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LEGISLATIVE BEHAVIOR AND INSTITUTIONS
Political Science G8223
Fall 2005

This course examines the interactions between individual incentives and political institutions in shaping policy. The purpose of this course is two-fold: first, to develop analytical skills; and second, to apply these tools to the study of legislative institutions, and in particular the U.S. Congress. The first part of the course presents an approach to the study of politics that emphasizes individual incentives in an electoral system. The second part examines how reelection-minded legislators organize to solve collective dilemmas. The third part focuses on the effects of these political institutions on policy choice.

Course Materials: Readings for each class are specified in the attached syllabus. Materials are also available on the course website at: <https://courseworks.columbia.edu>. All books can be purchased at the bookstore and are on reserve at Lehman Library in the SIA building. The books for this course are:

Binder, *Minority Rights, Majority Rule*
Cox and McCubbins, *Legislative Leviathan*
Epstein and O'Halloran, *Delegating Powers*
Fenno, *Home Style*
Krehbiel, *Information and Legislative Organization*
Krehbiel, *Pivotal Politics*

Mayhew, *Congress: The Electoral Connection*
Mayhew, *Divided We Govern*
Poole and Rosenthal, *Congress*
Schickler, *Disjointed Pluralism*
Smith and Deering, *Committees in Congress*

Readings marked (CR) will also be placed on reserve in Lehman Library and a copy left outside my office door.

Requirements: Careful reading of each week's assignment before class is necessary. In addition:

- Each student will be required to lead the discussion of one day's class during the semester;
- Short written assignments will be due throughout the semester as your term paper progresses;
- A 20 minute in-class presentation; and
- A 20 page research paper.

Grading:

- General class participation (10%);
- Leading class discussion (30%);
- Final paper & presentation (60%).

COURSE OUTLINE

Part I: Overview

September 8: Introduction: Congress and Legislative Institutions

September 15: Setting the Rules

Readings:

United States Constitution

Federalist Papers 10, 47-52, 70 (CR)

Part II: Motivating Members

September 22: The Changing Nature of Congressional Elections

Readings:

Fiorina, "The Case of the Vanishing Marginals" (CR)

Jacobson, "Running Scared" (CR)

Alford and Brady, "Personal and Partisan Advantage in U.S. Elections" (CR)

Fenno, *Home Style*

September 29: The Electoral Connection: Legislative Behavior and Constituency

Readings:

Mayhew, *The Electoral Connection*

Part III: Division of Labor and Legislative Institutions

October 6: Problem: Chaos

Readings:

Shepsle and Bonchek *Analyzing Politics*, Chapters 4 and 5 (CR)

Shepsle, 1979, "Institutional Arrangements and Equilibrium in Multidimensional Voting Models," (CR)

How Congress Works (CR)

Overviews of legislative Process <http://docs.lib.duke.edu/federal/guides/LandL1st.html>

October 13: Problem: Distributive Politics

Readings:

Krehbiel, *Information and Legislative Organization*, Chapters 1, 2

Fenno, "Congressmen and Committees" (CR)

Weingast and Marshall, 1988, "The Industrial Organization of Congress," (CR)

How our laws are made <http://thomas.loc.gov/home/lawsmade.toc.html>

Assignment # 1 Due

October 20: Problem: Information

Readings:

Polsby, "The Institutionalization of the US House of Representatives," (CR)

Krehbiel, *Information and Legislative Organization*, Chapters 3-7

Part IV: Parties as Integrative Mechanisms

October 27: Parties in Congress

Readings:

Binder, *Minority Rights, Majority Rule*

Schickler, *Disjointed Pluralism*

Cox and McCubbins, *Legislative Leviathan*

Cooper and Brady, "Institutional Context and Leadership Style" (CR)

Assignment # 2 Due

November 4: Election Day

Part V: Legislative Institutions and Public Policy

November 10: Divided Government

Readings:

Mayhew, *Divided We Govern*

Krehbiel, *Pivotal Politics*

Assignment # 3 Due

November 17: Congress and the Executive

Readings:

Epstein and O'Halloran, *Delegating Powers*

Part VI: Presentations

November 24: Student Presentations

December 1: Student Presentations

December 8: Student Presentations

REMEMBER: FINAL PAPER IS DUE BY 5:00 PM, December 15th, 2005.

Assignment # 1

Statement of Purpose

Due October 13th

Prepare a 1-page statement of purpose on your research topic. Be sure to discuss the following:

- What is your research question?
- What is your central hypothesis?
- What are your assumptions?
- What is the logic of your argumentation (intermediate steps)?
- State one alternative hypothesis.

Assignment # 2

Evidence Page

Due October 27th

Prepare a **1 page** statement that overviews the evidence you will use in your research. Be prepared to present your assignment to the class. Be sure you do the following:

- Clearly restate your hypothesis.
- What evidence will you use to support your hypothesis?
- How is this a test of your hypothesis?
- How can you refute this argument?
- Any weaknesses?

REMEMBER: Your intermediate steps are a good guide to what evidence you must provide to make your hypothesis seem plausible.

Assignment # 3

Annotated Bibliography

Due November 17th

Prepare an annotated bibliography that covers the literature relevant to your topic. There should be a minimum of 12 sources reviewed. Be prepared to discuss your findings. Address the following:

- What is the relevant literature?
- What have others said?
- How does your thesis fit into this literature?
- What are the primary sources?
- What are the secondary sources?

Assignment # 4

20 Minute Presentation

Due November 24th, December 1st and 8th

Assume that your audience has never heard your paper topic before and knows nothing about the subject. Your presentation should provide them with enough information so that they understand the central problem you are addressing, your hypothesis, and can evaluate the evidence you use to support your claim. Be sure to do the following:

- Discuss the central question.
- Define the hypothesis.
- Define the logic of your argument.
- Present data or figures that support your argument.
- Give a concluding overview.

This is a professional presentation. Use overheads, handouts, and any other necessary props. You will find that it is really difficult to organize a short coherent talk. I will hold you to the 20 minutes. **NO EXCEPTIONS.**

Assignment # 5

Final Paper

DUE BY 5:00 PM, December 15th, 2005

Turn in a 20-page research paper on your topic. It should include all the elements that we have discussed.

- State your topic or question.
- **Clearly** state your hypothesis.
- State the logic of your argument.
- Discuss the relevant literature: define the central debate.
- Provide evidence to support your hypothesis.
- What conclusions or policy prescriptions follow from your argument?