

Political Science 225
Congress and the Presidency
Fall 2006

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Class meetings: T, Th 2:20 to 3:30

Office Hours: M, F 9:00 – 10:30; T, TH 1:00 – 2:00 and by appointment

Introduction

Recent history had been marked by a level of frustration with the performance of national governing institutions that led to a belief that the era of big government was over. The experience of divided government, heightened partisanship and increased ideological politics all contributed to such frustrations. The events surrounding September 11, 2001 appear to have halted the move towards smaller government, however, and there remains a substantial agenda of public problems that require a significant governmental response. National security issues associated with the war on terrorism, the invasion of Iraq and the growing importance of China are joined by uncertainties about the economy, health care, education, energy production and the environment. Indeed, this agenda raises fundamental questions about the relevance of our national institutions at a time when the transfer of control over public affairs from democratic governing institutions to the operations of global markets is being driven by the increasing power of global corporate enterprise.

In this context, it is very important for Americans to understand how their national institutions work. Public frustrations derive in part from a limited understanding of the structures and processes that characterize how the President and Congress do their jobs. This limited understanding obscures how the operations of the national government reflect a particular conception of democratic government in the United States. It also obscures recognition of the resources and capacities available to address this nation's public problems. Finally, there is a need to understand how the operations of the national government have been transformed by socioeconomic and technological changes that altered both the way in which government conducts its business and the way that public officials interact with interest groups, the media and citizens in general.

This course seeks to address these concerns through the following objectives:

- Students will examine the relationship between the citizenry and elected officials through research on the congressional election in their home district.
- Students will learn to recognize major changes in both the Congress and Executive Branch resulting socioeconomic and cultural change, the expanded role of electronic media and the adaptation of information technologies to the political process.
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of the legislative process and the role of both Congress and the President in enacting law.
- Students will examine the capacities and limitations of the President as Chief Executive

- Students will explore the role of Congress and the President in the conduct of foreign policy and war

Required Books

Lawrence C. Dodd and Bruce Oppenheimer, **Congress Reconsidered**, Eighth edition, (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, 2005)

Lewis Fisher, **Presidential War Power**, (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2004)

Michael Nelson, ed., **The Presidency and the Political System**, Eighth edition, (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, 2006)

Attendance

Students are required to attend all classes. Attendance will be part of the instructor evaluation grade. Students missing class for legitimate reasons can be excused but the instructor reserves the right to judge the legitimacy of the excuse. Common courtesy also requires that students inform the instructor as soon as when absences will be unavoidable.

Cell Phones

Cell phones should be turned off and stored away during class. Students whose cell phones are visible will be asked to put them away. Students who answer them or use them in any way **during class time** will be asked to leave.

Evaluation of Student's Performance

The student's final grade will be based on a 400 point system.

Reading portfolio	100 points
Policy research paper	100 points
Legislative memorandum	100 points
Persuasive essay on war powers	40 points
Congressional representative report	40 points
Instructor evaluation	20 points

Final grades will be assigned according to the following schedule:

GRADE	POINTS	GRADE	POINTS
A	375	C	300
A-	360	C-	280
B+	345	D+	270
B	335	D	260
B-	320	D-	240
C+	310	F	<240

Reading Portfolio

The assigned readings in this course are intended to help the students achieve the course objective listed above. To assess the student's comprehension of these readings, each student will write a set of responses to selected readings and keep them in a portfolio. Beginning in week 2 (9/5) and concluding during week 12 (11/14) **{NOTE THAT THIS ASSIGNMENT WILL NOT BE REQUIRED DURING WEEK 11 AS THE ELECTION REPORT WILL BE DUE THAT WEEK}**, each student will select one of the readings assigned for classes scheduled that week and submit a portfolio entry containing the following:

- **Summary of the Thesis:** A one paragraph summary of the principle thesis and conclusion of the chosen reading. This paragraph should be 5 to 6 sentences in length.
- **Evidence:** Three or four statements, 3 to 5 sentences in length, identifying observations or arguments provided by the author to illustrate or support the principal thesis of the reading.
- **Critical observations:** One to three paragraphs offering critical reflections on the reading. For this section, the students can use any of the following questions as prompts if he or she wishes: Was the reading insightful and useful in understanding the subject matter of the course? What additional questions were raised in your mind from reading the material? Does the article correspond or contradict other readings in the course? What questions would you want to ask the authors if you had the chance to meet with them to discuss their work?

