

LEGISLATIVE SYSTEMS
Florida State University

POS 4424
Spring, 2011
Office Hours, Tuesday and Thursday
9:00 – 10:00 a.m. or by appointment

Professor: Brad T. Gomez
Office: 536 Bellamy Bldg.
E-mail: bgomez@fsu.edu
Telephone: 850-644-7303

This course is designed to provide students with a broad introduction to the state of knowledge on legislative politics with a particular emphasis on the United States Congress. Our concentration will be on the functions that legislatures perform in society, as well as those factors, such as legislative institutionalization, integration, and development, that increase the probability that legislative bodies will achieve and maintain stability within a political system. We will also examine the role of individual legislators within the legislature, their capacity as representatives, as well as the behavioral predispositions and institutional constraints that structure both their actions and decisions.

Students will be expected to develop an understanding of the theoretical nature of legislative institutions and legislative behavior and convey this understanding through class participation, a writing assignment, and five examinations. To stimulate class discussion and learning, you will be expected to complete the assigned readings *before* class sessions (I have no problem with calling on people to participate).

REQUIREMENTS:

Texts: The following texts have been ordered through the FSU Bookstore and are required for this course:

Jacobson, Gary C. 2008. *The Politics of Congressional Elections*. 7th ed. New York: Pearson-Longman.

Smith, Steven S., Jason M. Roberts, and Ryan J. Vander Wielen. 2008. *The American Congress Reader*. New York: Cambridge University Press. (hereafter, “SRV”)

Selected readings also will be placed on Blackboard or may be downloaded directly from the electronic journals found at www.jstor.org or FSU’s Electronic Journal Holdings at <http://www.lib.fsu.edu/ejournals>

Assignments and Grading:

- 1) Students are to read all required material *before* class sessions.
- 2) Examinations: Four unit examinations (Each 15% of Final Grade) and a cumulative final examination (20% of Final Grade)
- 3) Take-Home Writing Assignment: 4-5 pages maximum (10% of Final Grade)
- 4) Class Attendance and Participation (10% of Final Grade)

Your final grade will be determined by the following scale:

	B+ = 89 – 87	C+ = 79 – 77	D+ = 69 – 67	
A = 100 – 93	B = 86 – 83	C = 76 – 73	D = 66 – 63	F = 59 – 0
A- = 92 – 90	B- = 82 – 80	C- = 72 – 70	D- = 62 – 60	

Examinations

Examinations are closed book and may consist of some combination of objective, short answer, or essay questions. The unit examinations will cover all the material from lectures, class discussions, and readings on the unit being tested. The final exam, which will be given during the examination period scheduled by the university, will be cumulative (covering lectures, class discussions, and readings from the entire semester).

Take-Home Writing Assignment

The writing assignment is worth 10% of your final grade. The maximum length of the paper is 4-5 double-spaced pages (1 inch margins and standard 10, 11, or 12 point fonts, such as Times New Roman). At the end of class on **January 18, 2011**, students will be given a question regarding the role of legislatures in democratic life. Students are expected to provide a well-written answer to this question and return it to the professor at the beginning of the class period scheduled for **January 25, 2011**. The paper should convey your understanding of the theoretical nature of legislative institutions, as well as your knowledge of the class readings. Your response must be entirely original (and your own), though it is expected that you will draw upon the class readings to substantiate your claims. *Your paper will be evaluated on the quality and clarity of your argument, your ability to provide evidence in support of your claims, and the general grammatical quality of the paper.*

Class Participation

Your class participation grade will be based on the quality of your class participation, not simply the quantity. Your class participation should be aimed toward raising the level of class discussion and in-class learning. Good class participation should be informed by the readings (or perhaps what you've learned in other classes). Good participation may come in the form a point of criticism (remember to be kind to others), your own interpretation of the issue at debate, or even a question (you know, the kind the makes everyone go "hmmm").

