

Add Course Request

Submitted on: 2012-03-06 16:20:07

1. COURSE SUBJECT	Pols
2. COURSE NUMBER (OR PROPOSED NUMBER)	3604W
3. COURSE TITLE	Congress in Theory and Practice
4. INITIATING DEPARTMENT or UNIT	Political Science
5. NAME OF SUBMITTER	Matthew Singer
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11. EMAIL of of contact person	Email: matthew.m.singer@uconn.edu
12. Departmental Approval Date	11/20/2006
13. School/College Approval Date	10/09/2007
14. Names and Dates of additional Department and School/College approvals	
15. Proposed Implementation Date	Term: Fall, Year: 2012
16. Offered before next printed catalog is distributed?	Yes
17. General Education Content Area	
18. General Education Skill Code (W/Q). Any non-W section?	W
19. Terms Offered	Semester: Fall Spring Year: Every_Year
20. Sections	Sections Taught: 1
21. Student Number	Students/Sections: 19
22. Clarification:	
23. Number of Credits	3 if VAR Min: Max: credits each term
24. INSTRUCTIONAL PATTERN 2-3 meetings per week (depending upon how it is slotted), with the class having the format of a seminar. Students are expected to come to class ready to engage with the readings and are graded	

on the basis of this participation.

25. Will this course be taught in a language other than English?	No If yes, then name the language:
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26. Please list any prerequisites, recommended preparation or suggested preparation:
Prerequisite: ENGL 1010 or 1011 or 3800; open to juniors or higher.

27. Is Instructor, Dept. Head or Unit Consent Required ?	No
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28. Permissions and Exclusions:

Open only to Juniors or higher

29. Is this course repeatable for credit ?	No If yes, total credits allowed: Allow multiple enrollments in same term?
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30. Grading Basis	Graded
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31. If satisfactory/unsatisfactory grading is proposed, please provide **rationale**:

32. Will the course or any sections of the course be taught as Honors?
AsHonors

33. Additional Details:

34. Special Attributes:

35. **REGIONAL CAMPUS AVAILABILITY:**

Available if staff there are interested in teaching it-it has no special space requirements.

36. **PROVIDE THE PROPOSED TITLE AND COMPLETE CATALOG COPY:**

POLS 3604. Congress in Theory and Practice

Either semester. Three credits.

In-depth analysis of the U.S. Congress, including representation, elections, policy formation, law making, and organization.

POLS 3604W. Congress in Theory and Practice

Either semester. Three credits. Prerequisite: ENGL 110 or 111 or 250. Open only with consent of instructor.

Note that this was originally approved by the CLAS C&C under the old number system as Pols 273W

37. **RATIONALE FOR ACTION REQUESTED**

This course is focused on the U.S. Congress. The scholarly literature that addresses congressional

issues is rich, complicated and sophisticated. This course, then, is meant to investigate this literature in order to provide students with a deeper analysis and understanding of the processes and institutions of the Congress as well as congressional representation and elections. The most comparable course, POLS 275, divides the semester between the presidency and Congress.

Therefore, the rich congressional literature is only introduced at the most basic levels.

We have been teaching pols 3604 for the last few years, but would like to have the option of teaching a W version because the department is attempting to increase its W courses so that it may meet the GEOC W-in-the-Major requirement. We are proposing both simultaneously to give the department some flexibility in scheduling to meet students' needs.

38. SYLLABUS:

Online URL: ([https://web2.uconn.edu/senateform/request/course_uploads/mas07010-1331068806-Fall11_3604W_Proposed_Syllabus \(2\).doc](https://web2.uconn.edu/senateform/request/course_uploads/mas07010-1331068806-Fall11_3604W_Proposed_Syllabus_(2).doc))

39. Course Information: ALL General Education courses, including W and Q courses, MUST answer this question

Course description: This course will cover the historical origins and contemporary politics of the United States Congress, placing the partisan conflict that defines modern congressional life in historical context. We will emphasize three themes. First, through an analysis of apportionment, redistricting, and elections, we will investigate the tension between Congress' representational function and its policymaking function. Second, we will focus on the details of the lawmaking process. Students should come away from the course with an understanding of the process by which ideas make their way onto the political agenda, and eventually become law (or fail to). Finally, we will examine the role of interest groups in policymaking and explore the reasons Congress is held in such low regard by the American public.