The portfolio entries for a given week will be handed in on Thursday of that week. The first entry will be evaluated and returned with the opportunity to rewrite that entry. The opportunity to rewrite will apply only to the first entry. The responses are to be **typed** and **kept in a three ring binder**. *Entries to the portfolio will not be accepted in alternative form.*

Policy Research Paper on Responses to Global Warming

This assignment requires students to write a research paper on the possible legislative responses to the problems of *global warming*. This research paper will serve as the foundation for the **Legislative Memorandum** which constitutes the final assignment for the course as described below. The paper should be at least **ten** typewritten pages in length and will be due **October 24**. The finished paper should be well organized, clearly written and include proper citation. It will be graded on both substantive content and quality of writing.

THIS RESEARCH PAPER IS NOT A PERSUASIVE ESSAY. It should address the elements of the policy under consideration that are bulleted below as they form the focus of congressional deliberation and presidential leadership on this issue. The paper should, to the best of the student's ability, clearly lay out the major concerns on both sides of the issue

such that an observer would be better able to comprehend the substance of a congressional debate on the issue. Information in this report can include:

- A definition of the problem to be addressed by legislation
- Data, references to studies, current events or other information indicating the parameters of the current debate
- Identification of possible responses to the problem (see below)
- Partisan positions on the problem
- The position of the administration on the issue
- The status of public opinion on the issue
- The position or activities of interest group organizations regarding the issue

One of the most compelling contemporary policy debates focuses on the issue of global warming and its consequences. As the level of production of carbon dioxide and other air pollutants rises, it is proposed that these “green house gases” trap the sun's heat within the Earth’s atmosphere, causing the planet to warm up. As a result, it has been projected that significant climate change will occur leading to important alterations in weather patterns, rising ocean levels, shifts in patterns of food production and increased scarcity of key natural resources such as arable land and usable water. Debate over global warming has shifted from whether human activities are causing climate change to whether the possible changes will be severe enough to justify the hefty expense and economic impact of reducing production of green house gasses and developing cleaner-energy technologies.

Proposed responses to the problem of global warming have varied. Four of the key proposed responses have been: (1) the United States’ ratification of the Kyoto Treaty, (2) the development of a “cap and trade” system of pollution permits, (3) the imposition of a “carbon tax,” (4) mandating a “green portfolio” for electric utilities. These four possible policy responses are not mutually exclusive. Nor can any of them be said to represent a full and final solution to the problem. Each might have an important role to play in an overall policy approach to the problem of global warming. For our purposes, however, it is noteworthy that **each would require separate legislative action**. In developing your research paper, you should decide on a **specific policy approach** that will become the focus of **the Legislative Memorandum**. I.E. use the research paper to create the foundation for the next major writing assignment by deciding which policy option will constitute the proposed law for which you will draft a legislative strategy. **If you would prefer to offer a fifth alternative, that is permissible as long as there is some potential for Congress to consider it.**

Listed below are two sources (and the links to those sources) that can provide a good substantive introduction to these issues as they have been manifest in the congressional process. You will need to find **at least six additional sources** (for a minimum total of eight) to complete the assignment and no more than half of your total number of sources can come from the free web. Non free web sources include those that are found on library data bases as well as in printed texts. **DO NOT DISREGARD SOME SOURCES BECAUSE THEY ARE LONGER THAN OTHERS.**

Initial sources:

“Climate Change,” **CQ Researcher**, January 27, 2006

<http://library.cqpress.com/cqresearcher/>

Jeff Tollefson, “Getting a Grip On Carbon,” **Congressional Quarterly Weekly Reports**, December, 5, 2005, p. 3256

<http://library.cqpress.com/cqweekly/>

To facilitate the completion of this paper, the deadlines listed below are to be observed. Failure to meet these deadlines will result in **five** points being deducted from the final grade for this assignment. **The instructor will also assess the quality of the efforts and incorporate that judgment in the instructor evaluation grade.**

Task:	Due Date
Bibliography	9/12
Outline	10/5
Draft	10/17

Legislative Memorandum

Each student will write, in lieu of a final exam, a "memorandum" on how to get a particular policy proposal enacted into law. For the purpose of this assignment, students should assume that the memorandum is written after the 2006 congressional election and that the control of Congress is as it will be on January 1, 2007. Preparation of this memorandum will utilize the information developed in the research paper as well as materials presented in class and course readings. The content of the memorandum will be a discussion of a strategy to pass legislation addressing the policy problem featured in the research paper.

