

PSC 319/519 - American Legislative Institutions

Instructors: Michael Peress (mperess@mail.rochester.edu, OH: T 2-4)

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Time: Monday, 3:25-6:05

Course Description:

The United States Congress has always dominated the modern study of legislatures. In recent years, however, legislative scholars have paid increasing attention to the value of comparative studies. American state legislatures, in particular, offer a rich field for examining the impact (and origins) of institutional differences. In this course, we will look side-by-side at the U.S. House, the U.S. Senate, and the 99 state legislative chambers. We will consider the major institutions within a legislative chamber, including the role of committees, leaders, parties, and rules in legislative organization. But, taking advantage of this comparative approach, we will also gain insight into the effects of term limits, bicameralism, party competition, seniority systems, professionalization, careerism, ideological heterogeneity, money in politics, and links between campaigns and governance.

Course Requirements:

There will be three major requirements for this course. First, attendance and class participation are mandatory. Anything more than two absences needs to be excused. Each week, some students will be designated as discussion leaders for certain articles.

Participation counts for 40% of your final grade.

Two short papers (2-3 pages in length), related to the course readings, will be assigned throughout the class. They will be due in class, on dates indicated in the syllabus. Combined, these short papers will count for 20% of your final grade.

You will be required to write one research paper (10-15 pages in length). We are quite open to a number of different approaches you could take here, but you must gain permission from Professors Peress and Powell for your topic before you begin. The main requirement is that you go beyond the class readings and perform some amount of original research. We will provide a number of ideas as the course proceeds. The research paper will count for 40% of your final grade.

Please note that you must complete all of these requirements in order to receive a passing grade in this course.

Readings:

The following lists the readings we will be covering in class. Most articles are available through JSTOR, and the remaining articles will be e-mailed to you.

Week 1: Overview (January 29)

- [1] Oleszek, Walter J. (2004). *Congressional Procedures and the Policy Process*. Washington D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press. Chapters 4 and 5.
- [2] Smith, Steven S. (1989). *Call to Order: Floor Politics in the House and Senate*. Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press. Chapter 4.
- [3] Little, Thomas H., and David B. Ogle (2006). *The Legislative Branch of State Government*. Chapter 3.

Week 2: Incumbency and Redistricting (February 5)

- [1] Cox, Gary W., and Jonathan N. Katz (2002). *Elbridge Gerry's Salamander*. Cambridge University Press. Chapters 7, 8, and 9.
- [2] Gelman, Andrew, and Gary King (1990). "Estimating the Incumbency Advantage without Bias". *American Political Science Review* 34:1142-1164.
- [2] Ansolabehere, Stephen, and James M. Snyder, Jr. (2002). "The Incumbency Advantage in U.S. Elections: An Analysis of State and Federal Offices". *Election Law Journal* 3:315-338.
- [4] Carey, John M., Richard G. Niemi, and Lynda W. Powell (2000). "Incumbency and the Probability of Reelection in State Legislative Elections". *Journal of Politics* 62:671-700.
- [5] Carson, Jamie L., Michael H. Crespin, Charles J. Finocchiaro, and David W. Rhode (2004). "Linking Congressional Districts Across Time: Redistricting and Party Polarization in Congress". Working Paper.

Week 3: Ideal Point Estimation (February 12)

- [1] Poole, Keith T., and Howard Rosenthal (1997). *Congress: A Political Economic History of Roll Call Voting*. New York: Oxford University Press. Chapters 1, 2, and 3.
- [2] Groseclose, Timothy J., Steven D. Levitt, and James M. Snyder, Jr. (1999). “Comparing Interest Group Ratings Over Time and Chambers: Adjusted ADA Ratings for the U.S. Congress”. *American Political Science Review* 93:33-50.
- [3] Martin, Andrew D. and Kevin M. Quinn (2002). “Dynamic Ideal Point Estimation via Markov Chain Monte Carlo for the U.S. Supreme Court, 1953-1999”. *Political Analysis* 1:134-153.
- [4] Poole, Keith T. (1998). “Estimating a Basic Space from a Set of Issue Scales”. *American Journal of Political Science* 42:954-993.
- [5] Krehbiel, Keith (2000). “Party Discipline and Measures of Partisanship”. *American Journal of Political Science* 44:212-227.

Week 4: Representation I (February 19)

- [1] Miller, Warren E., and Donald E. Stokes (1963). “Constituency Influence in Congress”. *American Political Science Review* 1:45-56.
- [2] Achen, Christopher H. (1978). “Measuring Representation”. *American Journal of Political Science* 3:475-510.
- [3] Powell, Lynda (1982). “Issue Representation in Congress”. *Journal of Politics* 44:658-678.

- [4] Erikson, Robert S., Gerald C. Wright, and John P. McIver (1994). *Statehouse Democracy: Public Opinion and the American States*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 4, 5, and 6.

Week 5: Representation II (February 26)

- [1] Levendusky, Matthew S., Jeremy C. Pope, and Simon Jackman (2005). “Measuring District Level Preferences for the Analysis of U.S. Elections”. Working Paper.
- [2] Bishin, Benjamin J. (2000). “Constituency Influence in Congress: Does Sub-constituency Matter?”. *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 25:389-415.
- [3] Ansolabehere, Stephen, James M. Snyder, Jr., and Charles Stewart, III (2001). “Candidate Positioning in U.S. House Elections”. *American Journal of Political Science* 45:136-149.
- [4] Canes-Wrone, Brandice, David W. Brady, and John F. Cogan (2002). “Out of Step, Out of Office: Electoral Accountability and House Member’s Voting”. *American Political Science Review* 96:127-140.
- [5] Adams, James F., and Samuel Merrill III (2004). “Candidate Equilibrium and the Behavioral Model of Voter Choice and Turnout: Theoretical Results and an Empirical Model”. Working Paper.

Weeks 6 through 13: To Be Announced