

APLS 461  
Fall 2008  
Office Hours: Fridays, 2-4  
and by appointment

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## CONGRESSIONAL POLITICS

### TEXTS

The American Congress (5<sup>th</sup> Ed.), Steven S. Smith, Jason M. Roberts, & Ryan J. Vander Wielen  
The U.S. Congress: A Simulation for Students, Lauren Cohen Bell

### COURSE WEB PAGE

<http://www.usca.edu/polisci/apls461/default.htm>

### OVERVIEW

The study of American politics cannot be complete without a thorough understanding of the Congress of the United States and how it works. Our aim will be to survey the election of members, how members interact with parties, lobbies, and interest groups, the role of party leadership, the legislative process, and the interaction of Congress with other branches of government in order to gain an understanding of how Congress works. The student will leave this course with an understanding of the many different factors that affect legislation and legislators in the American system of government.

Because this is an upper-level course, and because there are limits on what can be learned through lectures, a course on the U.S. Congress avails us of an intriguing opportunity to learn in a hands-on way. During the month of November this class will simulate the U.S. Congress. Students will play the role of members, drafting legislation, sitting on committees, and voting for passage of the bills that come before the whole House. This approach will mean that this course probably will require a little more work. This additional work – in the form of writing legislation and meeting with party members to develop strategy – may seem more like fun to you, however. At least, that is your professor's hope.

### REQUIREMENTS

Class Participation	15%
Legislative Action	15%
Smith Exam #1	15%
Smith Exam #2	15%
Legislative Journal	15%
Final Examination	<u>25%</u>
	100%

### Class Participation, Absences, and Tardiness

Your class participation grade is based solely on my impression of your contributions to our semester-long discussion, but remember: all serious questions and comments have a place in the classroom. Sometimes not knowing an answer can lead to the best participation. All questions and comments contribute to your participation grade, whether you know the answer to a question or not.

Questions about any of the requirements may be asked at any time. If you are uncertain about something, it is often better to ask a question in advance than try to solve a problem after it has happened.

**Regular attendance is absolutely necessary in this class.** On days when simulation activity will take place, the Speaker (professor) will call the roll. Absences will be recorded and counted against your participation grade at the rate of one letter grade per absence. Congress cannot do business without its members.

### Legislative Action

A separate participation grade will be calculated based on your participation in our Congress simulation. This grade will be based on your statements to the Committee of the Whole, your committee work, your constituent relations, your legislative justification, and your Dear Colleague letter.

### Legislative Journal

Throughout the semester, but especially on the legislative days (party caucuses, committee hearings, legislative sessions), you must keep a journal, detailing the progress of your bill and of your party's agenda. Additional details for this assignment will be distributed at a later time in the semester, though for now a few requirements are worth noting: (1) As an assignment, this journal must be typed and stapled for submission; (2) The journal need not reflect daily entries, though it should have a substantial number that track milestones through the legislative process from writing your bill through its disposition by committee or the House; (3) It is advisable that the journal be a journal, which is to say that entries are made regularly.

### Exams

Three examinations will comprise more than half of your grade for this course. An in-class review will be offered for the final exam, however no in-class review will be offered for the other exams. You are strongly encouraged to study together and to take advantage of my office hours prior to exams.

The exams will include fill-in-the-blank questions and essay questions. Each exam should take about one hour to complete.

Exams will be offered in-class on **October 8, 2008** and on **November 5, 2008**. The final examination will be offered according to the published university schedule on **December 11, 2008**.

### Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty in *any* form is the most serious offense you can commit as a student. All students are expected to observe the USCA Honor Code, as defined in the Student Handbook.

According to the 2008-2009 edition of the USCA Student Handbook, academic dishonesty includes “cheating, lying, bribery and plagiarism.” The Handbook further provides that, a student “may receive a 0 or F on the assignment or requirement for which the violation occurred,” or “may receive an F in the course or requirement for which the violation occurred.” Please refer to the USCA Student Handbook (available online at <http://www.usca.edu/studenthandbook>) for more specific information.