In preparing the strategy, the student should assume that they have been hired as a legislative staff consultant whom is an expert on the legislative process, not as an expert on global warming. In assuming this role position, the student can choose (and must specify) to have been hired by one of the following:

- Democratic Party leadership in Congress
- Republican Party leadership in Congress
- The White House Chief of Staff

The principal who has hired you as a consultant has asked that a memorandum be prepared presenting **an analysis and recommendations on how to pass a version of the chosen policy response to the issue of global warming.** In doing so, the student should specify the key provisions of the legislation and provide advice on the strategic considerations necessary to succeed in getting a bill signed into law.

To complete this assignment, the memorandum should include an effort to address as many of the concerns listed below as possible. These include:

- What are the President's principal legislative and policy goals
- What specific provisions of the legislation should the people who have hired you support to secure passage? What provisions should be considered most important? Where might he compromise? What should he insist upon?
- The partisan and ideological divisions in Congress as they pertain to determining what might pass.
- Who are the key congressional actors (party leaders, committee leaders, individual policy entrepreneurs) who might influence the outcome of the legislation?
- What are the key elements of the legislative process that must be recognized and "negotiated" to assure passage of the legislation? What strategic advice might be offered to address the current structure and practice of the congressional process?
- How might the President mobilize interest group or public support to facilitate the success of the legislative initiative?
- What incentives or bargaining tools might be used to assemble a winning coalition in Congress?
- Which individuals or elements of the executive branch might be used to facilitate passage of the President's bill?

The final paper should be a **minimum** of seven typewritten pages double-spaced. Papers should be well edited to avoid repetition and extraneous material. The paper will be due on **what ever day the final exam is scheduled.**

Election Report

Each student will research the election in his or her congressional district. These reports are due on **November 14. THERE WILL BE ABSOLUTELY NO EXTENSIONS.** Reports should be typewritten and include as much of the information on the following categories as possible:

Number of congressional district

Name of candidates including identification of incumbent

Outcome of past three congressional elections in the district

% Democratic % Republican % Significant third parties (+ 5%)

Outcome of the 2004 presidential elections **in the district**

% Democratic % Republican % Significant third parties (+ 5%)

Candidate biographies (current position and previous political experience, career, education, family, notable life experiences)

Major issues or events in the campaign

Comments (i.e. observations or commentary on the election that can be connected to the content of the course)

Persuasive Essay

Each student will write a persuasive essay on the following proposition:

The President of the United States has too much power over matters of military engagements involving the United States.

Students can argue in favor or in opposition to this statement but I will try to arrange that equal numbers of students take each position. The essay should include a clear statement of the position to which the writer is trying to persuade his or her audience and three clear and distinct arguments to support the position taken. The essay should also show evidence of having read Lewis Fisher, **Presidential War Power**. The final essay should be approximately three typed pages. **It will be due on November 30**

Instructor Evaluation

Each student will be evaluated by the instructor for his or her participation, involvement in and contributions to the course. This portion of the grade will reflect all activities in the course that are not otherwise specified in the syllabus including attendance and participation in class discussion.

Course Outline and Reading Assignments

I Introduction of the Course (8/29)

II Constitutional Position and Historical Development of Congress (8/31)

Read: Joseph Cooper, “From Congressional to Presidential Preeminence: Power and Politics in Late Nineteenth Century America and Today” in **Congress Reconsidered**, pp. 363-394

III Congress as a Representative Institution

A. Representation and public attitudes towards Congress (9/5)

Read: John Hibbing and Christopher Larimer, “What the American Public Wants Congress to Be,” in **Congress Reconsidered**, pp. 55- 74

B. Variables in the outcome of congressional elections (9/7)

Read: Robert S. Erikson and Gerald C. Wright, “Voters, Candidates and Issues in Congressional Elections,” in **Congress Reconsidered**, pp. 77-106 and Paul S. Herrnson, “The Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act and Congressional Elections,” in **Congress Reconsidered**, pp. 107-134

