

## **PS 2211: American Legislative Process**

Spring 2017

9-11:55 T  
4430 Posvar Hall

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Research in American legislatures is at something of a crossroads. For much of the history of the study of the US Congress, scholars have focused on the study of elites and how they behave in Washington, D.C. With the obvious exception of Fenno's groundbreaking work on the connection between legislators and their constituencies, generally the study of Congress has been synonymous with the study of legislative behavior inside the Capitol. How do committees work? How do legislators decide how to vote? How does the institution of Congress change over time? For much of the 1990s, the literature became focused on one very important question: What is the role of parties in Congress? But as the literature became more and more narrowly focused on that question, it became clearer and clearer to Congress watchers that the parties – or at least party-based ideological divisions – had become *the* major factor in determining legislative behavior. The things we had been concerned about – most particularly the outcomes of roll call votes – became largely about party, and the literature, frankly, started getting esoteric to the point that it found itself with little room to grow.

So we are in the somewhat odd position of embarking on an in-depth review of a literature that has a storied past, but is in search of a roadmap for the future. In some ways, this may be seen as a liability, but we will instead view it as an opportunity. We have a long, well-developed literature that helped shape much of the way political scientists think about legislatures (and indeed, group interactions) around the globe. But we also have a great opportunity to explore new pathways and discover new ways of thinking about the literature. In this class, you should expect to do both.

## Required texts

Adler, E. Scott and John D. Wilkerson. 2013. *Congress and the Politics of Problem Solving*.  
Harbridge, Laurel. 2015. *Is Bipartisanship Dead?*  
Kanthak, Kristin and George A. Krause. 2012. *The Diversity Paradox*.  
Koger, Gregory and Matthew J. Lebo. 2017. *Strategic Party Government*.  
Krehbiel, Keith. 1998. *Pivotal Politics*.  
Lee, Francis E. 2016. *Insecure Majorities*.  
Mayhew, David E. 2004. *Congress: The Electoral Connection*.  
Schiller, Wendy and Charles Stewart. 20xx *Electing the Senate*.

## Course requirements

Your grade will be based on your performance on three assignments:

Weekly reaction papers:	40 percent
Discussion participation:	20 percent
Final research paper:	40 percent

*Weekly reaction paper:* Each week, you should prepare a 1-2 page critical reaction to the readings for that week. You may discuss all of the readings or select one or more on which to focus your comments (of course, you're expected to have read them all). Four sets of questions that might help spur some thoughts for you (and which will form the basis for the start of in-class conversation) are:

1. What is the **motivation** behind the paper? Why did the authors write it? What is the puzzle?
2. What is the **null hypothesis**? How would we know if the data do not confirm the theory?
3. What are the **premises**? What assumptions do the authors make? What choices do they make? Would you make similar assumptions/choices?
4. What are the **conclusions**? What is the paper's contribution to the literature?

You are required to complete 10 reaction papers over the course of the semester. This means that you will have several bye-weeks, of your choosing, in which you do not write a reaction paper. You may choose to use these bye-weeks when you are especially busy with other work, or when the papers or books assigned don't move you to put pen to ink. Each reaction paper is due at noon, via courseweb, on the day prior to the class for which the discussion of those readings will be held. I encourage your to take a look at courseweb after the noon deadline, to get a sense of what others in the class are thinking about the readings.

*Discussion participation:* Your participation grade will come down to two parts, and your points will be divided equally between them. First, ten percent of your final grade will come from coming to class every week with the readings prepared, ready to discuss them with the group. And second, ten percent of your grade will come from your serving as a discussion leader for one class session. On your day as discussion leader, you will prepare a short introduction to the readings, and provide some context for the readings. You will be in charge of leading discussion, and I will participate much like any other member of the class.

*Research paper:* You will be responsible for producing a paper that is worthy to be presented at an academic conference. You should consider the research paper to be a “call to arms” in the face of the status of the literature right now. Please don’t “tweak” a variable in an extant paper. I can assure you, tweaks are not what this literature needs. What it needs is new eyes and new ideas, and that’s what you have. I would encourage you to use them. The paper will comprise three assignments:

- A one-page summary of the research question and its importance (Due Feb 21)
- A literature review and research design (Due Mar 21)
- A completed paper (Due Apr 25)

## **Course policies**

*Students with disabilities:* If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both me and Disability Resources and Services, 216 William Pitt Union, (412)648-7890/(412)383-7355(TTY), as early as possible in the term. DRS will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course.

