

[Lecture Slides](#)

NEW! [Opponents List](#) [What is this?](#)

[Lecture Slides](#) (from 4/18)

[Lecture Slides](#) (from 5/7)

Always use the most recent version of this syllabus! (question? [jwilker@uw.edu](mailto:jwilker@uw.edu))

<http://faculty.washington.edu/jwilker/353/POLS353Fall2018Syllabus.pdf>



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### Tuesday (only) sections

#### 11:30-12:20

Section AA: Dapper Smith 309

Section AB: Douglas Smith 313

#### 12:30-1:20

Section AC: Dapper Smith 309

Section AD: Douglas Smith 313

Congress - the people's branch - is famously unpopular. Nine out of 10 Americans disapprove of Congress. Yet, the same Americans will reelect 90% of House members and 80% of Senators. One explanation is that candidates, including incumbents, run for Congress by criticizing Congress. Ironically, by reinforcing public disdain and delegitimizing the institution, they make their jobs more difficult and the cycle continues.

**Playing politics** can be an effective way to learn about the essential role of Congress in the US system of government, and why lawmaking can be so challenging. Roughly 50% of class time and most of your grade are devoted to a student-run simulation. This project-based approach can be a terrific way to learn about a subject – but it requires your participation!

### Learning Goals

Demonstrate appreciation of:

- the role of Congress in society
- the legislative process, its logic, and proposed reforms
- the external and internal influences shaping legislative behavior

Improve your:

- listening and communication skills
- collaboration skills
- strategic skills

**Thoughtful disagreements make this class work!**

*“We are so concerned to flatter the majority that we lose sight of how very often it is necessary, in order to preserve freedom for the minority, let alone for the individual, to face that majority down.”*

— William F. Buckley Jr., founder of *National Review magazine*

It takes courage to express alternative points of view. If we are truly interested in making good policy decisions (as opposed to just winning or getting reelected), then we need to encourage criticism. The framers of the Constitution believed in the power of information, which is why the first amendment protects freedom of speech (and why Congress is given the power to “promote the progress of science and useful arts”). Promoting the free flow of ideas is also a central reason for Congress’ [rules of decorum](#) and the University of Washington’s [student conduct code](#).

Please let us know if there is something we can do to improve your learning experience. If you have a temporary health condition or permanent disability that requires accommodations (conditions include but not limited to; mental health, attention-related, learning, vision, hearing, physical or health impacts), please contact DRS at 206-543-8924 or [uwdrs@uw.edu](mailto:uwdrs@uw.edu) or [disability.uw.edu](http://disability.uw.edu).

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**Required book** (Odegaard reserve has one copy (24 hour)

Robert Kaiser, *Act of Congress: How America's Essential Institution Works, and How It Doesn't*

**Recommended:** [The People vs. America](#) Any attempt to summarize 60 years of politics will be incomplete, but this one does a very good job.

**Legislative Resources:** These may prove useful. Take a look.

<http://info.legsim.org/students/resources/>

**LegSim: Everyone must register, create profile and complete constituency assignment by April 4 at 11pm. There is a \$16 registration fee. See registration instructions at the very bottom of this syllabus.**

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**ALL ASSIGNMENTS AND THEIR DUE DATES ARE LISTED AT THE VERY BOTTOM OF THIS SYLLABUS. YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR SUBMITTING ASSIGNMENTS ON TIME**

Assignments are opportunities to apply course content from the readings and lectures. You will receive a low score if you do not do this. Review assignments early and if you

have questions, ask! Essay assignment responses (except the Final Report) **should not exceed 2 double-spaced pages** (excluding bibliography).

Plan ahead for the capstone assignment, the [Final Report on Legislative Accomplishments](#) (20% of your grade).

**Designated opponent.** Throughout the simulation, another student is watching and will hold you accountable for your actions and decisions (see the Final Report assignment).

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### Topics of Instruction

#### **Week of March 26: Introduction to the people's branch**

[What lawmakers think you should know about Congress](#) (browse)

The people's branch is unrepresentative, unpopular and dysfunctional

[Composition of Congress](#)

[Wealth of Congress](#)

[Public Approval of Congress](#)

[Congressional un-productivity](#)

A 'representative' democracy: Congress' role in the Constitution

Reasons for government (collective action; coordination; dispute resolution)

[U.S. Constitution](#) (Article 1 Section 8)

[Federalist #51](#) ("if men were angels..." checks and balances explained)

Cutler, [To Form a Government](#) (is our Constitution obsolete?)

