

OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this semester you should come to understand the institution in two lights: one would be to view the legislature as a senior staff strategist or lobbyist would; the other would be to understand patterns with the eyes of a political scientist. Taken together, you will be able at the end of the semester to use clearly articulated standards to evaluate the performance of this central institution of our representative democracy.

To think like a senior strategist means understanding real policy options, interests, and tradeoffs. To see a bill through to passage, issue leaders and party leaders have to put themselves in the shoes of their supporters, opponents, and potential fence-sitters, understanding the Members' districts and their ambitions as well as their policy preferences. It means weighing the President's influence, the interest groups', and the general public's attentiveness. It also means understanding the differences between the House and the Senate.

As you pursue these objectives you should have accomplished the following by the end of this semester:

1. Understood what political scientists have written about members balancing their constituencies with their work as legislators;
2. Applied and tested the generalizations in these writings to individual legislators who are playing prominent roles in your assigned case studies;
3. Understood what political scientists have written about committees, political parties and the other major instruments of collective deliberation that help make the institution work as it does;
4. Applied and tested the generalizations in these writings to an analysis of your assigned case study;
5. Understood and evaluated major critiques and defenses of Congress;
6. Developed a framework for evaluating democratic legislatures more generally; and
7. Presented a reasoned evaluation of your own about Congress's performance, based on evidence in both the assigned readings and in your case study research.

TEACHING METHODS AND ASSESSMENTS

Instructional Strategy

This course will combine traditional with team-based learning approaches. In each major section of the curriculum, there will be lectures/discussions on reading from the textbook and other assigned material. There will be quizzes and a midterm exam on this material. After each unit's traditional introductory sessions, the teams will do research on their case studies to produce team reports that apply the reading to the case at hand. Questions or issues will be supplied at the beginning of each research class. The material will be synthesized in an individual paper/take-home exam at the end of the semester.

Papers, Exams and Grading

Quizzes on the reading (3) and short papers (2): 20% total

Midterm exam: 20%

Team reports: 25% for all exercises combined (Based on peer evaluation + evaluation by instructor)

Final exam / take-home paper: 30%

Class participation and attendance (other than team evaluation) 5%

REQUIRED BOOK

Available in the Campus Center Bookstore

Roger H. Davidson, Walter J. Oleszek, Frances E. Lee, and Eric Schickler. *Congress and Its Members*, 14th edition (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2015). ISBN 978-1-4833-8888-5. \$78

All other required, common reading will be on Blackboard.

You should download each item and bring the reading to class on the day assigned.

Additional web-based research will be required.

POLICIES

Internet + Laptops:

Internet research will be required to complete the assignments in this course. On many days, teams will be doing Internet research together and reporting the results. Each team will be responsible for assuring that one or more laptops (in addition to any Tablets) are available for team use in class every day. Distributing students with laptops will be a consideration in forming teams. Using computers or cell phones during class for any purpose other than work for this class is prohibited and will be penalized.

Academic Honesty:

Students are expected to be familiar with and adhere to the university's regulations concerning academic honesty. A copy of those policies is provided at the end of this syllabus. Read them. You will also find a link there to the full set of policy guidelines. Violation will result in a severe penalty that may include a failing grade in the course and referral to the appropriate university judicial authority.

So far this is standard formula, so pay special attention to what is coming next: Penalties will be imposed for *inadvertent* as well deliberate plagiarism. Since inadvertent plagiarism is not fully intentional, you need to be aware of what it is. It is easy to cut-and-paste material from the Internet, summarizing a source's logic, evidence, reasoning or language. When you do this, you are obliged to acknowledge that you are doing so *within the text* of your paper. You need to say something like "Smith says that..." even when you paraphrase. Putting in a citation at the end of a series of directly paraphrased sentences is NOT adequate. Summarizing another person must be acknowledged, and close paraphrasing should be rare. When you paraphrase closely, you probably should be quoting.

