

CONGRESSIONAL POLITICS

POL: 790:304:01

Rutgers University
Fall 2020

Class Hours: Monday/Wednesday, 2:15-3:35PM*
(I will be available for live chat in the sakai chat room during the times listed above, however the material can be accessed any time in accordance with your schedule, provided all assignment deadlines are met)

Instructor: Nicole M. Bizzoco, MA

Office Hours: M/W 10am – 11am via zoom;
additional zoom hours available via appointment
(including weekend hours as needed)

Room: course sakai site

Email: nmb130@rutgers.edu

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the course is to learn about the history, development and current state of Congress. The course will examine various internal (i.e. institutional rules and procedures) and external (i.e. elections, interest groups) dimensions of the Congress, as well as focus on the policy process and examine the interaction of legislative branch with other political actors. The general goals of the course are: (1) to provide an understanding of the historical foundations of the modern Congress; (2) provide knowledge about the complex rules, procedures and structures that dictate Congressional functioning and; (3) enable students to develop a more thorough understanding of the American political system as a whole, by examining the interrelationships between Congress and other government actors throughout the policymaking process.

REQUIRED TEXTS and TECHNOLOGY

1. Davidson, Oleszek, Lee & Schickler (), *Congress and Its Members*, 17th edition, CQ Press. NOTE:(Book is available from many online retailers, including Amazon and Barnes n Noble; cheapest option is to buy an earlier edition of the book or rent it from Amazon – the content of the book has changed little since the 13th edition, just the real-life examples are a bit outdated, so please use whatever edition proves affordable for your personal circumstances)
2. Additional reading selections posted to Sakai
3. A laptop, chromebook, tablet with keyboard, or desktop computer
IX. Please visit the [Rutgers Student Tech Guide](#) page for resources available to all students. If you do not have the appropriate technology for financial reasons, please email Dean of Students deanofstudents@echo.rutgers.edu for assistance. If you are facing other financial hardships, please visit the Office of Financial Aid at <https://financialaid.rutgers.edu/> .

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADING

Your final grade is a product of three components:

- 1) **Participation (10%):** As this is an online course, participation is critical for me to get to know you, and to know that you are both completing and understanding the work
 - a. Will be judged based on:
 - i. participation in online discussion forums and course live chat (2 forum posts, responses, or chat room posts per week)
 - ii. participation in at least one Zoom office hour (either individual meeting with Prof, or small group discussion)
- 2) **Two Exams (50% combined):**
 - a. **Midterm Exam (25%):** consisting of short answer and application (essay) questions

- b. **Final (25%):** non-cumulative, same general format as midterm
- 3) **Current Congressional Elections Project (15%):** complete a **3-5** page (double-spaced) paper on the results of the November 2020 elections as it affects **Congress**, including any changes in the balance of power between parties, how the presidential outcome will impact unified/divided government, etc. **DUE: Nov 11th**
- 4) **Critical Analysis Paper (25%):** complete a **8-10** page (double-spaced) research paper which critically analyzes a topic related to Congressional politics. Paper topic to be submitted to instructor for approval in class on **November 18th**. **DUE: Dec 11th**

ACCOMADATIONS

Disability Services:

Every effort will be made to provide all accommodations necessary to students who may need them. Please see the official university policy below, and please reach out to me with any questions or concerns as early as possible:

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations must follow the procedures outlined at <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/getting-registered>.

- Full disability policies and procedures are at <https://ods.rutgers.edu/>

Disability Services Contact Information and Procedures:

(848) 445-6800 / Lucy Stone Hall, Suite A145, Livingston Campus, 54 Joyce Kilmer Avenue, Piscataway, NJ 08854 / <https://ods.rutgers.edu/>

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>.

Religious Accommodations:

Exceptions to the weekly participation requirement will be made for week's during which a religious observance takes place. In accordance with Rutgers University policy, *all* religious observations will be treated as excused absences, and no penalty will be incurred for students observing their faith. The full University policy on religious accommodations can be found below.

University attendance and religious holiday policies are at http://catalogs.rutgers.edu/generated/nb-ug_current/pg1433.html

STUDENT WELLNESS RESOURCES:

All of these services are being provided remotely during Fall 2020.

Counseling, ADAP & Psychiatric Services (CAPS)

(848) 932-7884 / 17 Senior Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901/ <http://health.rutgers.edu/medical-counseling-services/counseling/>

CAPS is a University mental health support service that includes counseling, alcohol and other drug assistance, and psychiatric services staffed by a team of professionals within Rutgers Health services to support students' efforts to succeed at Rutgers University. CAPS offers a variety of services that include: individual therapy, group therapy and workshops, crisis intervention, referral to specialists in the community, and consultation and collaboration with campus partners.

Crisis Intervention : <http://health.rutgers.edu/medical-counseling-services/counseling/crisis-intervention/>

Report a Concern: <http://health.rutgers.edu/do-something-to-help/>

Violence Prevention & Victim Assistance (VPVA)

(848) 932-1181 / 3 Bartlett Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901 / www.vpva.rutgers.edu/

The Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance provides confidential crisis intervention, counseling and advocacy for victims of sexual and relationship violence and stalking to students, staff and faculty. To reach staff during office hours when the university is open or to reach an advocate after hours, call 848-932-1181.

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MAKE-UP EXAMS

If for any legitimate reason (medical or family emergency) you are unable to take an exam as regularly scheduled, you must obtain a note from your Dean in order to take a make-up exam and contact me immediately to let me know that you are unable to take the exam as scheduled. Make-up exams apply to emergency situations only.

