

POL 433F: Congressional Politics in America

INSTRUCTOR: Professor Lawrence LeDuc, 109 Carr Hall (SMC)
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TEXTS: Lawrence C. Dodd & Bruce I. Oppenheimer (eds.) *Congress Reconsidered*,
11th edition (CR)

A selection of articles which will be posted on Quercus (Q) or made available
by the instructor

MEDIA / INTERNET:

Students are expected to keep up to date with the events of the election campaign using some of the many sources that are readily available for this purpose. The (“failing”) *New York Times* [www.nytimes.com] is the best overall reference for current information, and also has excellent op-ed pieces by regular columnists such as Paul Krugman, Maureen Dowd and David Brooks. A team led by Maggie Haberman has reported extensively in the *Times* on the Trump White House. The *Washington Post* [www.washingtonpost.com] has a section [“The Monkey Cage”] focusing on Congress [www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/category/congress/]. Other useful on-line sources are *Real Clear Politics* [www.realclearpolitics.com], *Vox* [www.voxl.com], *C-Span* [www.cspan.org], and *Politics1.com* [www.politics1.com].

ADDITIONAL SOURCES:

The literature on the U.S. Congress and American political parties and elections is vast. The following are recommended as additional reference sources, but are only a small sampling of the Political Science literature in this area. Note that there are multiple editions of many of these books. The Hetherington/Larson or Poloni-Staudinger/Wolf books may be particularly useful for students with little background in the field. The Routledge and Bartels anthologies, both published just before the 2016 elections, contain much useful background material and are available on-line.

John H. Aldrich et al, *Change and Continuity in the 2016 Elections*
Harold D. Clarke et al, *Making Political Choices: Canada and the United States*
Roger Davidson et al, *Congress and Its Members*
William H. Flanagan et al, *Political Behavior of the American Electorate*
Paul S. Herrnson, *Congressional Elections: Campaigning at Home and in Washington*
Gary C. Jacobson, *The Politics of Congressional Elections*
Michael Lewis-Beck et al, *The American Voter Revisited*
L. Sandy Maisel & Mark Brewer, *Parties and Elections in America*

Thomas E. Mann & Norman J. Ornstein, *It's Even Worse Than It Looks*
Jeffrey Stonecash, *Understanding American Political Parties*
Steven S. Smith et al, *The American Congress*
David R. Mayhew, *Congress: The Electoral Connection*
James A. Thurber & Jordan Tama (eds), *Rivals for Power*
Joseph A. Pika et al, *The Politics of the Presidency*
Michael Nelson (ed), *The Presidency and the Political System*
Michael Nelson (ed), *The Elections of 2016 (2012, 2008, etc.)*
Marc J. Hetherington & Bruce A. Larson, *Parties, Politics and Public Policy in America*
Lori M. Poloni-Staudinger & Michael R. Wolf, *American Difference*
Routledge FreeBooks, *United States Election Primer*, 2016
Larry M. Bartels (ed.), "Elections in America", *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 667 (September, 2016)

OFFICIAL SOURCES

Elections in the United States are administered by state and local authorities. Web sites maintained by the states are particularly useful sources of information. See, for example, the election information sites maintained by the office of the California Secretary of State [www.sos.ca.gov/elections] or the Maryland State Board of Elections [www.elections.state.md.us]. There are 48 others.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Two essays. See detailed essay instructions. The first essay (25%) will deal with some aspect of any one of the three areas of U.S. public policy scheduled for discussion in the classes of October 16th, 23rd or 30th. The essay should be approximately 6-8 pages in length and should begin with (although not rely exclusively on) the readings listed on the syllabus under the topic chosen. The due date for the first essay is **Tuesday, October 30th**, but students are expected to make a very brief class presentation based on their preliminary work for the essay in one of the three class sessions mentioned above. The second essay (35%) will deal with a topic of your choice falling under one of the four broad areas scheduled for discussion in the classes of November 13th, 20th, 27th and December 4th. It should be approximately 10-12 pages in length, and should address some of the themes found in the core readings for the appropriate class session. Although the second essay is not due until **Tuesday, December 4th**, students should similarly expect to make a short class presentation based on their research in one of the four class sessions commencing on November 13th.

Participation/seminar (20%). Each student will be expected to contribute to and participate in all class discussions, and to make two short class presentations based on research undertaken for the essays (see above).

Final oral exam (20%). An oral exam based on the required readings, seminar presentations, and written work will be scheduled at a mutually agreeable time from **December 5th to 14th**.

