**Mercer University**

**Congress and Legislative Process**

**Political Science 335**

**Fall 2015**

**Lecture/Discussion Syllabus**

**Dr. Derek Glasgow**

Monday-Wednesday-Friday ● 9:00-9:50 AM ● WHM 203

**Office:** Langdale Hall 225

**Office Hours:** Tuesday and Thursday 9:00-12:00, also by appointment

**E-mail:** glasgow\_dj@mercer.edu ● I try to limit my e-mail checking to office hours and the end of every day, but I will respond promptly to your queries.

**Course Requirements:**

Midterm 15% October 12th ● 9:00-9:50 AM

Final 25% December 12th ● 9:00-12:00 PM

Simulation and class participation 15%

Small Simulation Assignments 25% 6 assignments● Drop you lowest score

Opposition Research 10% December 2nd

Letter to constituents 10% November 6th

**Course Description:**

An examination of the United States Congress, with emphasis on recruitment, composition, styles of representation, leadership, the role of interest groups, and the executive in the legislative process, organization and function.

**Please keep in mind that although we may discuss controversial ideas and you might not agree with your classmates on a given topic, we want to maintain mutual respect and academic conduct towards each other in this class. Remember, everyone has a different opinion on the issues, and you should respect these perspectives. Choosing to act in a disrespectful manner may result in your dismissal from class and/or a reduction in participation points for that day.**

**Learning Outcomes:**

1. Students will identify the historical development of Congress.
2. Students will obtain a general working knowledge of the process and procedures of the United States Congress.
3. Students will recognize the importance of constituents in Congressional decision-making.
4. Students will explore how political parties, the president, organized interests, the Supreme Court, federal bureaucracy influence Congress.
5. Students will evaluate how Congressional re-election goals can conflict and with other legislative priorities.

**Grading Scale:**

A : 90-100 B + : 86-89 B : 80-85 C + : 76-79 C : 70-75 D + : 66-69

D : 60-65 F : 0-59

**Readings:** I highly recommend you buy used copies of the course readings if possible.

* Congress and Its Members, 14th Edition Paperback – July 22, 2013 by Roger H Davidson (Author), Walter J Oleszek (Author), Frances E Lee (Author), Eric Schickler (Author).
* Congress: The Electoral Connection by David Mayhew.
* Evolving Congress, prepared by Congressional Research Service (free pdf that I will post on Blackboard).
* You ***must*** register and pay for a Congressional simulation called LegSim. You need to pay *the website* $16 *as* you register for the simulation. The only way to pass this class is to participate in this simulation. I would suggest registering IMMEDIATELY after starting the course. Make sure you are signing up under the Mercer course. Website: <http://www.legsim.org/>

**Attendance:** Lecture/Discussion attendance is mandatory. Students are permitted *three unexcused* absences from class; after that I will take off a *letter grade* from your **total class grade** for each additional absence. Keep in mind that there are additional risks associated with missing class: you will receive a **zero** for participation that week. You can only drop *two participation* score. Please note that missing the first day of class without an excuse is considered an unexcused absence. Only in specific situations may absences be excuse (doctor’s note for an illness, participation in a sporting event, etc.). Please contact me if you have a legitimate excusable absence.

**Participation and Discussion:** Discussing the course text and current events are a major component of this class. Students are expected to be prepared for each class, which involves attending and listening intently during lectures, reading the required text, and thinking about questions and comments to make during class and the discussion portion. Everyone will be graded during the discussion portion of class each week. The quality and quantity of in-class contributions will affect participation. *Every* week you will be graded on participation—whether you are in class or not (you will be informed of your participation grade at the midterm and before the final). Those who are not in class will automatically get a zero; *however,* I will drop *two* of your lowest participation grades at the end of the semester. For those who are concerned about their ability to speak up in class, please talk to me about the issue as early in the semester as possible.

**Late and make-up work, electronic submissions, and extra credit:** Late work is permissible, but I will subtract a letter grade for every day in which the assignment is overdue. I will provide a few opportunities for extra credit; however, it is at my discretion for when and what type of assignment is assignment. Please note: There are no guarantees of extra credit throughout the semester. I **do not** accept electronic submissions *unless specified and under unique circumstances* (an excusable absence would can warrant an electronic submission). Please print out and hand in physical copies of assignments.

**Exams:** All exams will be based on a combination of multiple choice, short answer and short essays. Only the final will be cumulative. Look at the schedule for dates of exams.