Course requirements: (1) homework, in-class writing assignments, and participation 10%; (2) 1st short essay 5% (3 pages); (3) 2nd short essay 10% (3 pages) (4) research/analytical essay 20% (10-12 pages); (5) legislative procedures quiz 10%; (6) midterm 20%; (7) final examination 25%. If the students do not pass the writing components of the class, they will not pass the class.

major themes:

representation and campaigning

lawmaking and bargaining

The internal organization of congress and the role of parties

institutional reform

40. Goals of General Education: All Courses Proposed for a Gen Ed Content Area MUST answer this question

41. Content Area and/or Competency Criteria: ALL General Education courses, including W and Q courses, MUST answer this question.: Specific Criteria

a. **Arts and Humanities:**

b. **Social Sciences:**

c. **Science and Technology:**

i. **Laboratory:**

d. **Diversity and Multiculturalism:**

43. **International:**

e. **Q course:**

f. **W course:**

Students complete three written assignments throughout the semester. The first two are short 1-3 page essays reacting to topics discussed in class. For example, the first essay the instructor plans to assign next year is as follows:

Drawing on the evidence presented in the article by Lawless & Fox and the data that appear in the tables below, write a three page essay (typed, double-spaced, 1"-1.25" margins, 11-12 point font) explaining why women don't run for public office. Has the answer to that question changed since Lawless and Fox's initial study in 2001? Why or why not?

You will need to include a title (but not a title page). Please consult the Hacker book for information on identifying and citing the sources you use. You cannot complete this assignment without referencing/citing information from the Lawless and Fox article.

Objectives:

In this course, we will work on nine objectives developed by the political science department for writing courses such as this one. In this assignment, I want you to focus on numbers 1-4, and 6-9.

1. Summarize the main issue/argument in the piece you've read.
2. Articulate your own hypothesis clearly, using fitting experience and/or external sources.
3. Identify the underlying assumptions and alternative perspectives of the argument.
4. Assess the quality of the supporting evidence.
5. Identify the implications of the argument beyond the example given.
6. Use appropriate sources in support of your argument.
7. Develop your own style/tone of prose.
8. Do not make mistakes in grammar, syntax, spelling, and punctuation.
9. Adhere to political science academic standards for attribution of others' work (citations, etc.).

Due Dates and Grading:

Essays are due Wednesday, 9/7. I will review, comment on, and return the essays the following week. Final revisions are due Friday, 9/23. This assignment is worth 5% of your final grade. The initial submission is 60% of the value (3 out of 5) and the revised version makes up the remaining 40% (the remaining 2 out of 5).

(end of assignment)

In addition to the two short essays that I have provided one example of, the students will produce a longer piece of synthetic research. The assignment the instructor plans to use is as follows:

Barbara Sinclair uses several case studies to demonstrate that lawmakers have abandoned the "textbook" legislative process in favor of more "unorthodox" legislative procedures. In this assignment, you are to compare and contrast the procedures through which Congress enacted Medicare/Prescription Drug benefit legislation (see "Medicare/Prescription Drug Legislation: Making Sweeping Policy Change in a Highly Partisan Environment" on HuskyCT) and the 2010 health care reform bill (see ch. 8 of Sinclair). Identify similarities and differences in the processes and, most importantly, the tools legislative leaders used/are using to increase the chances of passage of these two bills. This paper, like the assigned chapters from the Sinclair book, is really about legislative procedures and the use of unorthodox methods to facilitate passage of major legislation in Congress. That is where your comparisons and contrasts should be focused.

There is no set number of "comparisons" or "contrasts" in this paper, but you should identify some dimensions along which the 2003 process and the current process were similar and some along which they differed.

Requirements: There is a ten (10) page minimum and a twelve (12) page maximum on this assignment. One of the goals of this assignment is to force you to distill the information necessary to make this argument into a reasonable amount of space. I won't read past the bottom of the 12th page. This paper is worth 20% of your grade. The initial submission is worth 15 of those points; the revisions are worth 5.

Academic Honesty: Students guilty of plagiarism will receive a grade of zero on the assignment and be referred to The Academic Misconduct Hearing Board. If you have any questions about plagiarism or citing sources, the library's website has a nice discussion of the relevant issues at <http://www.lib.uconn.edu/using/tutorials/instruction/citing.html>. The Writing Center (<http://www.writingcenter.uconn.edu>) has useful resources too.

Due Date: Hard copies of the essays – approximately 10-12 pages plus a cover page and a bibliography/works cited page, typed, double-spaced, 11-12 point font, approx. 1" margins – will be due Friday, November 11, at the beginning of class. Late papers will be heavily penalized, so turn them in on time. I will turn these essays around before Thanksgiving, and revisions will be due at the beginning of class Monday, December 7.

Electronic Submission: Be sure to save an electronic copy of your paper. Once you've handed in the hard copy, you'll be required to submit an electronic copy via HuskyCT.

