It is a process of persuasion, but the results cannot be predicted from the relative logic of different sides' arguments. People have biases, or good reason not to pay attention, or issues simply are difficult, with no "right" answer.

The decisions that are made depend on outside influences upon legislators, such as elections and lobbying and the president, and on internal influences, such as the party and committee structures that form the congressional decisionmaking process. This course will offer some grounding in these basics; I hope it will allow those who are interested to learn more from later courses or other experience.

Requirements

Each student of course is expected to do the reading for each class session. In addition, I have provided a list of optional readings. Each student will be asked to do two book reports from the books on that list, delivering written copies to me and making a ten-minute oral presentation to the class. When the reports are due will depend on the books you choose, because different books are relevant to different weeks' discussions. Towards the end of the class, I expect to make a full copy of your reports available to the whole class, so you will all have each others' work as a reference.

You may report on any book on the list at the end of this syllabus, all of which will be on reserve. If you would like to do a book that is not on the list, please consult with me. In order to schedule class presentations, I will ask

that you propose your choices by September 23. I will need to approve selections, in order to balance the schedule and avoid duplication. First come, first approved!

In addition to these reports, there will be a combination take-home final and term paper. The subject will be the behavior of a congressional committee in the 104th Congress and the beginning of the 105th Congress (1995-97). I will ask you to use that committee's experience in order to answer questions about the issues raised by the course, such as:

- * Electoral or constituency influences on the committee, e.g. the extent to which it represents a full cross section of the nation or particular interests;
- * The balance (or lack thereof) between partisanship and committee independence within the committee's decisionmaking; e.g. the extent to which the committee makes and can enforce bipartisan decisions, or alternatively follows direction from outside party leaders;
- * The influence of the president on the committee's output (or lack thereof);
- * The fate of the committee's priorities within the budget process.

I will ask that you choose your committee by September 30. Good sources for these papers would be the Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, the major newspapers, and specialized journals (e.g. the agricultural trade press). Each paper should be 15 to 20 double-spaced pages. For some committees, there will be too much material to address all the possible concerns in that space; others will be simple enough that you can. I strongly advise that you meet with me during October to talk about what you are finding and what it might make sense to cover in the paper. I also would much appreciate it if you would try to bring what you are learning about individual committees into the class discussions, either to support or raise questions about assertions in the reading or your professor.

This paper will be due on Monday, November 17.

Schedule

The class will follow a normal Tuesday/Thursday sequence, except for Thursday, October 2. That is Rosh Hashanah, and I will not be able to attend. To make up that class, I will hold a dinner/class at my apartment at the Faculty Club on Wednesday, October 8.

The readings listed for each date should be done by that class session.

There are four texts:

Roger H. Davidson and Walter J. Oleszek, Congress and Its Members 5th ed.

Paul S. Herrnson, Congressional Elections: Campaigning at Home and in Washington

Thomas E. Mann and Norman J. Ornstein, eds., Intensive Care: How Congress Shapes Health Policy.

Robert J. Spitzer, President and Congress: Executive Hegemony at the Crossroads of American Government

In addition, other articles are assigned for various weeks. Five copies of each will be placed on library reserve. Please excuse the fact that in some cases my marginal notes were reproduced from the originals.

Week 1: September 11 Introduction

Week 2: September 16 Views of Congress and the Presidency

Davidson and Oleszek, Chapters 1 & 2; Spitzer, Chapters 1 and 2.

September 18 Sayings of the Fathers...

Federalist Papers 47, 48, 51, 62, 70, 71, 72, 73

Week 3: September 23 Policymaking Stories: Health Policy

Mann and Ornstein, Chapters 6-8

September 25 Policymaking in General

Davidson and Oleszek, Chapters 5, 10-12

Week 4: September 30 Committees and the Congressional Division of Labor

Davidson and Oleszek, Chapter 7; Mann and Ornstein, Chapter 2.