**Use of Electronics in Class:** Electronics such as Ipads or Laptops are only allowed during the lecture portion of the class (and when needed). If these become a distraction, then I reserve the right to ask you to put them away. During the discussion section, laptops, electronic tablets, and other electronics **are** **not allowed**. Notes during discussion can be taken with pen and paper. Additionally, cell phones must be turned off or silenced during *both* the lecture and discussion. Texting will not be tolerated as it serves as a distraction for you, those sitting around you, and for your instructor. I reserve the right to give zero participation grades for that week for misuse of electronics in the classroom.

**Simulation**

A key component to this course is a teaching simulation meant to replicate the activities of a real Congress. This is **MAJOR** component to this class and will require in and out of class work. This is a fun simulation that will require a major time commitment. If you are unable to make a commitment to this simulation, then you will *not* pass the class (even if you do well on the exams). I will be passing out simulation materials as we go along, and I expect you to check the LegSim website *regularly*.

*Simulation/Discussion Days*: Throughout the semester we will have many days in which we talk about the ideas that are imbedded in the material and/or simulate/talk about our Congressional simulation. Sometimes we will be in a computer lab or we will be in our normal classroom. I will let you know what I expect from you during these days beforehand.

**Smaller Simulation Assignments (6):** Throughout the semester you will be responsible for the following smaller assignments. See assignment rubrics for more details and the schedule for due dates.

1. Legislative Profile
2. Legislative Agenda
3. Committee Assignment request / Leadership report #1
4. Create a bill
5. Committee Report/Leadership report #2
6. Debate Preparation assignment

**Large simulation Assignments:** Throughout the semester you will be responsible for the following larger assignments. See assignment rubrics for more details and the schedule for due dates.

1. Letter to constituents essay
2. Opposition Research essay

**Course Evaluations**In an ongoing effort to improve the quality of instruction, each student enrolled in this course is required to complete an on-line end-of-semester course evaluation. Students failing to submit the evaluation by a certain DEADLINE will be assigned the grade of “Incomplete,” which will automatically turn into an “F” if the evaluation is not submitted by the midterm of the next semester.

**Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism:** We are fortunate to be operating under a student-administered honor system. This system imposes on each student the responsibility for his or her own honest behavior and requires that each student will report any violations of the Honor Code. This course is conducted under the auspices of the Honor Code and all suspected infractions will be referred to the Honor Council. The students bear the responsibility of informing themselves fully about the Honor Code (see The Lair). As defined by The Lair, plagiarism is the “use of ideas, facts, phrases, or additional materials . . . from any source without giving proper credit for such material. Any material in a paper or report, which is not acknowledged, is understood to be the original work of the author.” Violations of the Honor Code will be treated with the utmost seriousness by the instructor.

**Please Note:**I retain the right to make changes to this syllabus throughout the semester as needed through in-class announcements. Please always contact me or see me during my office hours if you have a question or when there is a problem with your work in this course. Attendance in class communicates acceptance of, and intended compliance with the requirements of the syllabus.

Schedule:

