Spring 2-1-2000

PSC 387.01: Legislative Politics

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Course Description

Analysis of the structure, processes, and politics of the U.S. Congress. Topics include member-constituent relations, party leadership, the committee system, and House-Senate relations. Case studies will be utilized to analyze and assess the role of Congress in the policy-making process. Particular emphasis will be placed on the public's view of Congress.

Texts

Students are required to read the following texts which are available at the University Bookstore:

- Loomis, Burdett A. The Contemporary Congress. 3rd edition. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000,

Course Requirements

Students will be evaluated upon the following basis:

- Research paper prospectus (Due Feb. 11 IN CLASS) ......................... 5%
- Midterm Exam (March 10) Topics I-III ........................................... 25%
- Research Paper (Due March 13 IN CLASS) .................................... 25%
- Research Paper Resubmission (Due April 12 IN CLASS) ................... 20%
- Final Exam (Thurs., May 11, 3:20-5:20) Topics IV-IX .................... 25%

NOTE - ALL writing assignments must be submitted to complete the course.
- A "C" letter grade is required to receive a "passing" mark for the P/NP grading option.

Drop/Add and Grading Option Policies

- Feb. 11 - Last day to add/drop by Dial Bear. NOTE: last day to receive a full refund for classes dropped.
- March 6 - Last day to drop/add and/or change grade option.
Makeup Exam Policy

Students who are excused from a scheduled examination may write a makeup exam. In fairness to all students, exam absences must be approved by the instructor.

Research Papers

Students select a research topic of their choice. Research paper prospectuses are DUE Feb 11 IN CLASS.

Please note that this is to be a research paper. Consequently the amount of research undertaken, and the ability to marshal that information effectively, will be crucial in the evaluation of the paper.

The paper should range between 10 to 15 double-spaced typed pages. The first paper is due March 13 in class; the resubmission April 12 in class. Late papers will not be graded.

The Classroom Learning Environment (authored by Dr. Ronald Perrin, Professor of Political Theory)

Wherever the learning process takes place (for example, in the library or the seclusion of one's study) it does so best when there are a minimum of distractions. This requirement poses special challenges for the learning that takes place in the lecture hall or the classroom, where the possibility of distractions is the greatest.

In order to establish and maintain a supportive learning environment for my students I will not tolerate the few individuals who might be prone to a) come to class late or leave early, b) carry on private conversations during class, or c) use the lecture hall/classroom as an opportunity to read material, such as the Kaimin, that is not relevant to the subject matter under consideration.

The only exception to these conditions concern students whose work schedules or unanticipated appointments require them to arrive for class late or leave early. In these circumstances I would appreciate knowing of the circumstance before it occurs and, in all such instances, request that students do so as unobtrusively as possible. Thank you.
Lecture Topics and Readings - Supplemental readings may be added during the course of the semester.

I Introduction - The Politics of Discontent
   Cooper, passim.

II Theories of Representation
   Loomis, chapter 1, and
   Rae and Campbell, chapter 1.

III Congressional Design
   Loomis, chapter 2.

IV Congressional Politics and Elections
   Loomis, chapters 3 and 4.

V Congressional Committees
   Loomis, chapters 5 and 6 and
   Rae and Campbell, chapters 4 and 5.

VI Parties and Leadership
   Loomis, chapter 7 and
   Rae and Campbell, chapters 2 and 3.

VII Congress and the President
   Loomis, chapter 8.

VIII Rules of the Game
   Loomis, chapter 9 and
   Rae and Campbell, chapters 6 and 7.

IX Conclusion
   Loomis, chapter 10 and
   Rae and Campbell, chapters 8 and 9.

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