If your paper turns out to be a series of quotes and paraphrases, and if you give all of the proper references within the text as well as in footnotes, then it will not be plagiarized. So far, so good – but that is still not enough to make a paper satisfactory. A paper must be made up of and organized around *your* thoughts – your thesis, reasoning and evidence, phrased in your words and serving your paper's end. Compiling a series of quotes and paraphrases will not be enough to do a passable job. When you submit a paper as you own work, it must be your own.

If you have any questions about any of this while you are writing, then it is your responsibility to ask questions in advance.

Civility:

The case studies for this course involve some contentious issues. You will have differing opinions about the merits of each bill. I expect all discussions about these differences to be conducted with civility and to be based on evidence. Discussions should be about the other person's point, not about the other person. In the end, you should remember that none of your assignments will expect you to take a position on the merits of these issues. Your job will be to understand how the members think about them as a way to understand how the legislative process works.

Attendance:

Attendance in class, on time, is expected. All teams will be working on material that will cumulate into graded group projects. Team members suffer when someone fails to contribute. The assessment of your performance by your peers is part of your grade. In addition, your attendance will be factored in with the instructor's evaluations of your performance in group and other class activities. Missing class without a documented excuse will be penalized.

Attendance at exams and other graded exercises:

There will be no makeup quizzes or other in-class assessments. This includes team assessments that are not announced in advance. Excuses will be accepted only for an *adequately documented* illness or emergency. In the event of an appropriately documented excuse, the missed activity will not be calculated as part of the student's grade.

Late papers and assignments:

All papers and assignments are due on the date **and at the time** assigned. Excuses will be accepted *only* for an *adequately documented* illness or emergency. To give two examples: someone receiving professional treatment for an anxiety disorder that affects writing may well have a documented illness. Someone who has a conflicting exam or event does not. Nothing prevents the student with a known conflict from reading ahead and writing the paper early. The due dates are on the syllabus and instructions will be available early. All papers will be submitted electronically.

Blackboard:

All readings and other assignments (except the textbook) are posted on Blackboard and papers will be handed in through Blackboard. Chat rooms or lists will also be established for each of the learning teams. If necessary, change your email address on Blackboard to reflect the one you use. Blackboard can also forward messages to another email account.

Special Needs:

Students with special needs due to disabilities should register with the Disability Resource Center (Campus Center 137). The office will provide you with a letter describing the accommodations needed. Please give this letter to me within the first two weeks of the semester and remind me before each relevant event.

SCHEDULE

INTRODUCTORY

8/27 - Opening day – discuss syllabus and course expectations

9/1 Reading: *Congress and Its Members*, ch. 1, all; ch. 2, pp. 15-35.

*A. Taylor, *Congress: A Performance Appraisal*, ch. 2, "What We Should Want of Congress".

Sept. 1 (**continued**) – Select case studies/teams. The choices this year will be from among these: Iran agreement, trade, education, PATRIOT renewal, cybersecurity, highways/infrastructure. Introduce: How to find material on Congress.gov and other sources.

Sept. 3 – No class. Teams should meet in the library (or class room) to prepare 9/8

Sept. 8 – (1) Team presentations: narratives of cases' legislative histories.

(2) Evolution of legislative careers. Read: *Congress and Its Members*, ch. 2, pp. 35-38.

*Squire and Moncrief, *State Legislatures Today*, ch. 6, "The Changing Job," pp. 61-75 + two tables at the end (professionalization and salaries for each state. Where does NY rank?)

ELECTION RULES, CONTEXTS, HILL STYLES, AND HOME STYLES

Sept. 10 – Read: *Congress and Its Members*, ch. 4, pp. 67-77, 96-102; ch. 5, all.

*Herrnson, *Congressional Elections*, Ch. 1, "The Strategic Context" pp. 7-13.

*Jacobson, "Election Laws," pp. 21-22.

*Fenno, Richard, "U.S. House Members in Their Constituencies." pp. 883-90 and 914-17.