**Register and create profile (including selecting constituency) on LegSim by April 4**

#### **Week of April 2: Democracy: Do we really want one?**

[Is there something wrong with democracy?](#)

What do Americans want from government?

Hibbing, [Stealth Democracy](#) (chapter 6, starting on p.129 of the book, 147 of the pdf)

Two thirds of Americans won't vote in 2018: Is that a bad thing?

[How people approach facts and information](#), Pew

Hofstadter, [The Paranoid Style in American Politics](#) (focus on p.29 and after)

[Who votes?](#) [Forecasting the 2018 midterms](#)

[Guide to Republican herd](#); [Guide to Democratic herd](#) [Party Identification](#)  
Pew, [Behind Trump's Victory](#)

**Can legislators represent constituents and still win reelection?**

[Little compromise on compromising](#), Pew  
Eulau and Karps: [The Puzzle of Representation](#)  
Fenno; [Home Style](#) ('presentation of self')

[Redistricting game](#) (how many seats can your party win by drawing district lines?)

**Constituency research assignment due April 8**

***Week of April 9: How laws are made and what they do***

[Introduction to the legislative process](#), CRS

The Legislative process: [for kids](#) [for students](#) [what actually happens](#)  
(See also the tutorials on LegSim and this [handy primer](#) on floor procedures)

[US Code](#) [US Code growth](#) [Federal Regulations](#) [Depts and Agencies](#)  
[Signing Statements](#) [Executive orders](#) [Federal budget](#) [Dodd-Frank](#)

**Film: HR 6161: *An Act of Congress (1977)***

Synopsis: In 1977, the U.S. auto industry said that it would have to shut down if Congress did not delay the emissions reduction deadlines of the 1970 Clean Air Act. Democrats controlled all three branches of government, but labor unions supported the delay while environmental and public health advocates opposed it.

**Legislative Agenda assignment is due April 15**

***Week of April 16: Inside the Institution: Process, parties, committees and leaders***

**Parties: Just what the framers didn't want**

[Party and Committee Leadership](#), CRS  
[Party polarization](#) [Polarization versus Partisan Warfare](#), Theriault

**Committees: Why does such a small group of lawmakers have so much influence?**

[Legislative Explorer](#)  
[Committee Theories Reconsidered](#), Groseclose and King

**Leaders: Do they lead or follow?**

[Leadership flash cards](#)

[Party leaders in the House](#) CRS

Committee requests on LegSim and Committee assignment due April 22

### Week of April 23: Organizing your legislature

April 23: New members reception and leader candidate introductions

April 25: Selecting procedures for choosing leaders and making committee assignments

April 27: Electing leaders and assigning committee positions

Elected leader assigns committee positions by April 30

### Week of April 30: Government gets the hard problems: Why are we disappointed when they aren't solved?

Researching and drafting legislation

[Introducing a Senate bill or resolution](#), CRS [Congress.gov](#)  
[LegSim Sample](#) bill format [Ten Questions checklist](#)

*These issue ideas are not intended to be comprehensive or unbiased.*

**Economy**

[Economic Well Being of US Households](#)  
[How the Globalists ceded the field to Donald Trump](#), American Prospect

**Health**

[The Orphan Drug Act](#) Waxman (Hey, Congress addressed a problem! What were the keys to success?)  
[8 facts that explain what's wrong with American health care](#), Vox  
[Yes, bacon is really killing us](#), Guardian

**Gun violence**

[Familiar responses from Congress in wake of latest mass shooting](#)  
[Gun facts](#), Vox  
[How Australia all but ended gun violence](#), Fortune  
[Our childish gun debate](#), Wall Street Journal  
[Mass Attacks in Public Spaces](#) [Mass shootings 1982-2018](#)

**Technology**

[Facebook's surveillance machine](#) NYT

## Terrorism

[What research says about defeating terrorism](#), Scientific American  
[How to defeat terrorism: Intelligence, integration and development](#), Brookings

## Poverty

[The Way to Beat Poverty](#), NYT  
[Poverty Facts](#), U of Michigan

## Education

[Prepared remarks by Betsy DeVos](#)   [Educ. Facts](#)   [Education: Defining the Problem](#)

## Immigration

[The US Immigration Debate](#), Council on Foreign Relations  
[The Hispanic Challenge](#), Foreign Policy  
[Statistics](#), Migration Policy Institute  
[An American Tradition](#), NYT

### **Week of May 7: Fiscal Politics, incredibly boring but incredibly consequential**

[As deficit soars towards \\$ trillion, Congress shrugs and keeps spending](#) NYT  
[Winners and losers in the Trump budget](#)