(end of assignment)

These assignments require students to write at least 16 pages, to submit an initial draft for evaluation and feedback, and then to complete final revisions before a final grade is given. The instructor also provides instruction on research techniques and writing skills throughout the semester in accordance with W policies.

42. RESOURCES:

Does the department/school/program currently have resources to offer the course as proposed
YES

If NO, please explain why and what resources are required to offer the course.

43. SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

ADMIN COMMENT:

Senate approved W 10.15.12 // GEOCWapp_050112AP. newW_040412AP.

Professor Vincent Moscardelli
Office: 224A Monteith

Political Science 3604 (#XXXXX)
Congress in Theory and Practice
Fall 20XX

Office Hrs: Days and times; and by appt.

Phone: 486-1956

Days and Location Here

Email: vin.moscardelli@uconn.edu

URL: <https://lms.uconn.edu/webct/logon/2320970222051>

Course Description

This course will cover the historical origins and contemporary politics of the United States Congress, placing the partisan conflict that defines modern congressional life in historical context. We will emphasize three themes. First, through an analysis of apportionment, redistricting, and elections, we will investigate the tension between Congress' representational function and its policymaking function. Second, we will focus on the details of the lawmaking process. Students should come away from the course with an understanding of the process by which ideas make their way onto the political agenda, and eventually become law (or fail to). Finally, we will examine the role of interest groups in policymaking and explore the reasons Congress is held in such low regard by the American public.

Readings: The following books are required and are available in the Co-op.

- Davidson, Roger H., Walter J. Oleszek, and Frances E. Lee. 2011. *Congress and Its Members*, 13th ed. Washington, DC: CQ Press. (ISBN: 978-0-60871-642-5)

- Sinclair, Barbara. 2011. *Unorthodox Lawmaking* (4th ed.). Washington, DC: CQ Press. (ISBN: 978-1-60871-236-6)
- Hacker, Diana. 2008. *A Pocket Style Manual* (5th ed.). New York: Bedford/St. Martin's. (ISBN: 978-0-312-45275-9) (paper)
- Additional required readings are available online via HuskyCT. These readings are designated with **(HuskyCT)** on the course outline.

Writing Requirement: This is a "W" course. As such, we will spend a lot of energy not just evaluating each other's writing, but learning how writing can (according to the W Center's website) "ground, extend, deepen, and even enable [the] learning of course material." See page two of the syllabus for more information. According to university-wide policies for W courses, you cannot pass this course unless you receive a passing grade for its writing components.

Grading and Examinations: (1) homework, in-class writing assignments, and participation 10%; (2) 1st short essay 5%; (3) 2nd short essay 10% (4) research/analytical essay 20%; (5) legislative procedures quiz 10%; (6) midterm 20%; (7) final examination 25%.

Testing Accommodations: I will be happy to provide testing accommodations for students who provide documentation from the University's Center for Students with Disabilities (<http://www.csd.uconn.edu>).

Class Participation: I expect students to come to class prepared to participate in a meaningful way. To do so, students must complete the assigned readings. I also recommend that students do their best to follow news coverage of the final days of the first session of the 112th Congress in serious news outlets (e.g., *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal*, *CQ*, etc.).

Final Examination: Visit the Registrar's website at <http://www.registrar.uconn.edu/exams.htm> to access the official final examination schedule. Early exams or makeup exams must be approved by the Dean of Students. I do not have discretion in this matter.

GENERAL EDUCATION GUIDELINES for WRITING (W) COMPETENCY

As approved by the University Senate on May 12, 2003

Definition of Writing Competency for General Education:

The writing across the curriculum W course requirements are designed to ensure that writing instruction continues after the Freshman English writing courses (English 110 or English 111). As one of the fundamental ways through which academic disciplines explore, construct, and communicate their various forms of knowledge, writing is an essential component of a university education. . . . The W requirement extends [the goals of the Freshman English seminars] to other courses with an emphasis on the significance of writing in individual major fields of study.

W courses should demonstrate for students the relationship between the writing in the course and the content learning goals of the course. Students should not write simply to be evaluated; they should learn how writing can ground, extend, deepen, and even enable their learning of the course material. In addition then to the general formal questions concerning strategies for developing ideas, clarity of organization, and effectiveness of expression, and the discipline specific format, evidentiary, and stylistic norms, the W requirement should lead students to understand the relationship between their own thinking and writing in a way that will help them continue to develop both throughout their lives and careers after graduation.

...

Criteria: Courses (and their equivalents) appropriate for a W designation should . . .