Students are advised that it not only better fulfills the purpose of registering and paying for a class to do their own work, but it is also easier in the long run. Accepting a slightly lower grade for not knowing an answer or submitting a poorly researched paper will spare you the consequences of disciplinary procedures, an outright failing grade, and the work that must be done to maintain a deception.

## **POLICIES**

### Grade Scale

Grades will be assigned according to the following scale:

A	100-93
B+	92-89
B	88-85
C+	84-80
C	79-76
D+	75-72
D	71-70
F	69-0

### Students with Disabilities

If you have a physical, psychological, and/or learning disability which might affect your performance in this class, please contact the Office of Disability Services, 126A B&E, (803) 641-3609, as soon as possible. The Disability Services Office will determine appropriate accommodations based on medical documentation.

### Make-Up Assignments and Exams

All assignments and examinations must be completed on-time. However, in rare cases when unusual and documented circumstances prevent the timely fulfillment of your responsibilities, individual exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis. Ordinarily, even in cases where exceptions are made, make-up work must be completed *before the next class meeting*.

**Even in the most extreme cases, you may not have an opportunity to make up work if you do not notify me of your circumstances in a timely fashion. A short telephone call or e-mail message from you or someone on your behalf within 1-2 days of an emergency will greatly increase your chances of being given time to make up your work.**

### University Student E-Mail Policy

Electronic mail or "email" is considered an official method for communication to students at the University of South Carolina Aiken because it delivers information in a convenient, timely, and cost effective manner. To assure all students access to this important form of communication, USCA provides a University email account to each enrolled student. The primary purpose of these accounts is to ensure a standardized channel for faculty and staff to communicate with students of the University as needed. Official university communications sent to all students will include reminders of important dates such as deadlines to pay tuition and fees, to withdraw from a course with grade of "W," to apply for graduation, etc.

Students are responsible for reading, in a timely fashion, University-related communications sent to their official student email accounts. Students are expected to read and respond as appropriate to their USCA official email on a frequent and consistent basis. The University recommends checking email daily.

USCA Computer Services will not provide support service for personal email accounts such as AOL, Yahoo, Hotmail, etc.

For additional information, please consult the University's student e-mail policy at <http://www.usca.edu/helpdesk/student/studemailpolicy.html>.

### Junior Writing Portfolio Requirement

Please remember that the written work that you produce in this class can be included in your rising junior writing portfolio. For further information on the portfolio requirement please consult your USCA Undergraduate and Graduate Studies Bulletin, or visit Dr. Lynn Rhodes, Director of Writing Assessment, or Karl Fornes, Director of the Writing Room.

### Policy for Portable Electronic Devices

The use of any portable electronic devices, including cell phones, pagers, MP3 players, iPods, etc., during class is not allowed for any reason unless prior approval has been given to a student by the instructor, or unless required for the course. If you are planning to have any of these devices in class, they must be turned off and stowed away for the duration of the class period.

Please be aware that, under University policy, it is the instructor's right to remove from the classroom any student who disrupts or disturbs the proceeding of the class. Disruption of the class includes but is not limited to the use of any portable electronic devices, including cell phones, MP3 players, iPods, etc., unless prior approval has been given to a student or unless required for the course. If the student who has been ejected causes similar disturbances in

subsequent meetings of the class, he/she may be denied admittance to the class for the remainder of the semester and assigned a grade of F.

Because portable electronic devices, both for their capacities for data storage and for their ability to communicate with others outside the classroom, pose undeniable opportunities for academic dishonesty, **any use of portable electronic devices as defined above in this section during a quiz or examination will be construed as evidence of academic dishonesty**, and will invoke appropriate procedures and penalties under University policy. **ALL** portable electronic devices must be switched to the **OFF** (not silent, or vibrate) positions during quizzes and exams.

