The Legislative Process
Political Science 4035
Fall 2013

Dr. Hogan
TTH 1:30-2:50
218 Coates Hall

Course Description

This course is designed to provide students with an understanding of various aspects of the legislative process as practiced in the United States. A variety of topics are examined ranging from institutional development and candidate emergence to representation and the conditions that influence roll-call voting. Our goal is to better understand how the legislative process works and how this process produces public policies. While much of our focus is on the U.S. Congress, attention is also given to legislatures in the states where differences in institutional characteristics, electoral incentives, and political conditions provide analytical leverage for addressing important theoretical and practical questions.

In addition to our substantive focus on legislatures, we will also give attention to the methods used by scholars in answering empirical questions about these institutions. One of our objectives is to assess the evidence uncovered by scholars. How do these findings comport with common perceptions or media accounts? While this is not a course on political science methodology, issues involving research design and analysis will play prominently in many of our class discussions.

Reading Materials

The following book is available for purchase in the bookstore:


In addition to the text, other required readings listed on the syllabus can be accessed through the class Moodle site for this course. The articles themselves (or links to them) are available for download.

Course Requirements

The grade for the course is determined by a student’s performance in the following areas:

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Representation Project</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam #1</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam #2</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>30%</td>
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TOTAL 100%

Letter grades will be determined as follows: A = 90 – 100 percent, B = 80 – 89 percent, C = 70 – 79 percent, D = 60 – 69 percent, and F = below 60 percent.

Representation Project

Each student will write a report on an assigned member of Congress, the district represented by the member, and an assessment of his or her recent activities both at home and in Washington. The report counts for 25% of the course grade and a printed copy is due at the beginning of class on Thursday, November 21. Details concerning the project will be provided in an additional handout.
Exams

There are two in-term exams and a final (dates are listed on the syllabus). These tests will consist of multiple-choice, short-answer, and/or brief essay questions. Note that makeup exams are all-essay exams and will only be administered when a student can produce a valid written excuse. If you anticipate a problem, please let me know as soon as possible. Also, for anyone who has special needs or who requires accommodations through Disability Services, please advise me of your situation in advance of the exams so arrangements can be made.

General Policies

Academic Honesty

Students are required to abide by the academic conduct policies outlined in the LSU Code of Student Conduct (http://www.lsu.edu/judicialaffairs). Examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to: cheating on exams, plagiarizing, buying or selling assignments, altering grades, and collaborating with others without permission. I reserve the right to investigate when I suspect a violation of any of these policies. All violations of the university’s academic conduct policies are turned over to the Dean of Students.

Classroom Etiquette

Please be considerate to those around you who are trying to listen, take notes, and participate. Please make every effort to be on time to class. Be seated and ready to begin at 10:30 and leave early only for emergencies. Turn cell phones and pagers to silent. Most importantly, do not talk during class. Disruptive students will be asked to leave immediately.

Recording Devices, Photographs and Computers

No audio or video recording devices are allowed unless special permission is granted by the instructor. Please do not take photographs of the overheads. Photography of any kind is forbidden. This rule is strictly enforced during exams and during review of exam materials. All violations of this policy are turned over to the Dean of Students. You are free to use laptop computers and other electronic devices for class purposes (e.g., taking notes, looking up relevant information, etc.). But please do not simply play on the internet, check e-mail, or use social networking sites.

Late Assignments and Missed Work

Make every effort to take scheduled exams and hand in work on time. However, I recognize there are legitimate reasons for missing a deadline or an exam. The following reasons are some, but probably not all, of the excuses that are considered acceptable: a documented illness, a family emergency, some severe mechanical failure (related to transportation, computing, etc.), or a scientifically documented anomaly in the space-time continuum. Please note that most job-related issues are not considered acceptable excuses (although see university regulations concerning military duties, official events, etc.). For late assignments, penalties are assessed based upon the circumstances, but will generally involve a substantial loss of points. Recognize that for reasons of fairness to other students in the class, credit cannot be given at the end of the semester for missed exams or papers not handed in. In other words, when you experience a significant problem that prevents you from meeting a deadline or taking a test, it is your responsibility to let me know about it in a timely manner and to make arrangements to make up the missed work. Excuses must be provided within one week of your return, NOT at the end of the semester. Excuse forms are available on this course’s Moodle site where they must be submitted along with any other accompanying documentation (a doctor’s note, etc.).