1. Require that students write a minimum of fifteen pages that have been revised for conceptual clarity and development of ideas, edited for expression, and proofread for grammatical and mechanical correctness;
 2. Address writing in process, require revision, and provide substantial supervision of three student writing. (The structure of revision and supervision may vary, including in-class writing workshops, individual consultation, substantial formative commentary on drafts, and so on.);
 3. Have an enrollment cap of nineteen students per section;
 4. Make explicit the relation between writing and learning in the course;
 5. Articulate the structure of supervision of student writing;
 6. Explain the place and function of revision in the course;
 7. Detail how the page requirement will be met;
 8. Require that students must pass the writing component in order to pass the course.
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Course Outline

I. Introduction

A. Organizational Meeting and Introduction to Course (M8/29)

- Review of course syllabus
- Discussion of the functions (representation, lawmaking) legislatures serve in democratic societies and the tensions among them. Placing Congress in the broader context of the American constitutional system. Identification of extra-congressional actors (President, bureaucrats, interest groups, lobbyists, courts, campaign consultants) that also influence the organization and operation of Congress.
- Assignment: Visit course HuskyCT site and complete biographical assignment asap (but no later than Tuesday, 9/6, at 5:00pm).

II. Representation

A. Getting There: Candidate Recruitment, Apportionment, and Elections

1. Candidate Recruitment and the Decision to Run (W8/31)

- Readings:
 - Davidson, Oleszek, & Lee (hereafter denoted DOL), ch. 1 and pps. 58-64
 - Lawless and Fox, "Why are Women Still Not Running for Congress?" (**HuskyCT**)
- Discussion Questions: What characteristics do most candidates for the U.S. Congress share? What are the conditions under which strong challengers are likely to emerge? What factors influence prospective candidates' decisions to run (or not to run)?
- Assignment: Short Writing Assignment #1 (see below).

Writing Assignment (due Wednesday, 9/7; revisions due Friday, 9/23)

Drawing on the evidence presented in the article by Lawless & Fox and the data that appear in the tables I presented in class, write a three page essay (typed, double-spaced, 1"-1.25" margins, 11-12 point font) explaining why women don't run for public office. Has the answer to that question changed since Lawless and Fox's initial study in 2001? Why or why not?

See handout for outline of specific goals for this assignment.

2. The Paradox of Representation: Apportionment, Gerrymandering and the Legacy of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (W9/7, F9/9, M9/12)

- Readings:
 - DOL, pps. 43-58
 - *The Economist*, "How to Rig an Election" (**HuskyCT**)
 - Canon, "Representing Racial and Ethnic Minorities" (**HuskyCT**)

- Discussion Questions: Contrast descriptive and substantive representation. Describe two specific problems that can occur in the drawing of congressional district lines. Outline some of the pros and cons of our "SMP" system.

- Assignment: Play "The Redistricting Game" online at the following URL: <http://www.redistrictinggame.com>. Use the "Advanced" option to create an approved districting scheme (population equality stage only). Save a screen-shot and Email it to me before midnight Sunday, 9/11 (see handout for more details).

3. Congressional Elections (W9/14, F9/16, M9/19)

- Reading:
 - DOL, pps. 64-67, and all of ch. 4
 - Jacobson, "Barack Obama, the Tea Party, and the 2010 Elections" (**HuskyCT**)

- Discussion Questions: Are all politics really local? To what extent are congressional elections determined by national events? What explains the incumbency advantage? What is the "personal incumbency advantage"? What are the consequences of declining party competitiveness in congressional elections?

B. Being There: Home Styles (W9/21, F9/23)

- Reading:
 - DOL, pps. 122-129

- Discussion Questions: List and describe several goals that motivate members of Congress. Contrast various ways members of Congress perceive their constituencies.

C. Being There: Hill Styles and "Member Enterprises" (M9/26, W9/28, F9/30)

- Reading:
 - DOL, pps. 109-122 and 129-137

- Discussion Questions: What are the competing influences on members of Congress? What challenges do Members of Congress face upon arriving in Washington? What is casework? What are the pros and cons of casework as a means of 'representing' one's constituents?

Monday, 10/3: Midterm Examination (20% of grade)

D. Representing Whom? Who are the "Special Interests" and What Makes them so Special? (M11/9, W11/11, F11/13)

- Readings:
 - DOL, ch. 13
 - Lee, "Interests, Constituencies, and Policy Making" (**HuskyCT**)

- Discussion Questions: Contrast "inside" and "outside" lobbying. Is Congress controlled by special interests? Which interests are represented more effectively by Congress: local, particular interests or national, general interests? What characteristics of Congress as an institution encourage the representation of local interests? Of national interests?