Students are expected to attend every class. Absences from class due to illness and participation in formally sanctioned University events will only be excused with sufficient (e.g., University Health Services Excuse Forms) documentation. Documentation must be provided within 48 hours of the absence. Students who cannot physically provide such documentation within the 48-hour period (due to illness etc.) must do so as soon as possible and must include sufficient documentation supporting the claim that they could not physically deliver the original documentation in the 48-hour period. The instructor reserves the right to determine what is considered "sufficient documentation." Class attendance sheets will occasionally be passed out during class. If any student is determined to be misrepresenting either their or someone else's attendance in class, all students involved in such misrepresentation shall receive a zero for the semester participation and attendance grade.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS AND MISSED EXAMS

Written work is to be handed to the instructor at the beginning of the class during which it is due. I will *not* accept written assignments via email unless explicit *prior* permission has been granted by me. Late assignments will be penalized one full letter grade for each day that they are late. (Of course, this means that all assignments received after five days automatically will receive a failing grade.) Please inform the instructor as soon as possible if you find necessary to turn in an assignment late.

Missed exams will receive a grade of zero except in cases of demonstrated, appropriate, and verifiable emergencies or tragedies or where the student has *prior* approval from the instructor. In cases of missed exams excused by the instructor, a makeup exam will be rescheduled at the convenience of the instructor.

POLICY ON ACADEMIC HONESTY

All students are responsible for maintaining the highest standards of honesty and integrity in every phase of their academic careers. The penalties for academic dishonesty are severe and ignorance is not an acceptable defense. All academic work must meet the standards contained in the Academic Honor Code, published in the *Florida State University Bulletin* and *The Student Handbook*. Students are responsible for informing themselves about those standards before performing academic work.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should: (1) register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center; (2) bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type. This should be done during the first week of class. For more information services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact the Student Disability Resource Center, 97 Woodward Ave. South (Student Services Bldg.), 850-644-9566, or on the web at <http://www.disabilitycenter.fsu.edu/>

OFFICE HOURS AND AVAILABILITY

Undoubtedly, some of you will find the material covered in this class difficult to grasp. The readings, lectures, discussions, and assignments have been compiled to make understanding legislative politics an easier (and interesting) task. However, if at any time you feel confused by the material, please feel free to seek my help during office hours or by appointment.

Required Readings

(The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.)

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| 04 Jan | About the Course and Constitutional Foundations |
| 06 | NO CLASS – ANNUAL MEETING OF THE SOUTHERN POLITICAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION |
| 11 | Constitutional Foundations, cont. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• United States Constitution, Article I (SRV)• <i>The Federalist Papers</i> #51 (SRV)• Montesquieu, <i>The Spirit of the Laws</i> (Blackboard) |
| 13 | Legislatures in Comparative Perspective <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lijphart, <i>Patterns of Democracy</i>, Chs. 2 & 3 (Blackboard) |
| 18 | Legislatures in Comparative Perspective <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lijphart, <i>Patterns of Democracy</i>, Chs. 2 & 3 (Blackboard) |
- WRITING ASSIGNMENT QUESTION GIVEN AT END OF CLASS**

- 20 Theoretical Perspectives on Congress
- Mayhew, *Congress: The Electoral Connection* (SRV)
- 25 Representation and Apportionment
- *Thornburg v. Gingles* (1986) (Blackboard)
 - *Shaw v. Reno* (1993) (Blackboard)
 - *Miller v. Johnson* (1995) (Blackboard)
 - Cox and Katz, “Elbridge Gerry’s Salamander...” (SRV)
 - Swain, *Black Faces, Black Interests*, Chs. 9 & 10 (Blackboard)
- WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE AT BEGINNING OF CLASS**
- 27 Legislative Elections
- Lijphart, *Democracies*, Ch. 8 (Blackboard)
 - Jacobson, *The Politics of Congressional Elections*, Ch. 1
- 01 Feb Legislative Elections, cont.
- Jacobson, *The Politics of Congressional Elections*, Chs. 2-8
- 03 Legislative Elections, cont.
- Jacobson, *The Politics of Congressional Elections*, Chs. 2-8
- 08 The Legislator - Constituency Relationship
- Fenno, “U.S. House Members in Their Constituencies: An Exploration” (SRV)
- 10 **UNIT EXAMINATION #1 – LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS AND REPRESENTATION**
- 15 Legislative Procedures and their Effects
- Oleszek, Chs. 3-5 (Blackboard)
 - Sample of Special Rule (SRV)
 - Sample of Unanimous Consent (SRV)
- 17 Legislative Procedures and their Effects, cont.
- Oleszek, Chs. 3-5 (Blackboard)
 - Sample of Special Rule (SRV)
 - Sample of Unanimous Consent (SRV)
- 22 Legislative Procedures and their Effects, cont.
- Oleszek, Chs. 3-5 (Blackboard)
 - Cox, “On the Effects of Legislative Rules” (SRV)
 - Roberts and Smith, “The Evolution of Agenda-Setting Institutions...” (SRV)
- 24 The Budgetary Process
- Lecture (Notes Available on Blackboard)
 - Evans, “Appropriations in the Republican Era” (SRV)
 - Solomon and Birnbaum, “Pet Projects’ Veil is Only Partly Lifted...” (SRV)
- 01 Mar **UNIT EXAMINATION #2 – LEGISLATIVE PROCEDURES**