COURSE SYLLABUS (* denotes required reading for all students)

September 11th — Introduction: Before and After November 6th

New York Times, *2018 Election Calendar and Results*

[<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/us/elections/calendar-primary-results.html>]

September 18th — Studying Congress and the American Political System

* Lawrence C. Dodd & Bruce I. Oppenheimer, “Congress in the Age of Trump: The 2016 National Elections and Their Aftermath.” *CR*, ch. 18

* Barbara Sinclair, “The New World of U.S. Senators.” *CR*, ch. 1

Marc J. Hetherington & Bruce A. Larson, *Parties, Politics and Public Policy in America*, ch. 5

Steven S. Smith et al, *The American Congress*, ch. 1, 2, 4

Thomas E. Mann & Norman J. Ornstein, *It’s Even Worse Than It Looks*

September 25th — Congress and the Presidency from Obama to Trump

* Joseph Cooper, “The Balance of Power Between the Congress and the President: Issues and Dilemmas.” *CR*, ch. 15

* Sarah Binder, “Legislating in Polarized Times.” *CR*, ch. 8

* Carl Hulse, “Trump’s Next Battle: Keeping These Republican Senators Happy.” *New York Times*, November 26, 2016 (*Q*)

Stephen Schier and Todd Eberley, *The Trump Presidency*

Stephen Skowronek, *Presidential Leadership in Political Time*

James A. Thurber & Jordan Tama (eds.) *Rivals for Power: Presidential-Congressional Relations*, ch. 1, 2, 7

October 2nd — American Political Parties and Electoral Politics in 2018

* Vox, *A Guide to the 2018 Mid-term Elections*

[<https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2018/6/5/17386452/midterm-elections-2018-what-to-know-house-senate>]

* Gary C. Jacobson, “Partisanship, Money and Competition: Elections and the Transformation of Congress since the 1970s.” *CR*, ch. 4

* “The Republican Party: Triumph and Tragedy.” *The Economist*, June 20, 2014 (*Q*)

* “America’s Democrats: Where to Now?” *The Economist*, July 13, 2018 (*Q*)

Gary C. Jacobson, *The Politics of Congressional Elections*, ch. 4-5

Marc J. Hetherington & Bruce A. Larson, *Parties, Politics and Public Policy in America*, ch. 1-2

L. Sandy Maisel & Mark Brewer, *Parties and Elections in America*

October 9th — Polarization and Intraparty Democracy

- * Soren Jordan et al. “Constituency Representation in Congress.” *CR*, ch. 5
- * Matt Grossman & David A. Hopkins, “Ideological Republicans and Group Interest Democrats: The Asymmetry of American Party Politics.” *Perspectives on Politics*, March 2015 (Q)
- * Henry Olsen, “Why the Midterms Won’t Be Won by Playing to the Base.” *New York Times*, August 6, 2018 (Q)

Marc J. Hetherington & Bruce A. Larson, *Parties, Politics and Public Policy in America*, ch. 3
Larry M. Bartels, “Elections in America” and “Failure to Converge: Core Partisans and the Missing Middle in American Electoral Politics”, both in *Annals*, September 2016 (Q)
Theda Skocpol & Vanessa Williamson, *The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism*

October 16th — The Economy and Elections Since 2008

- * Robert S. Erikson and Gerald C. Wright, “Voters, Candidates and Issues in Congressional Elections.” *CR*, ch. 4
- * Andrew Ross Sorkin, “President Obama Weighs His Economic Legacy.” *New York Times*, April 28, 2016 (Q)
- * Thomas M. Holbrook, “Economic Considerations and the 2008 Presidential Election.” *PS*, July 2009 (Q)

Michael Lewis-Beck & Mary Stegmeier, “Economic Determinants of Electoral Outcomes.” *Annual Review of Political Science*, 2000 (Q)
Douglas A. Hibbs, *The American Political Economy*
Herbert Stein, *Presidential Economics: the Making of Economic Policy From Roosevelt to Reagan and Beyond*

October 23rd — Social Policy Issues in 2018 America

- * Russell L. Hanson, “Liberalism and the Course of American Social Welfare Policy.” in Lawrence C. Dodd & Calvin Jillson (eds.) *The Dynamics of American Politics* (Q)
- * Jordan Ragusa, “An Examination of Congressional Efforts to Repeal the Affordable Care Act.” *CR*, ch. 10
- * Sheryl Gay Stolberg & Jonarthan Martin, “Conservative and Liberal Groups Gird for Battle Over Kavanaugh.” *New York Times*, July 10, 2018 (Q)
- * Suzanne Mettler, “The Welfare Boogeyman.” *New York Times*, July 23, 2018 (Q)

