

**Legislative Politics
POLS 304, Summer 2013
M-F 10:10-12:10PM
CLARK C 248**

Instructor: Jonathan Fisk

Office: Clark C334

Email: jfisk@rams.colostate.edu

Office Hours: M/W/F 9:00-10:00, W 12:15-2, and by appointment

Course Description

This course explores the following topics: legislative behavior, representation, parties, elections, organization and process, and Congress' relationships to other branches of government. As an institution, Congress is often the arena where parties and groups come together to debate and address public problems, to represent citizens, to address conflicts and to set policy for the nation. Yet, these tasks are becoming increasingly difficult as Congress is becoming dominated by gridlock and paralysis. Our task is to consider the questions: How does Congress meet its constitutional responsibilities to both govern and to represent the people? And, does it do it well and/or fairly?

Classroom Behavior

Students should be mindful of all general conduct rules enforced by CSU relative to classroom behavior. I believe that we are adults and capable of treating one another with civility based on respect for one another's ideas and thoughts. Although there is not a formal attendance policy, be aware of the random in-class writing assignments. Once class begins please adhere to the following rules:

- Please do not use laptops unless allowed by me
- Please arrive on time and do not leave until the class is over (if you do need to leave early – please sit near the door and let me know); limit all other trips to a minimum
- Please silence cell phones; no texting during class – there will be a 10 minute break usually around 11.
- Please be respectful of others and their opinions – including waiting your turn to talk

Required Readings

Davidson, Roger H, Walter J. Oleszek and Frances E. Lee. 2011. *Congress and Its Members*, 13th edition. CQ Press: Washington, DC. **(CM)**.

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

Major news outlet like the NY Times, NPR – Daily.

****In addition to these texts, additional readings will be posted on blackboard****

Course Work and Assignments

Students will be evaluated through a number of ways. First, there will be a variety of low-stakes in and out of class assignments/reflections. Second, there will be a significant outside research project and presentation. And, finally a final examination and a shorter quiz. Further instructions will be provided with each assignment.

Assignment	Points Possible
Twitter comments I will post a variety of news stories on Congress on my Twitter feed (jonathan_fisk) with the hashtag #csupols304 – throughout the course – you are required to respond to at least FOUR stories – by identifying a concept or a theme discussed in class. If you do not have Twitter and are not comfortable using it – please see me as soon as possible.	25
In-Class Random Writing Assignments *For many class sessions, I will ask students to complete in-class writing assignments – randomly I will collect these assignments and award points based on completion. 5 points per assignment	25
Discussion Questions Each student will lead a class discussion. Discussion questions should stimulate discussion by focusing on the main points of the assigned reading(s). Discussion questions can also incorporate current events – look at the NY TIMES or my Twitter account for ideas). Discussion leaders should prepare a minimum of ten questions and plan to e-mail them to me (jfisk@rams.colostate.edu) ONE hour prior to class for the day they are assigned. Questions should be thoughtful and demonstrate the student’s ability to challenge the text/apply the concepts to the ‘real’ world. Points will be deducted for late assignments or questions that are not satisfactory.	25
District/Party Worksheet Students are required to complete a worksheet that provides details about a member of the House and his/her district.	25
Final Project Outline/Draft	25
Budget Simulation Students must complete a worksheet that requires them to reflect upon congressional organizational in the context of the budget simulation and discussion.	25
Quiz Students may bring in one sheet (8.5x11) of handwritten notes for the midterm.	75
Exam Students may bring in one sheet (8.5x11) of handwritten notes for the midterm.	100
Final Project	75
	Total Points: 400

All papers and assignments must be handed in on time and as a hard copy (if applicable) – assignments will be collected at the beginning of the session. For each day late (the clock starts at the end of class the day the assignment is due), ten percentage points will be deducted.

Points will not be deducted for late papers if the student has an excused or university-sanctioned absence that is documented. If this is the case, please inform me as soon as possible so that we can make appropriate arrangements.

GRADES

Exams, papers, and the final grade will be based on the following scale:

A = 100 - 89.5

- B = 89.49 - 79.5
- C = 79.49 - 69.5
- D = 69.49 - 59.5
- F = 59.49 – 0

****I do not expect to curve grades or provide any kind of adjustment****

****Extra credit will be limited, if given at all****

Procedure

Class sessions are intended to blend lecture and discussion. If the latter is to prove valuable to you, it is critical that you complete the assigned readings before class and attend class with questions and your thoughts in mind. Thus, the best way to earn a high grade in this course is to attend class regularly and to complete the assigned readings well before the day of an exam.

