

PLS 3743: LEGISLATIVE PROCESS (CONGRESS) – WRITING INTENSIVE COURSE

Spring Semester 2009

Instructor: Dr. Barbara L. Poole

Office Hours: MTWF – 10:00 – 10:50; or by appointment

Office: 2020 Coleman hall

Office Phone Number: 581-6963

E-mail: blpoole@eiu.edu

COURSE OBJECTIVE: This course examines the U.S. Congress as a policy-making institution from a variety of perspectives. Topics include the historical development of Congress, nominations and elections, constituent relations, congressional leadership, the formal and informal structures and procedures of houses, policy formations, lobbying, and relations with the executive and judicial branches. In addition, we will examine an in-depth case study of a new member of Congress. This is an advanced course which assumes a basic knowledge of the American political system.

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR:

- **Please** turn off all cell phones and other electronic devices before entering the classroom.
- Arrive at class on time. Habitual lateness is rude, makes me grumpy, and will have a serious effect on your participation grade.
- You may and should question the opinion of others in the class (including the professor), but do so in a respectful way.

DISABILITIES: Any student who has a disability which requires a special accommodation in either testing or papers should contact the instructor.

TEXTS:

Davidson and Oleszek. 2006. *Congress & Its Members*. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.

Sidlow.2007. *Freshman Orientation: House Style and Home Style*. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS: The student is responsible for all reading assignments as well as all lectures and class discussions. Regular attendance is expected and class participation is encouraged. All students will be required to prepare several short reading responses as well as a longer paper which will examine a particular piece of legislation which was passed in the last two congressional sessions.

EXAMS: There will be three exams in total. Each test will cover assigned readings, lectures, and class discussions. Each test will consist of short answer and essay questions. A study guide will be given to you to help you prepare for each exam. Make

up exams will only be given in accordance with University policy. **I retain the right to modify both the content and format of all make-up exams.**

TENTATIVE EXAMINATION SCHEDULE:

- Exam I – February 12
- Exam II – March 26
- Exam III – Final Exam Week

READING RESPONSES: Each student will be required to prepare several (six) brief (one page, singles spaced, typed) reading responses. These papers will reflect on the assigned readings. No more than one half of the paper should be a summary. The remainder of the paper should analyze the reading. The will be worth ten points each. I will drop the lowest grade. **No late papers will be accepted!**

- Reading response # 1 – Ch. 3 or 4; *Congress & Its Members*; January 20
- Reading response # 2 -- Ch 5; *Congress & Its Members*; February 3
- Reading response # 3 – Ch. 9; *Congress & Its Members*; February 24
- Reading response # 4 – Ch 10; *Congress & Its Members*; March 3
- Reading response # 5 – Ch 13; *Congress & Its Members*; March 24
- Reading response # 6 – Ch. 3 and 4 or 5 and 6; *Freshman Orientation*; April 21

BILL ANALYSIS PAPER: Each student will be required to prepare a six to eight page, double-spaced paper which will analyze the political process (legislative history, interest group involvement, media coverage, committee action, etc) as it applies to the passage of a particular piece of legislation. The particular bill that you choose to discuss must have been passed by Congress (House and Senate) in the past four years (2004-2008). **It must be a significant bill.** For the first part of the paper, you must write a one page introduction where you describe the bill that you have chosen to analyze. In this introduction, include the bill number(s) and name, the names of the chief sponsors, and a brief summary of the legislation. You will revise this introduction for the final paper. Further instructions (as well as a discussion of sources) will be given in class. A minimum of eight sources is required for this assignment. Four of the sources must be **primary sources (books, journal articles, government documents).**

- APA or MLA citations styles are acceptable.
- Paper must also include a reference page.

Approval of legislation – Due January 22

Introduction – Due February 17 – (worth 10 points)

Final paper – Due April 16 – (worth 90 points)

One grade will be deducted for each day the papers are late.

GRADING: Grades will be based on three tests (100 points), five reading responses (ten points each); the required paper (100 points) and class involvement (20 points).

423 – 470 = A
 376 – 422 = B
 329 – 375 = C
 282 – 328 = D
 281 and below = F

READING OUTLINE

WEEK	TOPIC	D&O	S	TEST
JAN 12	Introduction	1 & 2		1
JAN 19	Recruitment	3		1
JAN 26	Electoral Game	4		1
FEB 2	Hill Style; Home Style	5		1
FEB 9	Leadership	6		1
FEB 16	Committees and Rules	7, 8		2
FEB 23	Deliberation	9		2
MARCH 2	Rel. with president	10		2
MARCH 9	Rel. with bureaucracy & court	11, 12		2
MARCH 16	Spring Break!			
MARCH 23	Interest Groups	13		2
MARCH 30	Policymaking	14		3
APRIL 6	Policymaking	15		3
APRIL 13	Freshman Orientation		1, 2, 3, 4	3
APRIL 20	Freshman Orientation		5, 6, 7, 8	3
APRIL 27	Conclusions	16		

D& O – Davidson and Oleszek
 S -- Sidlow