Sept. 15 – No class (Rosh Hashana)

Sept. 17 – Quiz (covering 9/1-9/10).

In class: How to do profiles. Case study teams do research on elections, presentation of self, etc., for selected committee members. Suggested Sources: websites of legislators (www.house.gov or www.senate.gov), *Almanac of American Politics* or *Politics in America*; *Lexis-Nexis*.

Students will hand in individual 2 page papers, Sept. 24 growing out of this work.

Sept. 22 – No class (Yom Kippur)

THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS INTRODUCED

Sept. 24 – (Submit short **paper** on an individual member's home style and constituency.)

Read: *C. Stewart, *Analyzing Congress*, ch. 1, "An (Unusual) Introduction", selections.

Sept. 29 -- Read: *Congress in Context, ch. 5.

*2015-08-05 GOP Has Bold Plan to Get Out of Fall Gridlock (Roll Call)

COMMITTEES

Oct. 1 – Read *Congress and Its Members*, ch. 7.

*Squire/Moncrief, *State Legislatures...* ch. 4, "Legislative Organization...", pp. 117-23.

Oct. 6 – Team research: How well do your committees represent the full House and Senate? (Criteria you might use include geographic balance, partisanship, ideology, seniority, etc.)

INTEREST GROUPS

Oct 8 Read: *Congress and Its Members*, ch. 13.

*Hall and Wayman, "Buying Time: Moneyed Interests and the Mobilization of Bias" *American Political Science Review*. 84:3 (1990), pp. 797-820.

Oct 13 – Submit **individual 2 pp. papers**. Teams report on committees' decisions; interest groups.

Oct. 15 – **No class**. Review for exam.

Oct. 20 – **MIDTERM EXAM** (covering all material through Oct. 13).

PARTIES IN THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

Oct 22 – Read: *Congress and Its Members*, ch. 6.

*Squire/Moncrief, *State Legislatures*, ch. 4, “Legislative Organization...”, pp.103-17, 125-26.

Oct 27 – Read: *Smith and Gamm: Dynamics of Party Government, 167-89.

*House GOP Factions (2013) (Cook Political Report – chart)

*CQ – (House) GOP Retribution Continues (June 20, 2015)

*Roll Call – Rep. Mark Meadows Explains Effort to Oust Boehner, July 28, 2015

*McConnell Vows Changes – Gridlock Remains – NYT, March 2015

*McConnell Employs Reid’s Hardball Tactics July 30, 2015

Oct 29 – Team research: did the Democrats or Republicans in the House or Senate divide at any stage on your bill, from introduction through floor action? (Or, alternatively: did different party factions have to compromise to come together to form a majority?)

PRESIDENT IN CONGRESS

Nov 3 – Read: *Congress and Its Members*, ch. 10, pp. 275-97 and ch. 15, all.

Gubernatorial Powers Compared: *Squire/Moncrief, *State Legislatures...* ch. 6, pp. 184-90.

Nov 5 – Quiz on readings for [10/22-11/3] + Teams work on presidential role.

TO THE FLOOR AND BEYOND:

Nov 10 -- Access to the floor and procedures

Read: *Congress and Its Members*, ch. 8, pp. 224-242.

**Debating Reform*, ch. 12: “Resolved: Senate Rule XXII should be amended so that filibusters can be ended by Majority vote.” Steven Smith (Pro) v. Wendy Schiller (Con)

Nov. 12 – Team research on the House Rule and Senate UCA (or cloture vote) on your bill.

Nov. 17: Decision Making, Floor Votes

Read: *Congress and Its Members*, Ch. 9.

*Kingdon, “Models of Legislative Voting,” *Jrnl of Politics*, 39:-563-595 (1977). Only 574-76.

Nov. 19-24: -- Teams analyze the floor votes: Influence of the President, party leaders, interest groups.

Nov. 26 – No class. Thanksgiving.

ASSESSMENT OF THE INSTITUTION:

Dec. 1-3:

Dec. 1: Submit 2 pp. paper.

