

SYLLABUS
PLSC 379: The Legislative Process
Spring 2019

TTh 2:30 pm – 3:45 pm
Mundelein 415

Instructor

Dr. Eric Hansen

Email: ehansen4@luc.edu

Office Location: Coffey Hall 326B

Office Hours: TTH 3:45 pm – 5:15 pm, or by appointment

Course Description and Objectives

Journalistic accounts often portray Congress as an institution hampered by partisan gridlock and unable to respond to pressing national concerns. Yet, such accounts lie at odds with much of the important and meaningful work Congress does each day. Even as members spent much of their time campaigning in their districts in the final three months of 2018, Congress confirmed a Supreme Court nominee and several federal judicial nominees; passed bills authorizing agriculture and military spending; overhauled music copyright laws and federal criminal sentencing laws; and passed stricter rules governing sexual misconduct on Capitol Hill. Then again, Congress and President Trump were unable to agree on funding for border security before a multiweek government shutdown in late 2018 and early 2019. How should we evaluate the successes and shortcomings of the modern Congress?

This course provides an overview of legislative representation and lawmaking institutions in the American political system. It will do so primarily through an in-depth study of the U.S. Congress. The course is organized in three parts. The first part introduces Congress then dives into the “electoral connection” between members and the American people. The second part explores the inner workings of Congress through an examination of parties, lawmaking procedures, and interbranch relations. The third part asks students to think about lawmaking outside Washington. Congress is not the only legislative body in the U.S. students should care about. Americans are also governed by the laws written in the 50 state legislatures and thousands of county commissions, city councils, and other local legislative bodies. Though we do not have time to study all these institutions, we will study state legislatures in the final three weeks of class.

By completing this course, students should be able to:

- 1) Evaluate the role of Congress and state legislatures in U.S. politics
- 2) Understand the factors producing legislative election results
- 3) Explain the procedures by which laws are made in the U.S.
- 4) Think critically about lawmakers’ actions, tactics, and constraints in the legislative process
- 5) Develop further skills in articulating their thoughts through speaking and writing

Required Texts

Davidson, Roger H., Walter J. Oleszek, Frances E. Lee, and Eric Schickler. 2018. *Congress and Its Members*. 16th Ed. Sage/CQ Press.

Supplementary Texts [Excerpts assigned for class reading will be posted on Sakai.]

Bernhard, William, and Tracy Sulkin. 2018. *Legislative Style*. University of Chicago Press.

Carnes, Nicholas. 2018. *The Cash Ceiling: Why Only the Rich Run for Office and What We Can Do About It*. Princeton University Press.

Collins, Paul M., and Lori A. Ringhand. 2013. *Supreme Court Confirmation Hearings and Constitutional Change*. Cambridge University Press.

Lawless, Jennifer L., and Richard L. Fox. 2005. *It Takes a Candidate: Why Women Don't Run for Office*. Cambridge University Press.

Mayhew, David R. 1974. *Congress: The Electoral Connection*. Yale University Press.

Squire, Peverill, and Gary Moncrief. 2015. *State Legislatures Today: Politics Under the Domes*. Rowman & Littlefield.

Levine, Bertram J. 2009. *The Art of Lobbying*. Sage.

Lee, Frances E. 2016. *Insecure Majorities: Congress and the Perpetual Campaign*. University of Chicago Press.

Theriault, Sean M. 2008. *Party Polarization in Congress*. Cambridge University Press.

Grades

Final grades for the course will be based on the following scale. I reserve the right to make adjustments to individual grades based on overall performance in the course and/or extenuating circumstances. There will be **NO** extra credit provided.

Letter Grade	Percentage Score
A	93-100
A-	90-92.99
B+	87-89.99
B	83-86.99
B-	80-82.99
C+	77-79.99
C	73-76.99
C-	70-72.99

D+	67-69.99
D	60-66.99
F	59.99 or below

The proportion of each assignment as part of your overall grade is as follows:

Attendance & Participation: 10%

Reading Quizzes: 15%

Writing Assignment: 25%

Midterm Exam: 25%

Final Exam: 25%

Attendance & Participation

Attendance and participation are worth 10% of your overall course grade. Students are expected to participate in activities and in-class discussions of the course material. I will assess students based on the frequency of contributions, the relevance and insightfulness of the contributions in discussions, and active contributions to group work. Quality of participation can make up for a lack of frequency. Though there is no formal attendance requirement, attendance is an integral part of discussions. You can't join the conversation if you don't show up!