Graded Work

I do not make grades available on Moodle and I will not e-mail grades. I return major assignments and will allow time in class for you to view exams. You are also free to come by during my office hours to look at your tests. During office hours I am happy to review grades with you and talk with you about ways to improve your performance.

Graduate Credit or Honors Credit

For students taking this course for graduate credit or for those who wish to receive special Honors credit, it is the student’s responsibility to contact me to make appropriate arrangements.

Special Needs

For students who have special needs or require accommodations through Disability Services, please advise me of your situation so arrangements can be made.
Course Schedule

August 27  
**Introduction to the Course**

- No reading assignment.

August 29  
**Why Study the Legislative Process?**

- **Text**: Davidson, Oleszek, & Lee Chapter 1.

September 3  
**How to Study Legislatures**

- **Reading #5**: “Appendix: A Brief Introduction to Regression.”
- **Reading #6**: “Important Definitions.”

September 5  
**Development of Legislative Institutions in the United States**

- **Text**: Davidson, Oleszek, & Lee Chapter 2.
- **Reading #8**: U.S. Constitution: Articles I, II, and III; Amendment X.
- **Reading #9**: Federalist Papers: 10, 48, 51, 55, 56, 57, 62, and 63.

September 10  
**Legislative Institutions and Public Perceptions**


September 12  
**Who Runs for Congress and Why?**

- **Text**: Davidson, Oleszek, & Lee Chapter 3.

September 17  
**Nominations and General Elections**

- **Text**: Davidson, Oleszek, & Lee Chapter 4.
- **Reading #15**: Drutman, Lee. 2013. “The Political 1% of the 1% in 2012” Published by the *Sunlight Foundation*.
September 19  

**Legislative Districts and Redistricting**


September 24  

**Conditions Affecting Election Outcomes**


September 26  

Exam #1

October 1  

**Forms of Representation**

- Text: Davidson, Oleszek, & Lee Chapter 5.

October 3  

**How Legislators Spend Their Time**


October 8  

**Leaders and Parties in the Legislature**

- Text: Davidson, Oleszek, & Lee Chapter 6.

October 10  

**Committees**

- Text: Davidson, Oleszek, & Lee Chapter 7.

October 15  

**Legislative Rules and Procedures**

- Text: Davidson, Oleszek, & Lee Chapter 8.
October 17  Decision Making
- **Text**: Davidson, Oleszek, & Lee Chapter 9.

October 22  Roll Call Voting and Its Consequences

October 24  Exam #2

October 29  Interest Groups
- **Text**: Davidson, Oleszek, & Lee Chapter 13.

October 31  News Media

November 5  Legislatures and Executives
- **Text**: Davidson, Oleszek, & Lee Chapter 10.

November 7  Fall Holiday

November 12  Legislatures and the Bureaucracy
- **Text**: Davidson, Oleszek, & Lee Chapter 11.

November 14  Legislatures and the Courts
- **Text**: Davidson, Oleszek, & Lee Chapter 12.
November 19 Institutional Changes: Term Limits


November 21 Budgetary Policymaking

***** Printed copy of Representation Project due at the beginning of class *****

- **Text**: Davidson, Oleszek, & Lee Chapter 14.

November 26 Pork Barrel Politics


November 28 Thanksgiving Holiday

December 3 National Security Policy Making

- **Text**: Davidson, Oleszek, & Lee Chapter 15.

December 5 Conclusions and Reflections

- **Text**: Davidson, Oleszek, & Lee Chapter 16.

December 12 Final Exam in this classroom on Thursday, December 12 from 5:30-7:30 p.m.