Read:

*Mann/Ornstein, *It’s Even Worse than It Looks*, ix-xiv and 31-67.

*McCarty, “What we know and don’t know about our polarized politics.” Jan. 2014

*Zigerell, “Are Republicans Really Driving Polarization?” Sept. 2014, pp. 1-6

*B. Sinclair “What’s Wrong with Congress? Answer: It’s a Democratic Legislature.”

*Mayhew, “Is Congress ‘The Broken Branch’?”

*Shor, “Polarization in State Legislatures”, Jan 2014

Review: Andrew Taylor, *Congress: A Performance Appraisal*, ch. 2 (See 9/1)

Dec. 8: Teams discuss, debate, using the cases. Final paper/take-home exam distributed.

Dec. 17, 1PM (assigned exam time): Final paper/exam due by electronic submission.

The following pages have been copied from: <http://library.albany.edu/usered/cite/citing.html>

When and Why to Cite Sources

What is Plagiarism?

Plagiarism is defined as "a piece of writing that has been copied from someone else and is presented as being your own work" or "taking someone's words or ideas as if they were your own" ^[1]

Plagiarism is a serious issue in the academic community. While plagiarism sometimes does occur intentionally, it also occurs because the writer doesn't understand or does not know how to avoid it. Please visit our online tutorial: [Plagiarism 101](#) for an entertaining and interesting look at why people plagiarize and strategies to avoid it.

Plagiarism occurs when you use someone else's ideas and PRETEND they are your own. Avoiding plagiarism doesn't mean that you can never use other people's ideas. It's a widely known secret that in fact you CAN use other peoples' ideas and even their words. For many research papers you NEED to do this in order to prove your own points. So use their ideas! Use their words! Professors expect to see in your writing that you've done your research and understand what the experts think when you formed your own opinions. The trick is to acknowledge who these expert ideas really belong to by CITING them!

So let's assume you don't want to plagiarize, you've given yourself enough time to do it right, but you're still not sure about "putting things in your own words," judging when to cite work, or how to cite it. Read on for more information and examples.

Why Acknowledge Sources

Doing research for a paper is an exploration and learning process. By acknowledging our sources we show our reader the path we took to come to our conclusions. Citing the authors we read shows how we tied others' research and ideas together and how we came to learn about and develop our own ideas and opinions.

Why should you cite your sources?

1. Citations reflect the careful and thorough work you have put into locating and exploring your sources.
2. Citations help readers understand the context of your argument and are a courtesy to the reader, who may share your interest in a particular area of study.
3. Citations allow you to acknowledge those authors who contributed to your learning and your work.
4. Citations, by illustrating your own learning process, also draw attention to the originality and legitimacy of your own ideas.
5. By citing sources you demonstrate your integrity and skill as a responsible student and participant in your field of study. ^[2]

When to Cite Sources

While professors and scholars may have specific requirements based on the needs of their discipline, there are cases where you should **always** cite your sources.

1. Direct quotes of more than one word. If the author's words are powerful or you need to be specific for your argument, the authors' words can be used as a direct quote.
2. Paraphrasing or summarizing. If you want to use someone else's idea to help you make your point or to support your own ideas, in this case you would "translate" the ideas into your own words. [NB: "Always cite."]
3. Information which may be common knowledge but still unfamiliar to your reader. This would also include statistical information which may be familiar information but still requires confirmation.

4. Not just books or articles should be cited. Any source that you use for information can and should be cited including interviews, websites, TV programs, etc.
5. Whenever you are not sure if something should be cited, err on the side of caution and cite sources.

Let's look at some examples...

Direct quotes

How much you quote will determine how it appears in the body of your paper but whether it is one word or an entire paragraph, direct quotes need to be cited.

Lappe's explanation of a "thin democracy" ^[3] addresses a number of basic flaws within our American society.