Week 5: October 7 Committees, Continued: How and Why Committees Differ

Richard F. Fenno, Jr., "Environmental Constraints" (Chapter 2 of Congressmen in Committees); C. Lawrence Evans, "Committee Leadership in the United States Senate"; Richard L. Hall and Bernard Grofman, "The Committee Assignment Process and the Conditional Nature of Committee Bias."

October 8 The Dynamic Committee System

David C. King, "The Nature of Congressional Committee Jurisdictions"; Davidson and Oleszek, Chapter 6.

October 9 Parties and Committees

Steven S. Smith and Eric D. Lawrence, "Party Control of Committees in the Republican Congress"; Barbara Sinclair, "Party Leaders and the New Legislative Process."

Week 6: October 14 Leaders, Process, and Decisions

Davidson and Oleszek, Chapters 8, 9; Mann and Ornstein, Chapter 1.

October 16 The Electoral Connection

Davidson and Oleszek, Chapters 3, 4.

Week 7: October 21 Elections Continued

Herrnson, Introduction through Chapter 5 (pp. 1-121)

October 23 Elections Continued

Herrnson, Chapters 6-11.

Week 8: October 28 Budgeting and Local Interests

Diana Evans, "Appropriations Committee Earmarks and Vote-Buying in the U.S. Senate"; Bruce I. Oppenheimer, "The Representational Experience: The Effect of State Population on Senator-Constituency Linkages".

October 30 Decisionmaking Between Congress and President: Domestic Policy and the Budget

Davidson and Oleszek, Chapter 13; Mann and Ornstein, Chapter 3; Spitzer, Chapter 3.

Week 9: November 4 The Politics of Information

Mann and Ornstein, Chapters 4, 5.

November 6 Foreign Policy: The President's Domain?

Davidson and Oleszek, Chapter 14; Spitzer, Chapters 5-6.

Week 10: November 11 Sources of Presidential Power

Spitzer, Chapters 4, 7.

November 13 The Future of Congress

Davidson and Oleszek, Chapter 15; Bruce I. Oppenheimer, "Abdicating Congressional Power: The Paradox of Congressional Control."

Additional Readings for Book Reports

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As part of this course, I am asking each student to prepare two book reports, due at two separate class sessions, and to make those available to the class to help with the discussion on those days. I will discourage duplication, because the purpose is to expose the class to as wide a range of arguments as possible.

Since different weeks of the class will focus on different subjects, I have noted here the weeks for which each of these books might be scheduled for a report.

Arnold, R. Douglas The Logic of Congressional Action (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990) **weeks 4-10**

Bach, Stanley and Steven S. Smith Managing Uncertainty in the House of Representatives (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1988) **weeks 5-6**

Baker, Ross K. House and Senate (New York: Norton, 1989) **weeks 4-10**

Binder, Sarah A. and Steven S. Smith, Politics or Principle? Filibustering in the United States Senate (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1997) **weeks 5-6**

Birnbaum, Jeffrey H. and Alan S. Murray Showdown at Gucci Gulch: Lawmakers, Lobbyists, and the Unlikely Triumph of Tax Reform (New York: Random House, 1987) **weeks 4-10**

Browne, William P. Cultivating Congress: Constituents, Issues, and Interests in Agricultural Policymaking (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1995) **weeks 4-8**

Drew, Elizabeth Showdown: The Struggle Between the Gingrich Congress and the Clinton White House (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996) **weeks 6-10**

Edwards, George C. At the Margins: Presidential Leadership in Congress (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989) **weeks 8-10**

Elving, Ronald D. Conflict and Compromise: How Congress Makes the Law (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996, 1995) **weeks 4-8**

Richard F. Fenno, Jr. Congressmen in Committees (Boston: Little, Brown, 1973 or Berkeley, IGS Press, 1995) **weeks 4-5**