[A Tour of the Federal Budget](#)  
[Federal Budget Process](#)  
[Authorizations versus Appropriations](#)

**Introduce major bill and major bill assignment by May 6 (earlier is fine!)**

*As of May 14, everything needed to legislate is in place – knowledge of the process; organizational positions, and legislative proposals. Class time is available but the chamber leader must request it (and announce an agenda) at least 24 hours in advance.*

### **Week of May 14: The lone wolf starves: Getting others to support your legislative effort**

Arnold, [Strategies for Building Coalitions](#)  
Schneider and Ingram, [Social Construction of Target Populations](#)  
Kingdon, [How Legislators Decide](#)

### **Week of May 21: The dynamics of congressional elections**

[Forecasting the 2018 midterms](#), Vox

## Two years of hard work summed up in 20 seconds?

Kathleen Hall Jamieson, [Tony Schwarz tribute](#)  
Cohen, [Getting the Hogs to the Corn](#)

### Week of May 28

No class Monday

Legislature adjourns *Sine Die* on May 30

Course wrap up, June 1

Propaganda due June 1 (bring to class)

Final Report is due June 6, 5pm

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### Assignments (100pts total)

We expect your essay responses to demonstrate that you have been attentive to the lectures and assigned readings. Be sure to include appropriate citations (including page numbers where relevant). This [grading rubric](#) provides a sense of the differences between fair, good and great essays. The political science writing lab exists for you and offers excellent [on line resources](#). Late assignments will be accepted but penalized.

### Assignments with deadlines

**April 8, 11pm.** Register on LegSim (SEE BELOW), complete your profile, and submit the [constituency research assignment](#). **5 pts**

*Your constituency must be from a state that is within one letter of your last name (e.g. Wilkerson can choose a V,W or X)*

**April 15, 11pm** [Propose Your Legislative Agenda](#) **7.5pts**  
Describe your legislative goals and how they relate to your representational and reelection goals.

**April 22, 11pm** [Justify your committee requests](#) **7.5pts**  
How will serving on your requested committees advance your agenda?

**May 6, 11pm [Major bill assignment](#) 10pts**  
You may sponsor as many bills and resolutions as you like. This assignment asks for a 'major' bill. If you are uncertain if your bill qualified, please ask in advance!

*The following do not have specific due dates*

**[Give a one minute speech](#) 5pts**  
Maximum of three speeches per class period; plan ahead!

**[Prepare a Committee Report](#) 10pts**  
Draft a committee report A sample committee report is located under 'Instruction' on LegSim. 2 pt deduction if submitted after May 15, 11pm. No credit if submitted after May 20, 11pm

**[Prepare debate remarks](#) 5pts**  
Prepare talking points for a forthcoming legislative debate, applying strategies of persuasion discussed in class. 1 pt deduction if submitted after May 22, 11pm. No credit if submitted after May 28, 11pm

**June 6, 5pm [Final Report on Legislative Accomplishments](#) 25pts**  
Bring propaganda to display in class June 1  
The written report is due on Canvas June 6.

**Section Participation 15pts**  
Participation in section activities including quizzes and assignments

**LegSim Effectiveness 10pts**  
Contributions to the collective class experience, on-line and during class debates

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**100pts**

**Extra credit!**

Get elected (and reelected) to a leadership position

- 2 pts chamber leader (2 more points if reelected)
- 1 pt Committee chair (1 more point if reelected)

Earn a Leadership PAC Contribution

- The chamber leader awards 2 pts (campaign funds) to 3 different legislators
- Each committee chair awards 1 pt to 2 different legislators (leader and chairs must inform the TAs before finals week)

**LegSim Registration**

LegSim is a class resource. Please think twice before posting something that may be offensive (and then don't do it!). The photo upload is there so that your classmates can connect people in class with their on-line profiles. Please upload a good headshot.



A \$16 registration fee needs to be paid by credit card during the registration process. To register, go to [www.legsim.org](http://www.legsim.org), select 'create new account.' Complete the field and enter the authorization code (below). Be sure to use a valid email address and write down your username and password.

*If you exit the process before paying, you will need to start over. You cannot use the same email address unless you contact [support@legsim.org](mailto:support@legsim.org) to have your current information deleted.*

Within a few minutes after paying, LegSim will send a reply email with an activation link. **You must use that link to login for the first time (using your username, not your email address).**

Check your junk/trash folder If you don't receive the activation email. If it's not there, forward your receipt email to [support@legsim.org](mailto:support@legsim.org) and they will activate for you.

Here is the authorization code: 6626cea15b7895031070dc2a44ab361f