Global warming is being recognized as a major issue throughout the world and as Al Gore instructs, "it is time to make peace with our planet." ^[4]

Paraphrasing or Summarizing

[NB: "Always cite".]

This involves translating what you have read (or heard) and putting it into your own words. Paraphrasing typically refers to putting an idea or passage into your own words. Summarizing involves capturing the main idea or reducing a detailed piece to a shorter and more general synopsis. **[Instructor's additional comment: when summarizing someone else's work, it is not sufficient to drop in a footnote. The text must also say something like "according to ..." or "Smith says that..." or "some historians have argued"]**

HERE'S AN EXAMPLE:

"Instructors usually allow students to find their own topics for a major writing assignment; thus choose something of interest to you so you won't get bored after a few days. At the same time, your chosen topic will need a scholarly perspective." ^[5]

Paraphrase: When students are permitted to select their own topic to write about they should choose one that is interesting to them. The topic should also be scholarly in nature so that students will be able to find appropriate research and resources on the topic. ^[5]

Summary: Students should select writing topics that are interesting and also lend themselves to academic research. ^[5]

A summary generally addresses the overall theme of a passage, article, opinion, etc. while a paraphrase generally restates a more specific thought or idea. The difference between summarizing and paraphrasing is sometimes obvious and sometimes subtle — do you see the difference?

Common Knowledge? Or Not?

Some basic facts are common knowledge and easily confirmed from a variety of sources. Statistics should always be cited, as well as opinions and less familiar facts. Information that is considered well-known within your field of study will also help determine if it is considered common or not. However, if you are not sure, cite it!

Example 1:

The University at Albany located in Albany, New York and is part of the State University of New York.

This is common knowledge and easily confirmed in a multitude of sources.

Example 2:

The State University of New York was officially established in February of 1948 and currently consists of 64 institutions. The University at Albany is one of ten University Centers that are part of the SUNY system.^[6]

While the SUNY system is well known and these facts are easily confirmed, specific historical information or statistics should be cited.

How to Cite?

We've talked about plagiarism as well as why and when to cite. The next question is "How?"

There are **two things you need to know** from your professor.

The FIRST is how you will reference your sources within your paper. Generally you will use one of the following options:

- **IN TEXT** citation is when your source author is included within the body of your paper. This acts as a reference to your 'Works Cited' page.
- **END NOTES** format is used in this document. The cited idea or quote is noted with a number and the source is listed at the end of the paper.
- **FOOT NOTES** format is similar to end notes however the citations are listed at the bottom of each page.

The SECOND thing you need to know is what Format and Style Guide to use. There are very specific rules about how to do this that are not included in this document. Your professor will tell you which s/he wants you to follow. The choices will typically be one of the following:

- **MLA** Format and Style Guide (Modern Language Association)
- **APA** Format and Style Guide (American Psychological Association)
- **CHICAGO** Manual of Style

Please visit the University Libraries' Cite... Web page at [Cite...](#) for information and instructions on these style guides. Once you know what your professor wants you will need to follow the rules of that format accordingly.

^[1] "Plagiarism." *WordNet 3.0*. Princeton University. 03 Apr. 2008. [Dictionary.com](http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/plagiarism)
<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/plagiarism>.

^[2] Adapted from "Sources and Citation at Dartmouth College." Dartmouth College. 1998. Retrieved 9 Feb 2009. <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~writing/sources/sources-citation.html>

^[3] Lappe, Frances Moore. *Getting a Grip*. Cambridge, MA : Small Planet Media, 2007.

^[4] Gore, Al. "Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech." *Al's Journal*. December 10, 2007. Retrieved April 10, 2008. http://blog.algore.com/2007/12/nobel_prize_acceptance_speech.html

^[5] Lester, James D. & James D. Lester Jr. *Writing Research Papers: A Complete Guide, 11th Ed.* New York: Pearson Education, 2005.

^[6] "Short History of SUNY." The State University of New York. 2008. Retrieved April 25, 2008. http://www.suny.edu/student/university_suny_history.cfm