*Late work:* I accept no late work. Be sure to budget your time so that you can get all of your work done prior to the due date.

*Incompletes:* I do not give incompletes except in the most dire of circumstances beyond your control.

*Cheating:* You can be assured that I will not decrease the value of your eventual degree by tolerating cheating. Cheaters will fail the course and will be reported to the proper University authorities.

## Schedule of readings

### Jan 10: Introductions

## **The classics and their responses**

### Jan 17: Theoretical underpinnings of American legislatures

- Riker, William H. 1980. "Implications from the Disequilibrium of Majority Rule for the Study of Institutions." *The American Political Science Review*. 74(2):432-446.
- Shepsle, Kenneth A. 1979. "Institutional arrangements and equilibrium in multidimensional voting models." *American Journal of Political Science*. 23(1): 27-59.
- Sinclair Deckard, Barbara. "Political Upheaval and Congressional Voting: The Effects of the 1960s on Voting Patterns in the House of Representatives." *The Journal of Politics*. 38(2)326-345.
- Fenno, Richard F. Jr. 1977. "U.S. House Members in Their Constituencies: An Exploration" *The American Political Science Review*. 71(3):883-917.
- Poole, Keith T., and Howard Rosenthal. 1985. "A spatial model for legislative roll call analysis." *American Journal of Political Science*. 29(2): 357-384.
- Weingast, Barry R., and William J. Marshall. 1988. "The industrial organization of Congress; or, why legislatures, like firms, are not organized as markets." *The Journal of Political Economy*. 96(1): 132-163.

### Jan 24: Congressional elections and the electoral connection

Mayhew, entire.

- Jacobson, Gary C. 1989. "Strategic Politicians and the Dynamics of U.S. House Elections, 1946-86" *American Political Science Review*. 83(3):773-793.
- Bagashka, Tanya and Jennifer Hayes Clark. 2016. "Electoral Rules and Legislative Particularism: Evidence from U.S. State Legislatures." *American Political Science Review*. 110(3):441-456.

### Jan 31: Party Politics

Koger and Lebo, entire

- Schickler, Eric, and Andrew Rich. 1997. "Controlling the floor: parties as procedural coalitions in the House." *American Journal of Political Science*. 41(4): 1340-1375.
- Gailmard, Sean, and Jeffery A. Jenkins. 2007. "Negative agenda control in the Senate and house: Fingerprints of majority party power." *The Journal of Politics*. 69(3): 689-700.
- Anzia, Sarah F. and Molly C. Jackman. 2012. "Legislative Organization and the Second Face of Power: Evidence from U.S. State Legislatures." *The Journal of Politics*. 75(1):210-224.

Feb 7: Where's the party?

Krehbiel, entire.

McCarty, Nolan, Keith T. Poole and Howard Rosenthal. 2001. "The Hunt for Party Discipline in Congress" *American Political Science Review*. 95(3):673-87.

Binder, Sarah, Eric D. Lawrence, and Forrest Maltzman. 1999. "Uncovering the Hidden Effects of Party." *The Journal of Politics*. 61:815-831.

Woon, Jonathan and Sarah Anderson. 2012. "Political Bargaining and the Timing of Congressional Appropriations." *Legislative Studies Quarterly*. 37: 409-436.

### **Empirical and theoretical questions left unanswered**

Feb 14: Normative conceptions of legislatures and representation

Mansbridge, Jane. 2003. "Rethinking Representation." *American Political Science Review*. 97(4):515-28.

Saward, Michael. 2014. "Shape-Shifting Representation." *American Political Science Review*. 108(4):723-36.

Rehfeld, Andrew. 2011. "The Concepts of Representation." *American Political Science Review*. 105(3):631-641.

Mansbridge, Jane. 2011. "Clarifying the Concept of Representation." *American Political Science Review*. 105(3):621-30.

Rehfeld, Andrew. 2009. "Representation Rethought: On Trustees, Delegates, and Gyroscopes in the Study of Political Representation and Democracy." *American Political Science Review*. 103(2):214-30.

Gutmann, Amy and Dennis Thompson. 2010. "The Mindsets of Political Compromise" *Perspectives on Politics*. 8(4):1125-1143.

Priest, Maura. 2014. "Party Politics and Democratic Disagreement." *Philosophia*. 42:137-49.

Mansbridge, Jane. 1999. "Should Blacks Represent Blacks and Women Represent Women? A Contingent 'Yes'" *The Journal of Politics*. 61(3):628-57.