- The Emergence of a Senate Leader: Pete Domenici and the Reagan Budget (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 1991) **week 8**
- Senators on the Campaign Trail: The Politics of Representation (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996) **weeks 6-7**
- Fisher, Louis W. The Politics of Shared Power: Congress and the Executive (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 1993) **weeks 8-10**
- Constitutional Conflicts Between Congress and the President (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995) **weeks 8-10**
- Foreman, Christopher H. Signals from the Hill: Congressional Oversight and the Challenge of Social Regulation (New York: Twentieth Century Fund, 1988) **weeks 4-6, 8-9**
- Gilmour, John B. Strategic Disagreement: Stalemate in American Politics (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1995) **weeks 4-10**
- Hager, George W. and Eric Pianin Mirage: Why Neither Democrats Nor Republicans Can Balance the Budget, End the Deficit, and Satisfy the Public (New York: Times Books, 1997) **week 8**
- Jacobson, Gary C. The Politics of Congressional Elections 4th ed. (New York: Longman, 1997) **weeks 6-7**
- Jones, Charles O. The Presidency In a Separated System (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1994) **weeks 4-10**
- Kiewiet, D. Roderick and Mathew D. McCubbins The Logic of Delegation: Congressional Parties and the Appropriations Process (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991) **weeks 4-6**
- Kingdon, John W. Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies 2d. ed. (New York: Harper Collins, 1995) **weeks 4-10**
- Kingdon, John W. Congressmen's Voting Decisions 3rd ed. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1989) **weeks 4-10**
- Krasno, Jonathan S. Challengers, Competition, and Reelection: Comparing Senate and House Elections (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994) **weeks 6-7**
- Maass, Arthur Muddy Waters: The Army Engineers and the Nation's Rivers (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1951) **weeks 8-9**
- Maltzman, Forrest Competing Principals: Committees, Parties, and the Organization of Congress (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997) **weeks 4-6**
- Maraniss, David and Michael Weisskopf "Tell Newt to Shut Up!" (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996) **weeks 6-10**
- Mayhew, David Divided We Govern: Party Control, Lawmaking, and Investigations, 1946-90 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991) **weeks 6-10**
- Congress: The Electoral Connection (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974) **weeks 4-7**
- Peterson, Mark A. Legislating Together: The White House and Capitol Hill from Eisenhower to Reagan (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990) **weeks 4-10**
- Polsby, Nelson W. Congress and the Presidency. -- ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall) **weeks 4-10**

- Price, David E. The Congressional Experience: A View from the Hill (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993) **weeks 4-10**
- Redman, Eric The Dance of Legislation (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1973) **weeks 4-10**
- Rohde, David W. Parties and Leaders in the Postreform House (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991) **weeks 4-7**
- Schattschneider, E.E. (Elmer Eric) Politics, Pressures, and the Tariff (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1935) **weeks 4-10**
- Schier, Steven E. A Decade of Deficits: Congressional Thought and Fiscal Action (Albany: SUNY Press, 1992) **weeks 6-10**
- Seidman, Harold Politics, Position and Power: the Dynamics of Federal Organization (New York, Oxford University Press, 1997) **weeks 4-10**
- Sinclair, Barbara Legislators, Leaders, and Lawmaking: the U.S. House of Representatives in the Postreform Era (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995) **weeks 5-6**
- The Transformation of the U.S. Senate (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991) **weeks 4-10**
- Unorthodox Lawmaking: New Legislative Processes in the U.S. Congress (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 1997) **weeks 8-10**
- Stockman, David A. The Triumph of Politics: Why the Reagan Revolution Failed (New York: Harper & Row, 1986) **weeks 6-10**
- Waldman, Steven The Bill: How Legislation Really Becomes Law (New York: Penguin, 1996) **weeks 4-10**
- Whalen, Charles W. The Longest Debate: A Legislative History of the 1964 Civil Rights Act (New York: New American Library, 1986) **weeks 4-10**
- Wildavsky, Aaron: The Politics of the Budgetary Process any edition (Boston: Little, Brown, various years) **weeks 8-9**
- Wilson, Woodrow Congressional Government (Various Possibilities! First published 1885) **weeks 4-10**
- Woodward, Bob The Agenda: Inside the Clinton White House (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994) **weeks 6-10**