

APLS 461
Fall 2010
Office Hours: Fridays, 2-4
and by appointment

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CONGRESSIONAL POLITICS

TEXTS

The American Congress (6th Ed.), Steven S. Smith, Jason M. Roberts, & Ryan J. Vander Wielen
The American Congress Reader, Steven S. Smith, Jason M. Roberts, & Ryan J. Vander Wielen

COURSE WEB PAGE

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

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 Senate. 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	10%
Legislative Action	15%
Smith Exam #1	15%
Smith Exam #2	15%
Legislative Journal	15%
Class Presentation	10%
Final Examination	<u>20%</u>
	100%

Class Participation, Absences, and Tardiness

Unexcused absences from class are intolerable. “When students enroll in a particular course, they obligate themselves for all the work which may be assigned. Punctual and regular attendance is vital to the discharge of this obligation” (*USCA Faculty Manual*, 4.1-5). The great variety of circumstances in students’ lives make it impractical to penalize all unexcused absences. However, the instructor bears no obligation to offer assistance, make-up opportunities, additional time to complete work, or any other accommodation to students who have missed class or have been late to class without an excuse. Any student whose tardy arrival to class creates a disruption will be asked by the instructor to remove himself/herself.

An excused absence must be documented, and documentation must be presented promptly to the instructor in order that an absence may be excused. Absences may be excused for the following reasons: documented incapacitating illness, official representation of the University, death of a close relative, religious holidays, or jury duty. Student athletes should take note: absence from class due to a scheduled athletic event is excused. Athletes who expect to miss class due to an athletic event must present a *paper copy* of their schedule to the instructor at the beginning of the semester with their name on the schedule. For those scheduled events, as for any other anticipated absences, assignments, quizzes, and examinations must be completed before the absence. Make-ups and late submissions will not be allowed in these cases. For play-offs and other unanticipated athletic absences, students must submit *written* notice from a University official to the instructor as quickly as possible. In such cases, where scheduling may leave no alternative, late assignments and make-ups may be permitted on a case-by-case basis.

The class participation portion of your course grade is based solely on the instructor’s subjective impression of your contributions to our classroom discussion. This includes all questions and comments concerning the course material. Please note that having questions to ask or comments to offer depends on having completed the readings and prepared to attend each day’s class.

Legislative Action

A separate participation grade will be calculated based on your participation in our Congress simulation. This grade will be based on your floor activity, your committee work, your constituent relations, and your legislative justification.

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 full Senate; (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 **September 27, 2010** and on **October 25, 2010**. The final examination will be offered according to the published university schedule.

Class Presentation

Each student will make a 15-20 minute presentation once during the semester. The student will present the day's reading, offering an outline of the most important points, according to a schedule that will be distributed during the first week of class.

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 2010-2011 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, Quizzes, and Examinations

All assignments, quizzes, and examinations must be completed on-time. Late assignments may be accepted on a case-by-case basis, at the instructor's discretion. If late assignments are accepted, they will be deducted one letter grade each day they are late, beginning at the end of the class in which they were due. Unexcused absences from quizzes and examinations will result in a grade of F.

Exceptions will be made only in the case of an excused absence (see the standards for an excused absence above, under Class Participation, Absences, and Tardiness). When an excused absence permits an assignment to be submitted late or an examination to be made up, the instructor will inform the student of the appropriate time for submission of the assignment or make-up of the examination.

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.

Student Department

The classroom is a professional environment. Your instructor will dress professionally for each class meeting. Also, he will address students in a professional manner (Mr. X, or Ms. Y). Students who attend USC-Aiken with the hope to join the professional world are *strongly encouraged* to look on their time in the classroom as a time to practice appropriate professional behavior.

In practice, this means speaking in appropriate ways and at appropriate times to the instructor and fellow students. Crude language or other flagrant displays of disrespect never are appropriate. It also means addressing your instructor in the correct way: at USC-Aiken, instructors who hold the Ph.D. or other doctoral degree should be addressed as “Dr. {Last Name}” or “Professor {Last Name}.” All other instructors who do not hold a doctoral degree should be addressed as “Professor {Last Name}.”

Most of all, students are *strongly encouraged* to think about presenting themselves professionally when they dress for class. Baseball caps, flip-flops, dirty t-shirts, and pajamas are not suited for a professional environment. Outrageous extremes in student dress (*e.g.* excessively revealing clothing, pungently-unwashed clothing, etc.) that cause or may cause disruptions in the classroom may be grounds for removal from the classroom under University policy.

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 exams.

READINGS AND CLASS CALENDAR

<u>Aug. 23</u>	Introduction and Course Overview The Congress—Lecture No Readings
<u>Aug. 25</u>	Modern Trends Smith, 1-25 Reader, 3-6 “The Empty Chamber,” Packer, 1-14 Last Day to Withdraw without Record

<u>Aug. 30</u>	History & Constitutional Requirements Smith, 27-52 Reader, 31-50
<u>Sept. 1</u>	History & Constitutional Requirements Smith, 27-52 Reader, 31-50 Member Selections Due
<u>Sept. 8</u>	Congressional Elections Smith, 53-86 Reader, 126-140
<u>Sept. 13</u>	Candidates & Incumbency Reader, 113-125
<u>Sept. 15</u>	Members, Goals, Resources & Strategies Smith, 87-120 Reader, 141-176 Member Profiles Due
<u>Sept. 20</u>	Parties & Leaders Smith, 121-164 Reader, 177-199
<u>Sept. 22</u>	Rules of the Legislative Game Smith, 107-119 Reader, 243-255
<u>Sept. 27</u>	Exam 1
<u>Sept. 29</u>	Interest Groups Reader, 401-428 First Party Caucus
<u>Oct. 4</u>	CSPAN Day—Floor Procedures
<u>Oct. 6</u>	Writing Legislation
<u>Oct. 11</u>	Standing Committees Smith, 165-206
<u>Oct. 13</u>	CSPAN Day--Committees

<u>Oct. 18</u>	Congress and the Other Branches Smith, 267-304 Draft Legislation Due
<u>Oct. 20</u>	Budget Politics Smith, 363-388 Reader, 436-440
<u>Oct. 25</u>	Exam 2
<u>Oct. 27</u>	Member Presentations
<u>Nov. 1</u>	Party Caucus Legislative Business Day
<u>Nov. 3</u>	<i>In-Session (see legislative calendar)</i>
<u>Nov. 8</u>	<i>In-Session (see legislative calendar)</i>
<u>Nov. 10</u>	<i>In-Session (see legislative calendar)</i>
<u>Nov. 15</u>	<i>In-Session (see legislative calendar)</i>
<u>Nov. 17</u>	<i>In-Session (see legislative calendar)</i>
<u>Nov. 29</u>	<i>In-Session (see legislative calendar)</i>
<u>Dec. 1</u>	Wrap-Up

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