A Note on Punctuality

I will begin class promptly at our designated meeting time. Students should arrive five minutes before class begins in order to find a seat and make any preparations of materials before class starts. Getting to class ahead of time is also a courtesy to other students, who may become distracted by late arrivers. Students who must routinely arrive late due to circumstances outside their control (for example, a class immediately before mine on the opposite side of campus) should inform me at the beginning of the semester.

Reading Quizzes

Students will be given six pop quizzes throughout the semester to assess their understanding of the assigned reading for the day. All assigned readings must be completed by the beginning of the class period on the day listed on the reading calendar below. Questions will assess students' comprehension of the major themes of the assigned readings. Students will NOT be asked about the textbook readings on the reading quizzes (though textbook readings are fair game for the two exams). At the end of the semester, I will drop each student's lowest reading quiz grade from the calculation of the overall course grade.

All quizzes must be completed in class. No makeup quizzes will be given unless I receive written communication from another university official (e.g. dean, athletics official) requesting me to excuse an absence. I do not request or accept doctors' notes. I understand students must sometimes miss class for reasons outside their control, which is why I drop the lowest quiz grade.

Writing Assignment

Students will complete one long writing assignment during the course of the semester, worth 25% of the final course grade. Students will write a ten-page profile of a sitting member of the

116th Congress, due April 11. I will provide full instructions for the writing assignment in the first month of class.

Midterm & Final Exam

There will be two exams during the semester. Each exam is worth 25% of the final grade. Exams will test students on the material covered in the half of the course preceding it. In other words, the final exam is not cumulative. Each exam will contain a mixture of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. I will not offer the final exam at any time besides the time listed below unless the student has petitioned their dean's office for a change in exam time.

Communication, Office Hours, Question about Grades

Please direct all communication with me outside class or office hours through my campus email account, which can be found in the header of this syllabus. I check my campus email account several times daily and will try to reply to student emails as quickly as possible. That being said, students should not necessarily expect me to reply immediately to emails sent to me at the last minute. I may not be able to reply to questions about course material the morning of an exam or provide resources for an assignment the night before it is to be turned in.

My office hours exist solely for you to visit me with questions about this class. If you can't make those times, email me to schedule a more convenient appointment time. Email is only for brief communications. If you have long and complicated questions, come to my office hours. I will not send grades over email—check Sakai for the latest updates. After I have graded and returned your assignments, there is a 24-hour moratorium before I will answer questions about that assignment.

Technology Use

I will not allow the use of computers, tablets, or other electronic devices during class. There may be some days when I will ask you to bring a computer with you (if there is an online activity, for example). Most of class time will involve lecture or discussion of articles and concepts related to the course—this can be accomplished without computers.

The use of cell phones or other mobile communication devices is strictly prohibited during class, except in the event of an emergency. Cell phones minimally should be put on silent but preferably should be turned off. Students discovered using their phones during class time will be asked to turn off their phones and place them out of reach.

Student Accessibility

Loyola University provides reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. Any student requesting accommodations related to a disability or other condition is required to register with Students Accessibility Center (SAC), located in Sullivan Center, Suite 117. Students should provide me with an accommodation notification from SAC, preferably within the first two weeks of class. Students are encouraged to meet with me individually in order to discuss their accommodations. All information will remain confidential. For more information or further assistance, please call (773) 508-3700 or visit <http://www.luc.edu/sac>.

Academic Integrity

Students are responsible for adhering to university policy on academic honesty by avoiding acts of plagiarism or cheating. Students can find more information about what constitutes plagiarism at the Writing Center's website: (<http://www.luc.edu/writing/studentresources/onlineresources>). Consult the College of Arts and Sciences' statement to learn more about college policy: (<http://www.luc.edu/cas/advising/academicintegritystatement>). I reserve the right to exercise case-by-case discretion in assigning penalties for acts of academic dishonesty. Generally speaking, however, students should expect to receive a score of "0" on any assignment or exam where they are observed plagiarizing, cheating, or passing off someone else's ideas as their own. If more than one instance occurs during the semester, offending students should expect to fail my course. I report all acts of academic dishonesty to the Dean of College of Arts and Science's office.

