Overview
This class focuses on legislative politics with an institutional lens. That is, we will concentrate on the literature on legislative politics that examines how the structure, rules, and organization of legislatures influences political behaviors and outcomes. This is a vast literature, so I’ve hand-picked a mixture of seminal works and debates and peppered-in new things as possible. I have also included long lists of recommended readings that may be of help in your research or in preparing for your comprehensive exams. Even with my efforts to include a lot of material, several areas are badly neglected. If you are interested in pursuing legislative politics as a research area please see me to talk about areas left untouched by this syllabus. Unfortunately, it is impossible to include all the material in one (or even two) semesters’ time.

Evaluation
Your grade for the course will be measured by your weekly writing assignments (50%) related to the readings, your class participation (25%) and a final paper (25%). Letter grades will be assigned (and translated numerically) for final grading.

LSU Recently Adopted a Plus/Minus Grading System; I will apply the following in your final grade calculation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Range</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>96.5 and above</td>
<td>A+</td>
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<tr>
<td>93.50 – 96.49</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>90.00 – 93.49</td>
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<tr>
<td>86.50 – 89.99</td>
<td>B+</td>
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<tr>
<td>83.50 – 86.49</td>
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<tr>
<td>80.00 – 83.49</td>
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<tr>
<td>76.50 – 79.99</td>
<td>C+</td>
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<td>73.50 – 76.49</td>
<td>C</td>
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<td>70.00 – 73.49</td>
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<td>66.50 – 69.99</td>
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<td>63.50 – 66.49</td>
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<td>60.00 – 63.49</td>
<td>D-</td>
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<tr>
<td>59.99 and below</td>
<td>F</td>
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Each assignment is outlined with more detail below:

Weekly critical writings: Each week you will be responsible for reading critically and comprehensively and crafting a one page response to the readings. Additional details are provided on the separate sheet (attached) describing what I am looking for in these assignments.
These papers are an opportunity for you to organize your general assessments of the readings and how they fit with the major theoretical and methodological questions of the course. Response papers are not to summarize the readings; rather, they are intended to encapsulate your summary of the usefulness, strengths and weaknesses of the research. Your paper should focus on the question I give out each week – which will focus on a theoretical or methodological concern from the week’s readings. The paper should answer the question by incorporating the readings and related issues. You do not have to address each of the readings if all are not relevant to the question. It is important not to exceed 1 single spaced page. This is a writing exercise; you need to learn to write a succinct argument.

Participation: Your weekly in-class discussion participation is critical to my ability to track your progress and your own development in understanding the material. This requires you to have a comprehensive understanding of the readings and (obviously) to come to class. You should be prepared to answer the following questions for each reading each class:

1. What is the main contribution of the reading to scholarly knowledge?
2. What theoretical tradition is the reading working within or in contrast to?
3. What hypotheses are offered for empirical evidence?
4. What are the data and measures used in the paper appropriate for evaluating the theory and hypothesis?
5. What are the main findings?
6. What are the implications of the theory and results for understanding American politics?
7. What are your criticisms of the research?

Final Paper: Each student will complete a major paper assignment. This paper should involve original empirical research on a topic of each student's own choosing that addresses a theoretically-grounded research question relevant to the study of legislative politics. Students will be expected to develop or test an empirical test of some hypothesis(es) pertaining to legislative politics. It is expected that the finished research papers will be, subject to modest revision, of a quality suitable for presentation at a professional conference or, ideally, submission to a refereed, scholarly political science journal. Each student should begin to consider possible research topics as soon as possible, and should consult with the instructor about potential topics and relevant literature. Further, each student is expected to clear the selected topic with the instructor before beginning work, and should be prepared to work closely with the instructor in fine-tuning the proposed research. Whether actual data analysis is required will depend on several variables and will be decided on a case by case basis in conjunction with the student. Research topics may be developed in one of three ways.

1. I will provide each student with a list of possible research topics. Any of these topics may be selected for the semester research paper.

2. Each student may select a pre-approved article from the syllabus and replicate it; the replication can be based on the data used by the original authors, or can be based on data collected for another (set of) year(s) and/or political system.