C. Constituent relations and party competition in congressional elections (9/12)

Read: Bruce Oppenheimer, “Deep Red and Blue Congressional Districts: The Causes and Consequences of Declining Party Competitiveness,” in **Congress Reconsidered**, pp. 135-158

IV Congress as a Legislative Institution

A. Congressional Committee System (9/14)

Read: John Aldrich and David Rohde, “Congressional Committee in a Partisan Era,” in **Congress Reconsidered**, pp. 249-270

B. Parties and party government in Congress (9/19)

Read: Steven S. Smith and Gerald Gamm, “The Dynamics of Party Government in Congress,” in **Congress Reconsidered**, pp. 181-206

C. The Legislative Process in the House of Representatives (9/21)

Read: Eric Schickler and Kathryn Pearson, “The House Leadership in an Era of Partisan Warfare,” in **Congress Reconsidered**, pp. 207-226

D. The Legislative Process in the U.S. Senate (9/26)

Read: Barbara Sinclair, “The New World of U.S. Senators,” in **Congress Reconsidered**, pp. 1-22 and C. Lawrence Evans, “Obstruction and Leadership in the U.S. Senate,” in **Congress Reconsidered**, pp. 227-248

E. Policy formulation in Congress: the Power of the Purse (9/28-10/3)

Read: Catherine E. Rudder, “The Politics of Taxing and Spending in Congress: Ideas, Strategy and Policy,” in **Congress Reconsidered**, pp. 319-342 and Joshua B. Gordon, “The (Dis)Integration of the House Appropriations Committee: Revisiting the Power of the Purse in a Partisan Era,” in **Congress Reconsidered**, pp. 271-296

V Perspectives on Presidential Power

A. Perceptions and Standards of Evaluation of Presidential Power (10/5)

Read: Michael Nelson, "Evaluating the Presidency," in **The Presidency and the Political System**, pp. 1-27

B. Presidential Power: Constitutional authority (10/12)

Read: Jeffrey K. Tulis, "The Two Constitutional Presidencies," in **Presidency and the Political System**, pp. 57-88

C. The Presidency and the Political System (10/17)

Read: Steven Skowronek, "Presidential Leadership in Political Time," in **The Presidency and the Political System**, pp. 89-135

D. Presidential Competence (10/19)

Read: Paul Quirk, "Presidential Competence," in **The Presidency and the Political System**, pp. 136-169

VI Presidential Politics and Leadership

A. Presidential Selection (10/24)

Read: Richard M. Pious, "The Presidency and the Nominating Process: Politics and Power," in **The Presidency and the Political System**, pp. 195-218

B. The Public Presidency (10/26)

Read: Bruce Miroff, "The Presidential Spectacle," in **The Presidency and the Political System**, pp. 255-282

C. Political Constraints on the President (10/31)

Read: *Students will be assigned one of the following three readings for class presentation:* Lawrence R. Jacobs, "The Presidency and the Press: The Paradox of the White House Communications War," in **The Presidency and the Political System**, pp. 283-310; Daniel J. Tichenour, "The Presidency and Interest Groups: Allies, Adversaries and Policy Leadership" in **The Presidency and the Political System**, pp. 311-340; Sidney M. Milkis, "The Presidency and Political Parties," in **The Presidency and the Political System**, pp. 341-382.

VII The Institutionalized Presidency

A. The President as Chief Executive (11/2)

Read: David E. Lewis, “Presidents and the Bureaucracy: Management Imperatives in a Separation of Powers System,” in **The Presidency and the Political System**, pp. 410-429

B. The Institutional Presidency (11/7)

Read: John P. Burke, “The Institutional Presidency,” in **The Presidency and the Political System**, pp. 383-409

C. Presidential Management (11/14)

ELECTION REPORT DUE

VIII **The Election (11/9)**

VII Presidential Leadership in Policy Making

A. The President and the Policy Process (11/16)

Read: Matthew J. Dickinson, “The President and Congress,” in **The Presidency and the Political System**, pp. 455-480; Paul J. Quirk and Bruce Nesmith, “Divided Government and Policymaking: Negotiating the Laws,” in **The Presidency and the Political System**, pp. 508-532

B. Economic Policy Making (11/21)

C. Foreign Policy (11/28)

D. War Powers (11/30-12/5)

Read: Louis Fisher, **Presidential War Powers**, entire

VIII Class Evaluation (12/7)