- Assignment: Short Writing Assignment #2 (see below)

Writing Assignment (due Wednesday, 10/14; revisions due Monday, 10/31)

Write a three page essay (typed, double-spaced, 1"-1.25" margins, 11-12 point font) answering the following question:

Critics argue that Congress caters to narrow, special interests at the expense of the general good. In her article, "Interests, Constituents, and Policy Making," Frances Lee addresses this criticism head-on. In her view, what types of interests are advantaged in our system and why? On what evidence does she rely to draw this conclusion? Is the criticism (that Congress caters to special interests) valid? In addition to the article by Frances Lee, feel free to draw on the documentary on Jack Abramoff, class lectures, and your textbook to support your conclusion.

See handout for outline of specific goals for this assignment.

III. Lawmaking

A. The Structure of Congress

1. Institutional Design and Historical Development (W10/5, F10/7, M10/10)

- Readings:
 - DOL, ch. 2
 - Sinclair, chs. 1 and 6
- Discussion Questions: What was the “Textbook Era” Congress and how did it differ from the contemporary Congress? Which is most powerful and influential in the modern House of Representatives: parties, committees, or some other entity? In the modern Senate?
- *Legislative Procedures Review Sheet will be posted online during this week.*

B. The Structure of Congress: Parties vs. Committees

1. First Among Equals: Party Organization and Leadership (W10/12, F10/14)

- Readings:
 - DOL, ch. 6
- Discussion Questions: What resources do party leaders have at their disposal to encourage rank-and-file members of Congress to do as they say? What aspects of legislative life tend to weaken the power of leaders? Under what conditions would you expect legislative party leaders to be most influential?

2. Committees: The Little Legislatures (M10/17, W10/19)

- Readings:
 - DOL, ch. 7

- Discussion Questions: How are committee members chosen? What are the costs and benefits of the seniority system? What is "subcommittee government"? Which would you rather be: a party leader or a committee chair?

C. The Lawmaking Process in the House and Senate

1. Congressional Rules and Procedures (F10/21, M10/24, W10/26, F10/28)

- Readings:
 - DOL, ch. 8
 - Sinclair, chs. 2-4

- Discussion Questions: Contrast the "orthodox" legislative processes in the House and Senate. What elements of the legislative process are the same? Which are different? On what factors do members of Congress rely for voting cues? What is "unorthodox" lawmaking? What are the implications of the legislative process for the policy making process? For the public's evaluations of Congress as an institution?

Friday, 10/28: Quiz on Legislative Procedures (15% of grade)

Monday, 10/31: Last day to drop with grade of "W"

2. Case Study: Budgets and Policy Making (M10/31, W11/2, F11/4)

- Readings:
 - DOL, ch. 14
 - Sinclair, ch. 5

- Discussion Questions: Discuss the pros and cons of congressional earmarks. Describe several characteristics of congressional policy making. What is "reconciliation" and why is it important?

3. Case Study: Health Care Reform (M11/7, W11/9, F11/11)

- Readings:
 - Sinclair, chs. 8 and 10

- Discussion Questions: Trace the process through which health care reform was achieved in 2009-10. Identify at least three "unorthodox" procedures that were employed in securing passage of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. Do you understand "reconciliation" yet?

Friday, 11/20: NPSA Meeting in Philadelphia (no class meeting)

November 19-27: Thanksgiving Holiday (no class meetings)

D. Inter-branch Relations: Congress and the Executive (M11/16, W11/18, F11/20)

- Readings:
 - DOL, ch. 10, and pps. 359-369
 - Sinclair, ch. 7
- Discussion Questions: What is oversight? What types of programs are most likely to be the subjects of congressional oversight? Do members of Congress care if the President's approval ratings are high or low? Why or why not? What is a mandate? How has the relationship between Congress and the President changed over time?

IV. Conclusion: Reform and Institutional Change (M12/7, W12/9, F12/11)

- Readings:
 - DOL, ch. 16
 - Sinclair, ch. 10 (review)
 - Hibbing and Larimer, "The American Public's View of Congress" (**HuskyCT**)
- Discussion Questions: Will Congress reform itself anytime soon? Should it? Are the two Congresses ultimately compatible? Or, are they diverging, each detrimental to the other? Why do we "love our congressperson" but "hate Congress"?

Final Examination: Visit the Registrar's website at <http://www.registrar.uconn.edu/exams.htm> to access the official final examination schedule. Early exams or makeup exams must be approved by the Dean of Students. I do not have discretion in this matter.
