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Fall 9-1-2004

PSC 387.01: Legislative Politics

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Political Science 387
Legislative Politics
Fall 2004
T Th 3:40-5:00 LA 338

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Office Hours: T, W, Th, 9:30-10:30

Course Content

Americans rule themselves through elected officials who are responsible for advancing the interests and preferences of their constituents. This relationship is most evident in the U.S. Congress: specific politicians are responsible to specific voters at regular intervals.

This course focuses on how the politicians who are "closest to the people" get elected and make decisions that shape our society. In the process, we shall study the basic elements of legislative structure and behavior—elections, individual members, committees, parties—while noting the differences between the House and Senate.

Required Texts

- Gary Jacobson, *The Politics of Congressional Elections*, 6th edition
- *The American Congress*, 3rd Ed., available online at <http://congress.wustl.edu/>
- Additional readings on reserve in the library

Students are required to read all assigned readings, attend all lectures, take two exams, and complete a research paper. The grade breakdown is:

Midterm: 20%

Writing assignment: 40%

Final: 40%

It is your responsibility to bring three *blank* blue books to class during the first two weeks; I will re-distribute the blue books during the midterm and final. Students will have the choice of writing papers solo or in teams of two.

Class Rules

Make-up exams are allowed in the event of illness or death in the family with documentation. There are no excuses for late papers; start papers early and protect yourself against computer failures.

Course Schedule

Week	Topics
Aug. 31	Introduction.
Sept. 2	No Class. Read ahead!
Sept. 7 & 9	Constitution and Electoral Setting <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Fenno, <i>The United States Senate: A Bicameral Perspective</i>, ch. 1▪ Jacobson 2
Sept. 14 & 16	Choosing to Run; Incumbency Advantage <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Jacobson 3; also 113-116

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schaffner, "Local Newspaper Coverage and the Incumbency Advantage in the U.S. House" <p>(know your MCs' political career and fundraising history)</p>
Sept. 21, 23	<p>Congressional Campaigns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fenno, <i>The United States Senate: A Bicameral Perspective</i>, ch. 2 Jacobson 4; also 151-170 <p>(know the main issues from your MCs' last campaigns)</p>
Sept 28 & 30	<p>Elections and Representation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jacobson 7
Oct 5	Midterm
Oct 7	<p>Overview.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fenno, <i>The United States Senate: A Bicameral Perspective</i>, ch. 3 <p>(know your MCs' staff distribution)</p>
Oct 12 & 14	<p>Members of Congress. Lobbyists.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Koger, "Cosponsoring as Position-Taking" LSQ May 2003. "Study Faults Hill on E-mail" Roll Call 3/19/2001 American Congress 11
Oct. 19&21	<p>Committees & Caucuses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> American Congress 7 "Caucuses Bring New Muscle to Legislative Battleground" CQ 9/27/2003 <p>(know your MCs' committee assignments and committee-related efforts)</p>
Oct. 26 & 28	<p>Parties</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> American Congress 6 "GOP Whip Team Goes Into Overtime" Roll Call 7/1/2002 "House GOP Practices Art Of One-Vote Victories" W. Post 10/14/2003
Nov. 2	<i>Election—Holiday!</i>
Nov. 4&9	<p>Making Decisions—House & Senate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> American Congress 8 Sinclair, "The 60-Vote Senate" <p>(Has your MC offered amendments on the House floor?)</p>
Nov. 11	<i>Veteran's Day—Holiday!</i>
Nov. 16 & 18	<p>The End Game: Conferences, Presidents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> American Congress 9 <p>(Have your MCs served on any conference committees?)</p>
Nov. 23	<p>Divided Government</p> <p>Binder, "The Dynamics of Legislative Gridlock, 1947-1996" APSR 1999</p>
Nov. 25	<i>Thanksgiving—Holiday!</i>
Nov. 30	Budget Politics
Dec. 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> American Congress 12
Dec. 7, 9	<p>Reform Proposals: Term Limits, Filibusters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will and Broder columns re: term limits Frist finger on 'nuclear' button Hill, 5/13/2004 <p>Paper due Dec. 7</p>
Dec. 13	Final (3:20 - 5:20)