CLASS CONDUCT

The classroom is a special environment in which students and faculty come together to promote learning and growth. It is essential to this learning environment that respect for the right of others seeking to learn, respect for the professionalism of the instructor, and the general goals of academic freedom are maintained. *Respectful* expression of individual opinions related to the course discussions is greatly encouraged. Student conduct which disrupts the learning process, will not be tolerated and may lead to disciplinary action or removal from class per university policy.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY (Plagiarism and Cheating)

Rutgers University takes academic dishonesty very seriously. By enrolling in this course, you assume responsibility for familiarizing yourself with the Academic Integrity Policy and the possible penalties (including suspension and expulsion) for violating the policy. As per the policy, all suspected violations will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct. Academic dishonesty includes (but is not limited to):

- Cheating
- Plagiarism
- Aiding others in committing a violation or allowing others to use your work
- Failure to cite sources correctly
- Fabrication
- Using another person's ideas or words without attribution—re-using a previous assignment
- Unauthorized collaboration
- Sabotaging another student's work

Current Academic Integrity Policy:

Summary:

<http://nbacademicintegrity.rutgers.edu/home-2/academic-integrity-policy/>

Resources for Students:

<http://nbacademicintegrity.rutgers.edu/home-2/for-students/>

Honor pledge:

All students will need to sign the Rutgers Honor Pledge on every major exam, assignment, or other assessment as follows:

On my honor, I have neither received nor given any unauthorized assistance on this examination (assignment, paper, quiz, etc.).

COURSE WEBSITE - SAKAI

Our class Sakai website will have a variety of resources to help you throughout the semester. Here you will find assigned readings that are not in the text book, supplemental recommended readings, and lecture slides (found in the “Resource” section). Lecture slides with my audio/video commentary will be located under the “Meetings tab,” and a given week’s lectures should be reviewed before posting to the weekly discussions. The Sakai site also contains a discussion forum and chat room. Discussion is the backbone of this course, and so the bulk of our weekly class time will be spent on discussion forums, and/or live chat on Sakai. If you have a question, chances are that other people will as well, so please post them in the chat room so everyone can benefit from them. I check the chat room regularly and will answer any questions then.

To access the class Sakai website, (1) sign on to www.sakai.rutgers.edu (2) sign in using your RU netID, and (3) click on the class tab at the top of the page.

COURSE OUTLINE AND ASSIGNMENTS

Week 1 (Sept 2nd)

COURSE INTRODUCTION / CONGRESS: THE BROKEN BRANCH?

*No required reading for Week 1

Week 2 (Sept 8* & 9 – Tuesday 9/8 is a “special designation” Monday classes on a Tuesday)

THE TWO CONGRESSES & EVOLUTION OF CONGRESS

Required Readings

Davidson et al, Chps. 1 & 2

Week 3 (Sept 14 & 16)

CONGRESSIONAL RECRUITMENT & ELECTIONS

Required Readings

Davidson et al, Chps 3& 4

Week 4 (Sept 21* & 23; no live chat or office hours on 9/21)

HILL VS. HOME STYLES

Required Readings

Davidson et al, Ch.5

Fenno article, on Sakai

Week 5 (Sept 28 & Sept 30)

LEADERSHIP, PARTIES, AND COMMITTEES IN CONGRESS

Required Reading

Davidson et al, Ch. 6 & 7

Week 6 (Oct 5 & 7)

CONGRESSIONAL RULES

Required Readings

Davidson et al, Ch. 8

Committee articles on Sakai

Week 7 (Oct 12 & 14)

DECISION MAKING IN CONGRESS

Required Readings

Davidson et al, Ch. 9

Week 8 (Oct 19 & 21)

*No required readings this week

MONDAY: Exam review

WEDNESDAY: MIDTERM EXAM

Week 9 – (Oct 26 & 28)

CONGRESSIONAL – PRESIDENTIAL RELATIONS

Required Readings

Davidson et al, Ch. 10

Selections from *Veto Bargaining* and Executive Orders article (both on Sakai)

Week 10 (Nov 2 & 4)

CONGRESS AND THE BUREAUCRACY / CONGRESS AND THE COURTS

Required Readings

Davidson et al, Chps 11 & 12

Week 11 (Nov 9 & 11)

CONGRESS AND INTEREST GROUPS

Required Readings

Davidson et al, Ch 13

Additional readings on Sakai

Congressional Election Assignment DUE WEDNESDAY BY 11:59PM VIA SAKAI ASSIGNMENTS TAB

Week 12 (Nov 16 & 18)

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGETS AND DOMESTIC POLICYMAKING

Required Readings

Davidson et al, 14

CRITICAL ANALYSIS TOPICS TO BE APPROVED MONDAY IN CLASS

Week 13 (Nov23; No class Nov 25)

CONGRESS, FOREIGN POLICY, AND MATTERS OF NATIONAL SECURITY

Required Readings

Davidson, et al, Ch. 15

Additional readings on Sakai

Week 14 (Nov 30 & Dec 2)

CONGRESS, THE AMERICAN PEOPLE AND REPRESENTATION

Required Readings:

Davidson Ch. 16

Additional Readings on Sakai

Week 15 (Dec 7; No in class session Dec 9th but paper due via Sakai)

Dec 9th: FINAL EXAM REVIEW

**** CRITICAL ANALYSIS PAPER DUE : Dec 11th by 8PM via Sakai****

Final Exam Week: December 14th – 18rd; Exam date TBD