## **READINGS AND CLASS CALENDAR**

<u>August 22</u>	Course Overview—No Readings
<u>August 25</u>	Modern Trends Smith, 1-26
<u>August 27</u>	<b>Last Day to Withdraw Without Record</b> History and Constitutional Requirements Smith, 27-42
<u>August 29</u>	<b>Member Selection Form Due</b> Congressional Development Smith, 42-51
<u>September 1</u>	<b>LABOR DAY—Class will not meet</b>
<u>September 3</u>	Congressional Elections Smith, 53-67
<u>September 5</u>	<b>Class will not meet</b>
<u>September 8</u>	<b>Class will not meet</b>
<u>September 10</u>	Candidates & Incumbency Smith, 67-85

<u>September 12</u>	<b>Member Profile Sheet Due</b> Members, Goals, Resources, & Strategies Smith, 87-119
<u>September 15</u>	Members, Goals, Resources, & Strategies Smith, 87-119
<u>September 17</u>	Parties & Leaders Smith, 121-161
<u>September 19</u>	Parties & Leaders Smith, 121-161 <b>Extra Credit Opportunity</b> Constitution Day Observance 1:30pm, H&SS 116
<u>September 22</u>	<b>First Party Caucus</b>
<u>September 24</u>	Rules of the Legislative Game Smith, 207-235
<u>September 26</u>	Rules of the Legislative Game Smith, 207-235
<u>September 29</u>	Interest Groups Smith, 335-359
<u>October 1</u>	Writing Legislation Cohen-Bell, 7-19, 32-43
<u>October 3</u>	Standing Committees Smith, 163-205
<u>October 6</u>	<b>Draft Legislation, Justification, Dear Colleague Letters Due</b> Standing Committees Smith, 163-205

<u>October 8</u>	<b>Exam I</b>
<u>October 10</u>	<b>FALL BREAK—Class will not meet</b>
<u>October 13</u>	C-Span Day—Committees
<u>October 15</u>	Floor Procedures & Voting Smith, 237-265
<u>October 16</u>	<b>Last Day to Withdraw without Receiving WF</b> C-Span Day: Floor Procedures
<u>October 17</u>	Congress & The President Smith, 267-305
<u>October 20</u>	Congress & The President Smith, 267-305
<u>October 22</u>	Budget Politics Smith, 361-385
<u>October 24</u>	Budget Politics Smith, 361-385
<u>October 27</u>	Congress & The Courts Smith, 307-332
<u>October 29</u>	Member Presentations: 5-minute presentations to introduce yourself to your colleagues
<u>October 31</u>	Member Presentations: 5-minute presentations to introduce yourself to your colleagues
<u>November 3</u>	C-Span Day

<u>November 5</u>	<b>Exam II</b>
<u>November 7</u>	Free Day for Members
<u>November 10</u>	<b>Party Caucus</b>
<u>November 12</u>	IN-SESSION— <i>see Legislative Calendar</i>
<u>November 14</u>	IN-SESSION— <i>see Legislative Calendar</i>
<u>November 17</u>	IN-SESSION— <i>see Legislative Calendar</i>
<u>November 19</u>	IN-SESSION— <i>see Legislative Calendar</i>
<u>November 21</u>	IN-SESSION— <i>see Legislative Calendar</i>
<u>November 24</u>	IN-SESSION— <i>see Legislative Calendar</i>
<u>November 26</u>	<b>THANKSGIVING BREAK—Class will not meet</b>
<u>November 28</u>	<b>THANKSGIVING BREAK—Class will not meet</b>
<u>December 1</u>	IN-SESSION— <i>see Legislative Calendar</i>
<u>December 3</u>	IN-SESSION— <i>see Legislative Calendar</i>
<u>December 5</u>	Wrap-Up: Legislative Journal Due
<u>Final Examination</u>	Wed., Dec. 11—11:00AM

**\*\*\*THE FOREGOING CALENDAR IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE\*\*\*  
**CHANGES WILL BE ANNOUNCED IN CLASS**  
**WITH AS MUCH ADVANCE NOTICE AS CIRCUMSTANCES WILL PERMIT****