Phillips, Anne. 1991. "The Representation of Women." In *Engendering Democracy*. University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press.

Feb 21: Outside forces, incumbency, and candidate emergence

Masket, Seth E. 2011. *No Middle Ground*, Introduction and Ch. 1

Bawn, Kathy, Marty Cohen, David Karol, Seth Masket, Hans Noel and John R. Zaller. 2012. "A Theory of Political Parties: Groups, Policy Demands and Nominations in American Politics." *Perspectives on Politics* 10(3):571-597.

Abramowitz, Alan I., Brad Alexander and Matthew Gunning. 2006. "Incumbency, Redistricting, and the Decline of Competition in U.S. House Elections." *The Journal of Politics*. 68(1):75-88.

Carson, Jamie L., Erik J. Engstrom and Jason M. Roberts. 2007. "Candidate Quality, the Personal Vote, and the Incumbency Advantage in Congress." *American Political Science Review*. 101(2):289-301.

Carson, Jamie L., et al. 2010. "The electoral costs of party loyalty in Congress." *American Journal of Political Science*. 54(3): 598-616.

Walter J. Stone, Sarah A. Fulton, Cherie D. Maestas and L. Sandy Maisel. 2010. "Incumbency Reconsidered: Prospects, Strategic Retirement, and Incumbent Quality in U.S. House Elections." *The Journal of Politics*, 72, pp 178-190.

Thomsen, Danielle M. 2014. "Ideological Moderates Won't Run: How Party Fit Matters for Partisan Polarization in Congress." *The Journal of Politics*. 76(3): 786-797.

***One page summary due***

Feb 28: Congress as an institution and congressional careers

Katz, Jonathan N., and Brian R. Sala. 1996. "Careerism, committee assignments, and the electoral connection." *American Political Science Review* (90)1: 21-33.

Berry, William D, Michael B. Berkman and Stuart Schneiderman. 2000. "Legislative Professionalism and Incumbent Reelection: The Development of Institutional Boundaries." *The American Political Science Review*. 94(4): 859-874.

Morris P. Fiorina. 1994. "Divided Government in the American States: A Byproduct of Legislative Professionalism?" *American Political Science Review*, 88, pp 304-316.

Kanthak, Kristin. 2011. "The hidden effects of rules not broken: Career paths, institutional rules and anticipatory exit in legislatures." *British Journal of Political Science* 41(4): 841-857.

Kellermann, Michael, and Kenneth A. Shepsle. 2009. "Congressional careers, committee assignments, and seniority randomization in the US House of Representatives." *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 4(2): 87-101.

Aldrich, John H. and Thomsen, Danielle M. 2016. "Party, Policy, and the Ambition to Run for Higher Office." *Legislative Studies Quarterly*. doi:10.1111/lsq.12161

Binder, Sarah A. 1996. "The Partisan Basis of Procedural Choice: Allocating Parliamentary Rights in the House, 1789-1990." *The American Political Science Review*. 90(1):8-20.

Schickler, Eric, Kathryn Pearson and Brian D. Feinstein. 2010. "Congressional Parties and Civil Rights Politics from 1933 to 1972." *The Journal of Politics*. 72(3):672-89

Mar 14: Interactions among legislators

Kanthak and Krause, entire

Masket, Seth E. 2008. "Where you sit is where you stand: The impact of seating proximity on legislative cue-taking." *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*. 3(3): 301-311.

Ringe, Nils, Jennifer Nicoll Victor and Justin H. Gross. 2013. "Keeping Your Friends Close and Your Enemies Closer? Information Networks in Legislative Politics." *British Journal of Political Science*. 43:601-628.

Mar 21: Policy Responsiveness

Adler and Wilkerson, entire

Lax, Jeffrey R., and Justin H. Phillips. "Gay rights in the states: Public opinion and policy responsiveness." *American Political Science Review* 103.03 (2009): 367-386.

Maestas, Cherie. 2000. "Professional Legislatures and Ambitious Politicians: Policy Responsiveness of State Institutions." *Legislative Studies Quarterly*. 25(4):663-690.

**Research design due**

Mar 28: Congress in a Historical Perspective

Schiller and Stewart, entire.

Apr 4: The Perpetual Campaign

Lee, entire

Apr 11: Descriptive Representation

Carnes, entire

Apr 18: Bipartisanship in an Age of Polarization

Harbridge, entire

Apr 25: **FINAL PAPER DUE**