

Bowie State University
Department of History and Government
GOVT 348 Legislative Process
Fall 2006
T 4:55-7:30

Prof. D. Osei Robertson
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Office Hours: Office Hours: T: 1:30-4:50, W: 1:30-4:50, Th: 12:30-3:00, or by appointment
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Course Description

This course explores the procedural components and behavioral patterns of the United States Congress. It examines the structural dynamics of the institution, and how its rules and procedures influence the legislative process. The course also focuses on theoretical models which seek to understand, and to certain degree predict, Congressional behavior. _____

Course Overview

Legislative process is designed to expose students to some of the main components of Legislative activity in the US Congress. The course explores several key areas as they relate to Congressional activities, including: rules and procedures, structural differences between the House and the Senate, theoretical models, partisan shifts and influence, minority involvement, and contemporary issues.

*******Special Needs:** Students who have a disability and who would like accommodations should report immediately to Disability Support Services (DSS), located in Room 1328 in the Business and Graduate Studies Building or call Dr. Michael S. Hughes, DSS Coordinator at 301-860-4067.

A:General Education Competencies

- 1) Written and Oral Communication
 - Write weekly summaries of readings
- 2) Critical Thinking and Reasoning
 - Carefully interpret, analyze, and evaluate evidence statements, graphics, and questions
 - Construct well-supported (evidence based), clearly articulated, and sustained arguments
- 3) Scientific Analysis Using Quantitative and Qualitative Sources
 - Apply descriptive statistics (such as public opinion data) to analyze the 2010 mid-term elections
 - Use decision-maker and policy documents to assess the accuracy of claims made by politicians
- 4) Technology Competence
 - Use word processor to create a text document
 - Use Graphics program (such as Excel) to create tables and graphs for data analysis
- 5) Information Literacy
 - Use a Library Database (such as EBSCO Academic) or the internet to conduct research for class

II: Student Learning Objectives

- 1) Define the basic concepts and themes of political parties, such as: the Two-Party System, Third Parties, realignment, and historical constituencies.
- 2) Identify and analyze key actors in within political parties, including: whips, caucuses/conferences, majority leader, the speaker of the house, committee system, and the national chair.
- 3) Use the requisite skills for research in political science;
- 4) Demonstrate this knowledge in the use of technology and library resources.

III: Expected Outcomes: Students will be required to complete the following:

- 1) 1 Test to evaluate mastery of key concepts, themes, institutions, and actors (learning objectives 1- 4); Tests will be composed of multiple choice, short answers, and essays.
- 2) Write weekly summaries of readings (learning objectives 1-2).
- 3) Participate in one group project/presentation examining Congressional & Presidential elections. (learning objectives 1,3,4).
- 4) Complete one book review (learning objectives 1-4)
- 5) Write an annotated bibliography (learning objectives 1-4).

Requirements

1. Class Readings: Students will be responsible for weekly readings taken from textbooks and supplemental articles. The required texts are:

Walter Oleszek, *Congressional Procedures and Processes*, 6th edition (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2003). ISBN: 1-56802-819-9

Lawrence Dodd and Bruce Oppenheimer, *Congress Reconsidered*, 8th edition (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2005). ISBN: 1568028598

2.) Tests: Students will take one test as a part of the evaluation process. The test will be composed of multiple choice questions, short answers, and essays covering material reviewed in the prior weeks.

3)Papers: Students will be responsible for three types of papers in this course. First, there will be several weekly summaries due on a revolving basis (divided between two groups) throughout the semester. The summaries should be 1-2 pages long outlining the major points of the reading. Secondly, students will have to complete book review on the designated text. The book review should be approximately 8 pages long and adhere to the rubric guidelines. Finally, students must complete an annotated bibliography of the contemporary literature on political parties. The annotated bibliography must be based on four scholarly books and six journal articles or edited book chapters, and should be approximately 10 pages long.

Book Review:

R. Douglas Arnold, *The Logic of Congressional Action* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1990).

U.S. Congress Website: <http://thomas.loc.gov/home/r109query.html>

Grading Scale

First Test: 25%
First Paper: 25%
Weekly Assignments: 20%
Group Paper: 20%
Attendance and Participation: 10%

Course Schedule

Week 1: Aug 28-Sept. 1

Course Overview: Power, Politics, and Congress

Required Reading:

Week 2: Sept. 4-8

The Constitution and the Legislative Branch

Required Readings: *Federalist Papers* #s 10, 51, 62; Oleszek Ch. 1

Suggested Reading:

Week 3: Sept. 11-15

Congressional Processes

Required Readings: Oleszek Chs. 2 and 3

Suggested Reading:

Week 4: Sept. 18-22

Congressional Processes Cont.: The House

Required Readings: Oleszek Chs. 4 & 5

Suggested Reading:

Week 5: Sept. 25-29

Congressional Processes Cont.: The Senate

Required Reading: Oleszek Chs. 6 & 7

Week 6: Oct. 2-6

Test 1

1st Test Sept. 29 (25% of Student's Grade)

Required Readings:

Suggested Readings:

Week 7: Oct. 9-13

Congressional Patterns

Required Reading: Dodd and Oppenheimer "Prologue," and "A Decade of Republican Control"

Suggested Readings:

Week 8: Oct. 16-20

Elections and Constituents

Required Readings: Erikson and Gerald Wright, "Voters, Candidates, and Issues in Congressional Elections;" Oppenheimer "Deep Red and Blue Congressional Districts,"

Suggested Reading: Fiorina "Keystone Reconsidered"

Week 9: Oct. 23-27

Parties and Committees

Required Readings: Smith and Gerald Gamm, "The Dynamics of Party Government," Schickler and Pearson, "House Leadership in an Era of Partisan Warfare,"

Suggested Readings:

Week 10: Oct. 30-Nov. 3

Parties and Committees Cont.

Required Readings: Aldrich and Rhode, "Congressional Committees in a Partisan Era," Evans and Lipinski, "Obstruction and Leadership in the US Senate,"

Suggested Reading:

Week 11: Nov. 6-10

Book Reviews Due/ Class Discussion

(25% of students' grade)

Required Reading:

Week 12: Nov. 13-17

Policy Promulgation

Required Reading: Rudder "The Politics of Taxing and Spending in Congress," Wolfensberger, "Congress and Policymaking in the Age of Terrorism"

Suggested Readings:

Week 13: Nov. 20-24 [Thanksgiving Holiday Nov. 23-27]

Committee Reports

Required Reading:

Week 14: Nov. 27- Dec. 1

Committee Reports

Required Reading:

Week 15: Dec. 4-8 [Last Week of Class]

Committee Reports

Required Readings:

Suggested Reading:

Week 16: Dec. 11-15 [Exam Week]

Final Papers Due (See Instructor for Due Date)