Readings

Students are expected to complete daily reading assignments in preparation for class. Students should read carefully and be ready to discuss the material, as discussions based around these readings will form the basis of the participation grade. I reserve the right to make changes to the reading list and will inform students well in advance of any changes.

All reading assignments are to be completed by the beginning of class on the day the assignment is listed. Assigned readings in normal typeface in the calendar are *required* for the day. Textbook readings (in *italics*) are considered *recommended* for that day. My lectures will draw heavily from the textbook material; students may find it in their interest to read the textbook ahead of time to supplement their understanding of lecture material. Students are responsible for understanding the material from the textbooks for the midterm and final exams, though textbook readings will never be the subject of an in-class reading quiz.

All reading assignments are to be completed by the beginning of class on the day the assignment is listed. Students are responsible for obtaining their own copies of the Davidson, Oleszek, Lee and Schickler textbook (abbreviated DOLS below). All articles/chapters denoted with "[S]" will be posted on Sakai. Students may not share course materials with others outside of the class without my written permission.

<i>January</i>	
January 15 Introduction & Course Overview	Read Syllabus <i>DOLS Ch. 1</i>
January 17 History/Institutional Development	Polsby [S] <i>DOLS Ch. 2</i>
January 22 Electoral Motivations	Mayhew, pp. 13-77 [S] Warren [S]
January 24 Electoral Rules	Wasserman [S] Rush [S] <i>DOLS Ch. 3, p. 43-62</i>

January 29 Ambition, Recruitment, and Candidate Entry	Lawless & Fox, p. 16-32 [S] Carnes p. 120-157 [S] <i>DOLS Ch. 3, p. 62-71</i>
January 31 Campaigns	Petersen [S] <i>DOLS Ch. 4, p. 73-90</i>
<i>February</i>	
February 5 Elections	TBD – 2018 midterm analysis [S] <i>DOLS Ch. 4, p. 90-109</i>
February 7 Representation	Bernhard & Sulkin, p. 16-33 & 42-49 [S] <i>DOLS CH. 5, p. 111-23</i>
February 12 Representation	Miler [S] <i>DOLS Ch. 5, p. 123-137</i>
February 14 Party Leadership	Cooper & Brady [S] <i>DOLS CH. 6, p. 139-166</i>
February 19 Partisan Conflict	Theriault, p. 43-58 [S] <i>DOLS Ch. 6, p. 166-73</i>
February 21 Partisan Conflict	Lee, p. 18-70 [S]
February 26 Wrap-up & Review	Bring questions for review
February 28	Midterm Exam
<i>March</i>	
March 5 & 7	NO CLASS – Spring Break
March 12 Committees	Fenno pp. 1-14 [S] <i>DOLS CH. 7</i>
March 14 House Procedure	Crowley [S] <i>DOLS Ch. 8, p. 219-245</i>
March 19 Senate Procedure	Binder & Smith [S] <i>DOLS Ch. 8, p. 245-259</i>
March 21 Decision Making	Kingdon [S] <i>DOLS Ch. 9</i>
March 26 Congress & the Executive Branch	<i>DOLS CH. 10 & 11</i>
March 28 Congress & the Judicial Branch	Collins & Ringhand, pp. 196-230 [S] <i>DOLS Ch. 12</i>
<i>April</i>	
April 2 Lobbying	Levine, p. 80-112 [S] <i>DOLS Ch. 13</i>
April 4	NO CLASS – Dr. Hansen at conference
April 9 Appropriations	Berry & Fowler [S] <i>DOLS Ch. 14</i>

April 11 Overview of State Legislatures	Squire & Moncrief Ch. 1 [S] Writing Assignment Due
April 16 State Legislative Elections	Rogers [S]
April 18 Organization & Professionalism	Squire & Moncrief Ch. 4 [S]
April 23 Term Limits	Bowser & Moncrief [S] Berman [S]
April 25 Wrap-up & Review	Bring questions for review
May 4	Final Exam – 4:15 pm

Changes to the Syllabus

I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus at any time. If changes are made, students will be informed through email and verbally in class, and a new syllabus document will be posted on Sakai.