

PSCI 3320: Congress and the Presidency, Spring 2009

Section 202: TR 1:00–2:15 p.m., 217 Bullock Hall

Dr. Christopher N. Lawrence <christopher.lawrence@tamiu.edu>

Office: 313 Lamar Bruni Vergara Science Center (LBVSC)

Hours: M 5:50–7:30 p.m., TuTh 10:50 a.m.–1:00 p.m., or by appointment

Phone: (956) 326-2467

This course examines the evolution and current state of the United States Congress, from both institutional and behavioral perspectives. In addition to talking about what happens in Congress, this course will examine the connections between members and their constituents, most notably what political scientist David Mayhew termed “the electoral connection” between Congress and voters.

The course will also look its oversight of the executive branch and the bureaucracy, and the increased centralization of power in Congress, particularly in the House of Representatives, in the hands of the leadership over the past few decades.

We will also study the historical and contemporary presidency and the role of the executive branch within the broader political system.

Student Learning Objectives: Ideally, at the conclusion of this course, you will have a greater understanding of

- ▷ the two branches of the American national government comprised of elected officials, the Congress and the Presidency.
- ▷ how candidates for public office are recruited and campaign for positions in government.
- ▷ how political parties help organize Congress.
- ▷ the role of the committee system in managing the work of Congress and overseeing other branches of government.
- ▷ the contemporary lawmaking process.
- ▷ how other political institutions such as the federal bureaucracy and courts interact with elected officials.
- ▷ how social scientists study political institutions and public officeholders.

Required Materials: There are **four** books required for this course:

- ▷ Roger H. Davidson, Walter J. Oleszek, and Frances E. Lee. 2008. *Congress and Its Members*, 11th ed. Washington: CQ Press. ISBN 978-0-87289-357-3.
- ▷ Lawrence C. Dodd and Bruce I. Oppenheimer, eds. 2009. *Congress Reconsidered*, 9th ed. Washington: CQ Press. ISBN 978-0-87289-616-1.
- ▷ Joseph A. Pika and John Anthony Maltese. 2008. *The Politics of the Presidency*, 7th ed. Washington: CQ Press. ISBN 978-0-87289-468-6.
- ▷ Barbara Sinclair. 2007. *Unorthodox Lawmaking: New Legislative Processes in the U.S. Congress*, 3rd ed. Washington: CQ Press. ISBN 978-0-87289-306-1.

These textbooks should be available, new and used, at the TAMIU Bookstore in the Student Center; you may also be able to order them on-line at a discount.

Additional readings may be assigned at the discretion of the professor and will be provided for you at the library reserve desk, on the course Angel site, or as handouts in class.

Assignments and Grading: Your grade in this course will be based on the following elements:

Midterm Exam	25%	Class Participation	10%
Final Exam	25%	Short Research Papers (2)	25%
Reading/Lecture Quizzes	10%	Fantasy Congress	5%

Your final grade in the course will be assigned based on this scale:

Final Average	≥ 90.0	≥ 80.0	≥ 70.0	≥ 60.0	< 60.0
Grade	A	B	C	D	F
Grade Points	4.0	3.0	2.0	1.0	0.0

Exams: The exams will be closed-book, in-class examinations, consisting of an appropriate mixture of multiple-choice, short-answer, and essay questions. The midterm exam will cover topics covered up to that point in the course; per college policy, the final exam is *comprehensive*.

Fantasy Congress: 5% of your final grade will be based on your participation in Fantasy Congress, an online simulation based on Congress where you earn points based on the legislative prowess of a team of legislators drafted by you. Initially, you should pick a team of legislators; over the course of the semester, a series of short exercises based on the site will be assigned, which will count toward this element of your grade.

To join the league on FantasyCongress.com, go to <http://www.fantasycongress.com/register> and click on the “I am a student” icon. You will need the following information to join the site: the Class ID is 1239 and the Class Code is `dustyr001z`. This information will also be made available in Angel.

Research Papers: There will be two research papers of approximately five pages in length (each); further details on these paper assignments will be given in class and posted on Angel.

Your papers must be individual efforts; you may consult with me, the TAMIU Writing Center, other faculty members, or other students, but the writing and research must be substantially your own work.

The body of your paper should be double-spaced and written using a proportional typeface (either 11 point or 12 point), with one-inch margins and including page numbers.¹ You should include a title page with the date, title, and appropriate identifying information.

The paper must consistently utilize the citation style of the American Political Science Association, include a full bibliography listing the works cited in your paper, and be written in standard English using coherent prose and acceptable grammar. Please refer to *The Style Manual for Political Science* published by the APSA for a complete guide to the proper use of APSA style.