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| **Topic** | **Dates**  | **Readings**  | **Assignments**  |
| **Introduction to Course**  | August 19th | * Congress and Its Members: Chapter 1 (12 pages).
* PDF. Congressional Research Service. The Evolving Congress: Overview and Analysis of the Modern Era by Walter J. Oleszek. (57 pages).
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| **Simulation/Discussion Day #1: Simulation Overview.** *Sign up for LegSim Due today!* Meet in computer lab (I’ll let you know of the location of the computer lab. August 21st. |
| **Congressional History and Today** | 2 sessions, August 24th and 26th | * Congress and its members: Chapter 2 (18 pages) .
* PDF. Congressional Research Service. The Evolving Congress: Being a Member of Congress: Some Notable Changes During the Last Half Century, by Michael L. Koempel (33 pages).
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| **Congressional Elections** | 2 sessions, August 28th and 31st | * Congress and its members: Recruitment and candidacy, Chapter 3 (23 pages)
* Congress and its members: The Electoral Game, Chapter 4 (37 pages)
* PDF. Congressional Research Service. The Evolving Congress: *The Unchanging Nature of Congressional Elections, by* Kevin J. Coleman and R. Sam Garrett (25 pages).
 | *Assignment: Personal Profile*  due on August 31st |
| **Simulation/Discussion Day #2:** September 2nd  |
| **Electoral Connection**   | September 4th and 9th. *No Class on September 7 (Labor Day)* | * Congress and its members: Chapter 5 (27 pages)
* Mayhew, Congress: The Electoral Connection: Chapter 1 (30 pages)
* PDF. Congressional Research Service. The Evolving Congress: Understanding Congressional Approval: Public Opinion from 1974 to 2014, by Jessica C. Gerrity (27 pages).
 | *Assignment: Personal Agenda Due on* September 9th |
| **Simulation/Discussion Day #3:** September 11th |
| **Parties and leadership in Congress** | September 14th and 16th | * Congress and its members: Chapter 6 (42 pages)
* (on reserve at the library) PDR. Party Influence in Congress: Chapter 3 (37 pages) .
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| **Simulation/Discussion Day #4:** September 18th |
| **Committees** | September 21st and 23rd  | * Congress and its members: Chapter 7 (41 pages)
* PDF. Congressional Research Service. The Evolving Congress: Committee Assignments and Party Leadership: An Analysis of Developments in the Modern Congress (23 pages)
 | *Assignment: Committee Assignment request* *due on September 23rd* |
| **Simulation/Discussion Day #5:** September 25th |
| **Congressional Procedures** | September 28th and 30th | * Congress and its members: Chapter 8 (34 pages)
* The legislative process on the Senate floor: An introduction
* [https://www.senate.gov/CRSReports/crs-publish.cfm?pid=%26\*2D4Q%5CK3%0A](https://www.senate.gov/CRSReports/crs-publish.cfm?pid=%26*2D4Q%5CK3%0A)
 | *Procedural Quiz due on September 30th* |
| **Simulation/Discussion Day #6:** October 2nd  |
| **Congressional voting and decision-making.** **Review for Mid-term.**  | October 5th and 7th | * Congress and its members: Chapter 9 (29 pages)
* Find materials related to your bill.
 | *Assignment: Create a bill and submit a bill by October 7th* |
| *Fall Break: No class on October 9th.**Midterm: October 12th.*  |
| **Congress and the Judiciary** | October 14th  | * Congress and its members: Chapter 12 (30 pages)
* PDF. Senate Voting on Supreme Court Nominees: A Neoinstitutional Model by Cameron, Cover, and Segal (pdf, 11 pages).
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| **Simulation/Discussion Day #7:** October 16th |
| **Congress and the Presidency** | October 19th and 21st | * Congress and its members: Chapter 10 (28 pages)
 | *Assignment: Committee Report/* Leadership report #1 due on October 21st |
| **Simulation/Discussion Day #8**: October 23rd  |
| **Congress and interest Groups** | October 26th and 28th | * Congress and its members: Chapter 13 (25 pages)
* PDF. Article: Lobbying as legislative subsidy by Hall and Deardorff (16 pages).
 | *Assignment Debate Preparation assignment* due on October 26th |
| **Simulation/Discussion Day #9:** October 30th |
| **Congress and the Bureaucracy** | November 2nd and 4th | * Congress and its members: Chapter 11 (27 pages)
* PDF. The Evolving Congress, Congress Evolving in the Face of Complexity: Legislative Efforts to Embed Transparency, Participation, and Representation in Agency Operations, by Clinton T. Brass and Wendy Ginsberg (21 pages).
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| **Simulation/Discussion Day #10:** November 6th. *Letter to constituents due on November 6th.* |
| **Congress, Domestic and Budget Policy**  | November 9th and 11th | * Congress and its members: Chapter 14 (28 pages)
* PDF. The Evolving Congress: Changes in the Purposes and Frequency of Authorizations of Appropriations (14 pages).
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| **Simulation/Discussion Day #11:** November 13th |
| **Congress, National and Foreign Policy**  | November 16th | * Congress and its member: Chapter 15 (24 pages).
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| **Simulation/Discussion Day #12:** November 18th |
| **Simulation/Discussion Day #13:** November 20th |
| *No Class: November 23rd, 25th, and 27th. Thanksgiving break.* |
| **Simulation/Discussion Day #14**:November 30th  |
| **Simulation/Discussion Day #15**: December 2nd. Opposition Research due on December 2nd.  |
| *Wrap up/Last Day: December 4th.* Leadership report #2 due on December 4th. |
| *FINAL EXAM: December 12th* |