3. Each student may develop his/her own research idea consistent with his/her own interests and inclinations.

Solid rough drafts of all research papers are due in hardcopy form by NOON on Friday, November 20, 2015. Final drafts are due in hardcopy form by noon on Friday December 4, the same day you will present your paper conference style. Students should have their research topic selected and turn in a brief abstract of their proposed paper by October 2. Furthermore, all papers and drafts should be (1) typed and
double spaced with page numbers, (2) written in accordance with the APSR style manual, (3) proofread for mistakes, and (4) neat and professionally presented.

**Cheating and Plagiarism:** All students are expected to observe the University’s rules against cheating and plagiarism. We will discuss more on this at length during the first class meeting.

**Readings**

There is only one required text for this course and it is available for download for free through the LSU library system. I do recommend some other books too.

**Required:**


**Recommended:**


Rohde. *Parties and Leaders in the Post Reform House*.


Arnold, R. Douglas.


Below is a schedule of assigned peer-reviewed journal article and other readings for the course. Most are journal articles that can be found via the LSU library system. Others are hard to find or book chapters which will be marked with am (M) to denote they can be found on the class moodle page.
Schedule:

Week 1 (August 26) – Syllabus and Instructions

Week 2 (September 4) – NO CLASS, Instructor (and a few classmates) at APSA but read and we will double the discussion during week 3 - General Approaches


Recommended:


Grumm, "The Effects of Legislative Structure on Legislative Performance," in Hofferbert and Sharkansky (eds.), *State and Urban Politics*.


**Week 3 (September 11) Legislative Organization: The Distributive Approach**


**Recommended**


**Week 4 (September 18) Legislative Organization: The Informational Approach**


**Recommended**


Week 5 (September 25) Legislative Organization: The Partisan Approach (and conclusions)


Recommended:


Cox and McCubbins, "Toward a Theory of Legislative Rules Changes: Assessing Schickler and


**Week 6 (October 2) Parties and Leaders: Conditional Party Government and Critics**


Recommended:

Rohde. *Parties and Leaders in the Post Reform House.*


**Week 7 (October 9) Congressional Committees and the Legislative Process, some newer stuff**


**Week 8 (October 16) Rules and Procedures**


Recommended


Binder and Smith, *Politics or Principle? Filibustering in the United States Senate*.


Krehbiel and Meirowitz, “Minority Rights and Majority Power: Theoretical Consequences of the


**Week 9 (October 23) Universalism and the Pork Barrel in Congress**


**Recommended:**


Ferejohn, *Pork Barrel Politics*.

Arnold, *Congress and the Bureaucracy*.


Ferejohn, "Logrolling in an Institutional Context: A Case Study of Food Stamp Legislation," in Wright, Rieselbach, and Dodd (eds.), *Congress and Policy Change*.


**Week 10 (October 30) -NO CLASS FALL BREAK**

**Week 11 (November 6) Ambition, Strategy, Careers, and Term Limits**


**Recommended**


Dodd, "A Theory of Congressional Cycles: Solving the Puzzle of Change," in Wright, Rieselbach, and Dodd (eds.), *Congress and Policy Change*.


**Week 12 (November 13) Congress and Interest Groups/Congress and the Bureaucracy**


**Austen-Smith & Wright vs. Baumgartner & Leech, AJPS 1996**


**Recommended – congress and interest groups**

Wright, *Interest Groups and Congress: Lobbying, Contributions, and Influence.*


Wright, "PACs, Contribution, and Roll Calls: An Organizational Perspective,” *APSR* (June 1985: 400-14).


Cox and Magar, "How Much is Majority Status in the U.S. Congress Worth?" *APSR* (June 1999: 299-310).


Kollman, "Inviting Friends to Lobby: Interest Groups, Ideological Bias, and Congressional


Recommended – congress and the bureaucracy

Ogul, Congress Oversees the Bureaucracy, chapter 1.

Dodd and Schott, *Congress and the Administrative State*, chapters 5-6.


**Week 13 (November 20) New and Cool Stuff - Solid Rough Drafts due in class**


**Week 14 (November 27) NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK**

**Week 15 (December 4) – Presentations of Research Papers and Final Papers Due in Class**