Class Discussion: As this course is an upper-division class, students are expected to participate regularly in class discussions about the assigned readings. If you have other commitments that preclude regular class attendance, this portion of your grade will suffer and there are no “make-ups” for missed class discussions.

Class Policies: I make it a general policy to treat all students as adults. While this affords you, the student, greater freedom than you may have had in high school, it also means that you must take a greater personal responsibility for your performance in the course. I am always happy to

¹Proportional typefaces include Times New Roman, Arial, Calibri, Garamond, etc. “Typewriter-style” (constant-width) typefaces such as Courier New are **not acceptable**.

meet with students to discuss their concerns about the course, but I will not necessarily assume that you are in difficulty simply because you perform poorly on a homework assignment or disappear from class for a few days.

Please provide a respectful learning environment for your fellow students. Repeated tardiness, cell phone disruptions, reading materials unrelated to the course (such as the student newspaper), and abuse of communication technologies (e.g., web browsing/IMing/texting during class) during class will adversely affect your grade; per university policy, repeated disruptive behavior may result in your involuntary withdrawal from the course.

Please arrive at class *on time* and mute (or switch off) all pagers, cell phones, and alarms during class.

Make-up examinations must be scheduled two weeks in advance in the case of an **unavoidable** planned or reasonably-foreseeable absence; otherwise, make-ups will be given only in the case of an illness or emergency that is properly **documented**. Please refer to the student absence policy posted on the TAMIU website for examples of absences that will ordinarily be excused by the professor and specific documentation that is acceptable. Should you have three final exams scheduled for one day, please consult with me to arrange an alternative time to take your final.

I do not provide lecture notes for students under any circumstances. You will have to rely on the generosity of a classmate or make use of any materials provided on the textbook website or the textbook's study guide (if applicable). Students with disabilities who require notes or other learning environment accommodations should consult with the Student Disability Services office for assistance.

Copies of all out-of-class written assignments must be submitted **both** in paper (hard copy) format to the professor and in the appropriate TurnItIn.com "drop box" on the TAMIU Angel E-Learning website. In the event that the timeliness of an assignment is in question, the time submitted to Angel will be used as the definitive record of when the assignment was received, as long as the hard copy is substantially identical. The professor reserves the right to not grade any assignment not received in a timely fashion in *both* formats.

Any extra-credit opportunities offered by the professor will be offered to **all** students on an equal basis. Please do not ask the professor for individualized extra credit opportunities.

This syllabus is subject to revision by the professor.

Grade Appeals: If you wish to dispute a grade on a particular assignment for any reason other than an obvious arithmetic error on my part, you will need to type a one-page explanation of your position and turn it in, along with the original graded assignment, *at least one week after* the assignment is returned to you. I will then consider your appeal and make a determination. Appeals must be submitted in hard copy format; no appeals submitted via email will be considered. Please refer to the Student Handbook for policies regarding appeals of *final letter grades*.

University and College Policies: The following policies of the TAMIU College of Arts and Sciences and Texas A&M International University are reproduced here for your information; you may already be familiar with them from other courses, but please review them.

STUDENT EMAIL ADDRESS: All students must obtain a TAMIU email address and have access to the Angel E-Learning system. Students should check their TAMIU email on a regular basis.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY FOR DROPPING A COURSE: It is the student's responsibility to drop the course before the designated drop date. Faculty are not responsible for dropping students who stop attending class.

OFFICE HOURS: Your professor will keep regular office hours, as posted above, and appointments can be made to accommodate students' schedules. The door will be open for all students on a "first-come, first-served" basis when no appointment has been previously scheduled.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: Texas A&M International University seeks to promote reasonable accommodations for all qualified persons with disabilities. This University will adhere to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations as required to afford equal educational opportunity. It is the student's responsibility to register with the Student Disability Services office and to contact the faculty member in a timely fashion to arrange for suitable accommodations.

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR: The College of Arts and Sciences encourages classroom discussion and academic debate as an essential intellectual activity. It is essential that students learn to express and defend their beliefs, but it is also essential that they learn to listen and respond respectfully to others whose beliefs they may not share. The College will always tolerate diverse, unorthodox, and unpopular points of view, but it will not tolerate condescending or insulting remarks. When students verbally abuse or ridicule and intimidate others whose views they do not agree with, they subvert the free exchange of ideas that should characterize a university classroom. If their actions are deemed by the professor to be disruptive, they will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, which may include being involuntarily withdrawn from the class.