Most class sessions will be divided into two parts. The first will include my presentation of the material – I will not just restate the material appearing in the assigned readings. Rather it will incorporate information from other outside sources, group work and multi-media. The second part will include student led discussion and debate. **My expectations are not that you remember every fact that you read. What I do expect from you is that you critically engage, apply and evaluate the texts.**

Academic Integrity

Please be advised that this course will adhere to the Academic Integrity Policy of the Colorado State University General Catalog and the Student Conduct Code. With this in mind, plagiarism and/or failure to properly cite will result in a failing grade for the assignment, and students found guilty of plagiarism will be reported to the University. The CSU Academic Integrity Policy can be found in the General Catalog - 1.6, pages 7-9. (<http://www.catalog.colostate.edu/Content/files/2012/FrontPDF/1.6POLICIES.pdf>) and the Student Conduct Code (<http://www.conflictresolution.colostate.edu/conduct-code>).

Disabled Students

Students working with the resources for disabled students’ office should let me know as early as possible and have their forms ready.

Readings & Assignments

While it is very possible that we may fall behind the following schedule, I expect students to keep up with the readings on this schedule unless advised otherwise by me.

Date	Topic	Readings	Written Assignments
June 17	Introduction and Logistics/Form small groups	N/A	
June 18	Democratic Theory	Democratic Theory and Pluralism - RAMCT	
June 19	Representation Bring your computer	Rethinking Representation - RAMCT FO Chapter 5 (83-99)	
June 20	Congressional Basics - Committees and Structure	CM Chapter 7 (175-212)	

June 21	Congressional Behavior -- Is it Logical? Review	Skim - FO Chapters 3-4, (37-83) Read FO Chapter 7 (121-139)	
June 24	Unorthodox Lawmaking Quiz	Gun Control Debate – RAMCT (Chapter 4 only)	
June 25	Congress and Interest Groups Special Guest Speaker	CM Chapter 13 (371-401)	
June 26	Congress and the Presidency	CM Chapter 10 (281-312)	
June 27	Congress and the Presidency	Work on finding a unorthodox law	District assignment DUE
June 28	Congress and the Courts Special Guest Speaker	CM Chapter 12 (345-358) Congress and Judicial Decision Making – RAMCT	
July 1	Congress and the Bureaucracy	CM Chapter 11 (315-343)	
July 2	Parties and Congress - Polarization	CM Chapter 6 (139-175)	Unorthodox lawmaking draft DUE
July 3	Review	Bring Questions/Notes	
July 5	Exam	N/A	
July 8	Running for Congress – Special Guest Speaker	2010 Elections – RAMCT FO Chapter 2 (21-37) FO Chapter 8 (139-155)	
July 9	Public Policy Process	CM Chapter 14 (401-434) FO Chapter (121-139)	
July 10	Budgets and Budget Simulation– Bring YOUR Computer http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2010/11/13/weekinreview/deficits-graphic.html?_r=0		
July 11	Work Day/Video/Catch up	Group work time	
July 12	Presentations		Budget simulation Reflection due Unorthodox Lawmaking Paper Due

KEY DATES SUMMARY

June 24	Quiz
June 27	District assignment DUE
July 2	Unorthodox lawmaking draft DUE
July 5	Exam
July 12	Budget simulation Reflection DUE Unorthodox Lawmaking Paper DUE Presentations

I reserve the right to change this syllabus

Academic Integrity Agreement for POLS 304

The goal of this contract is to have the student review and confirm his/her understanding of the university's academic integrity rules and expectations. By initialing and signing this contract, the student confirms that he or she understands the consequences of violating the university's academic integrity rules and expectations.

Because this class based on a model of mutual respect – there are also expectations for the instructor. For my part, I will try to create assignments and questions that are not formulaic or just require you to regurgitate information but call upon you to apply and investigate concepts/ideas. I will also designate some time to share my writing expectations I have for you – and will provide opportunities to you to receive feedback on your writing from me.

Please initial next to each statement. Your initial indicates you have read and fully understand each statement.

- _____ Academic misconduct includes but is not limited to
- Cheating– this includes unauthorized use of notes, textbook, copying from others, cheat sheets etc
 - Plagiarism –
 - Plagiarism is when a writer “deliberately uses someone else’s language, ideas, or other original material without acknowledging its source. This definition applies to texts published in print or online, to manuscripts, and to the work of others including students.” (http://www.wadsworth.com/english_d/special_features/plagiarism/WPAplagiarism.pdf)
 - Conspiring to perform academic misconduct

- _____ Once academic misconduct is suspected, the following process will be followed:
- Meeting with the instructor to discuss the matter, in which the evidence against the student will be presented and the student will be allowed to explain such evidence. If the student refuses to meet with the instructor or becomes hostile with the instructor, that refusal or hostile behavior shall be reported to the department head. Please note that if you fail to meet with the instructor- academic misconduct will be assumed.
 - If violation is confirmed, the instructor will implement the following sanctions. *See point #3 below.*

- _____ 3) If academic misconduct is confirmed, the student will automatically receive a zero for that assignment.
- I reserve the right for further sanctions including: failing the course and/or reporting the violation to Conflict Resolution and Student Conduct Services.

I have read and understood al the statements above. I acknowledge the expectations and consequences for violating academic integrity policies.

Student Name (Please Print): _____

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____