- 03 Congressional Committees: From Committee to Subcommittee Government
- Davidson and Oleszek, “Committees: Workshops of Congress” (Blackboard)
 - Canon and Stewart, “The Evolution of the Committee System...” (Blackboard)
- 08 NO CLASS – Spring Break!!!
- 10 NO CLASS – Spring Break!!!
- 15 Congressional Committees: From Committee to Subcommittee Government, cont.
- Davidson and Oleszek, “Committees: Workshops of Congress” (Blackboard)
 - Canon and Stewart, “The Evolution of the Committee System...” (Blackboard)
- 17 Congressional Committees: The Pivot of Power
- Maltzman and Smith, “Principals, Goals, Dimensionality...” (SRV)
 - Hurwitz, Moiles, and Rohde, “Distributive and Partisan Issues...” (SRV)
 - Shepsle and Weingast, “The Institutional Foundations of Committee Power” (Optional Challenging Reading) (SRV)
- 22 Parties and Legislative Leadership
- Cooper and Brady, “Institutional Context and Leadership Style...” (SRV)
 - Smith, “Party Influence in Congress” (SRV)
 - Cox and McCubbins, “Setting the Agenda” (SRV)
- 24 Parties and Legislative Leadership, cont.
- Cooper and Brady, “Institutional Context and Leadership Style...” (SRV)
 - Smith, “Party Influence in Congress” (SRV)
 - Cox and McCubbins, “Setting the Agenda” (SRV)
- 29 **UNIT EXAMINATION #3 – COMMITTEES, PARTIES, AND LEADERS**
- 31 Legislative Voting Behavior
- Kingdon, “Models of Legislative Voting” (SRV)
- 05 Apr Interest Groups: Influence and Networks
- Gais, Peterson, and Walker, “Interest Groups, Iron Triangles, and Representative Institutions in American National Government” (Blackboard)
 - Wright, “Legislative Lobbying” (SRV)
 - Hall and Wayman, “Buying Time...” (SRV)
- 07 Executive Relations: The Politics of Divided Government
- Binder, “The Dynamics of Legislative Gridlock, 1947-1996” (SRV)
- 12 Executive Relations: Divided Government and the Nomination Process
- Binder, “The Dynamics of Legislative Gridlock, 1947-1996” (SRV)
 - Cameron, Cover, & Segal, “Senate Voting on Supreme Court Nominees” (SRV)
 - Krutz, Fleisher, and Bond, “From Abe Fortas to Zoë Baird...” (SRV)

- 14 Legislative - Executive Relations: The Veto
- Cameron, “Veto Bargaining...” (SRV)
- 19 **UNIT EXAMINATION #4 – CONGRESS, INTEREST GROUPS, AND THE PRESIDENT**
- 21 **LAST DAY OF CLASS – Final Thoughts and Review for Final Examination**
- Hibbing and Theiss-Morse, “What is Wrong with the American Political System” (SRV)

FINAL EXAMINATION – Monday, April 25, 2011, 10:00 a.m. – noon