COPYRIGHT RESTRICTIONS: The Copyright Act of 1976, as amended by the Digital Millennium Copyright Act, grants to copyright owners the exclusive right to reproduce their works and distribute copies of their work. Works that receive copyright protection include published works such as a textbook. Copying a textbook without permission from the owner of the copyright may constitute a copyright infringement. Civil and criminal penalties may be assessed for copyright infringement. Civil penalties include damages up to \$100,000; criminal penalties include a fine up to \$250,000 and imprisonment.

PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING: Plagiarism is the presentation of someone else's work as one's own work. Recently the internet has complicated the issue. Taking from the internet and presenting it as one's own work is still plagiarism. Copying another student's paper or a portion of the paper is called "copying." Neither plagiarism nor copying will be tolerated. Should a faculty member discover that a student committed plagiarism, the student will receive a grade of "F" in that course and the matter will be referred to the TAMU Honor Council for possible disciplinary action. Per university policy, you have the right to appeal any such penalty according to procedures published in the faculty and student handbooks.

INCOMPLETES: Incompletes are discouraged and are assigned only under extenuating circumstances. College policy mandates 70% of course requirements must be met before an "I" can be considered. In fairness to those students who complete the course as scheduled, under no circumstances will an incomplete ("I") be changed to an "A" unless the student has experienced a death in the immediate family or has a written medical excuse from a physician.

Course Outline: Any changes to this schedule will be announced in class and will be posted to the course calendar and in Angel. We will not necessarily read books in the order they appear on the syllabus; please be sure you read the correct chapters *in advance of* the designated class dates.

While the professor may periodically remind students of upcoming scheduled events, it is **your responsibility** to be familiar with this schedule and any changes to it.

Jan 13 Introduction to the course.

Jan 15, 20, 22 Congress in the Constitution, the evolution of Congress, and Congress today: Davidson et al., ch. 1–2.

From Dodd and Oppenheimer: Sinclair, “The New World of U.S. Senators”; Mann and Ornstein, “Is Congress Still a Broken Branch?”

Jan 27 Candidate recruitment: Davidson et al., ch. 3.

From Dodd and Oppenheimer: Dodd and Oppenheimer, “Prologue.”

Jan 29, Feb 3 Running for Congress: Davidson et al., ch. 4.

From Dodd and Oppenheimer: Erikson and Wright, “Voters, Candidates, and Issues in Congressional Elections”; Herrnson and Curry, “Issue Voting in the 2006 Elections for the U.S. House of Representatives.”

Feb 5, 10 Congress and its constituents: Davidson et al., ch. 4.

From Dodd and Oppenheimer: Sulkin, “Promises Made and Promises Kept”; Lipinski, “Congressional Careers from the Inside: A Political Scientist as Congressman.”

Feb 12, 17, 19 Parties in Congress: Davidson et al., ch. 6

From Dodd and Oppenheimer: Smith and Gamm, “The Dynamics of Party Government in Congress”; Pearson and Schickler, “The Transition to Democratic Leadership in a Polarized House”; Evans and Grandy, “The Whip Systems of Congress.”

Feb 19 First Paper Due

Feb 24, 26; Mar 3 Congressional Committees: Davidson et al., ch. 7

From Dodd and Oppenheimer: Aldrich and Rohde, “Congressional Committees in a Continuing Partisan Era.”

Mar 5, 10 The Legislative Process in Principle: Davidson et al., ch. 8.

Mar 12 Midterm Exam

Mar 16–20 Spring Break: No Class

Mar 24, 26 Lawmaking in the Contemporary Congress: Davidson et al., ch. 9; Sinclair, ch. 1–6, 13.

Mar 31; Apr 2 The evolution of the presidency: Pika and Maltese, ch. 1.

Apr 7, 9 Presidential nominations and campaigns: Pika and Maltese, ch. 2.

Apr 9 Drop Date

Apr 14, 16 Congress and the Presidency: Davidson et al., ch. 10; Pika and Maltese, ch. 5.

From Dodd and Oppenheimer: Cooper, “From Congressional to Presidential Preeminence: Power and Politics in Late Nineteenth-Century America and Today”; Howell and Kriner, “Congress, the President, and the Iraq War’s Domestic Political Front.”

Apr 21, 23 Congress, the President, and the Bureaucracy: Pika and Maltese, ch. 6; Davidson et. al, ch. 11.

Apr 28, 30 Congress, the President, and Judicial Politics: Davidson et al., ch. 12; Pika and Maltese, ch. 7.

From Dodd and Oppenheimer: Binder and Maltzman, “The Politics of Advice and Consent: Putting Judges on the Federal Bench.”

Apr 30 Second Paper Due

Thursday, May 7, 11:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m. Final Exam