Bruce I Oppenheimer, “ANWR and CAFÉ: Frustrating Energy Production and Conservation Initiatives in Congress Over Three Decades.” *CR*, ch. 14
Leslie McCall & Lane Kenworthy, “America’s Social Policy Preferences in the Era of Rising Inequality.” *Perspectives on Politics*, September 2009 (Q)
Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: the Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States*

October 30th — Foreign Policy and National Security

- * John Gerard Ruggie, “The Past as Prologue: Interests, Identity and American Foreign Policy.” *International Security* 1997 (Q)
- * Douglas L. Kriner, “Congress, Public Opinion, and the Political Costs of Waging War.” *CR*, ch. 17
- * Mark Landler, “Trump, the Insurgent, Breaks With 70 Years of American Foreign Policy.” *New York Times*, December 28, 2017 (Q)

Sebastian Rosato & John Schussler, “A Realist Foreign Policy for the United States.”

Perspectives on Politics, December 2011 (Q)

Robert S. Singh, “Change and Continuity in Obama’s Foreign Policy.” in Bert A. Rockman et al, *The Obama Presidency: Appraisals and Prospects* (Q)

Thomas J. McCormick, *America’s Half-Century: U.S. Foreign Policy in the Cold War and After*

November 6th — Election Day: no class

November 13th — Election Retrospective: What Happened and Why

- * Lawrence LeDuc & Richard G. Niemi, “Voting Behavior: Choice and Context.” in Lawrence LeDuc et al, *Comparing Democracies 4: Elections and Voting in a Changing World* (Q)

Costas Panagopoulos, “Campaign Context and Preference Dynamics in U.S. Presidential Elections.” *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties*, May 2012 (Q)

Michael Nelson (ed.), *The Elections of 2016*

John H. Aldrich et al, *Change and Continuity in the 2016 Elections*

Gary C. Jacobson, *The Politics of Congressional Elections*, ch. 6-7

November 20th — Organizing and Managing the 116th Congress

- * Steven S. Smith & Gerald Gamm, “The Dynamics of Party Government in Congress.” *CR*, ch. 7
- * John H. Aldrich & David M. Rohde, “Lending and Reclaiming Power: Majority Leadership in the House Since the 1950s.” *CR*, ch. 2
- * Craig Volden & Alan E. Wiseman, “Legislative Effectiveness and Problem Solving in the U.S. House of Representatives.” *CR*, ch. 11

Peter C. Hanson, “The Endurance of Nonpartisanship in House Appropriations.” *CR*, ch. 12

Alan Abramowitz, “Expect Confrontation, Not Compromise.” *PS*, April 2011 (Q)

Steven S. Smith et al, *The American Congress*, ch. 5-7

John H. Aldrich. “Did Hamilton, Jefferson and Madison ‘Cause’ the U.S. Government Shutdown?” *Perspectives on Politics*, March 2015 (Q)

November 27th— Political Issues and Divisions in the 116th Congress

- * Lawrence C. Dodd & Scot Schraufnagel, “Moderate Polarization and Productivity in Congress: From Harding to Obama.” *CR*, ch. 9
- * Sarah Binder & Forrest Maltzman, “Is Advice and Consent Broken?: The Contentious Politics of Confirming Federal Judges and Justices.” *CR*, ch. 16
- * Gregory Koger, “Filibusters and Majority Rule in the Modern Senate.” *CR*, ch. 13

Rodney E. Hero & Robert R. Preubs, “Black-Latino Relations in Congress: Inter-Minority Group Relations in Institutional Context.” *CR*, ch. 6

Kathryn Pearson, “Demographic Change and the Future of Congress.” *PS*, April 2010 (*Q*)

James A. Thurber & Jordan Tama (eds.) *Rivals for Power: Presidential-Congressional Relations*, ch. 4-6

December 4th— Predicting (?) the Future: The Next Electoral Cycle

- * Lee Drutman, “Political Divisions in 2016 and Beyond.” (*Q*)
- * James E. Campbell et al. “A Recap of the 2016 Election Forecasts.” *PS*, April 2017 (*Q*)
- * “Defining Realignment.” *The Economist*, July 30, 2016 (*Q*)
- * Sean McElwee et al, “The Missing Obama Millions.” *New York Times*, March 10, 2018 (*Q*)
- * David Brooks, “What Is the Democratic Story?” *New York Times*, July 23, 2018 (*Q*)

Larry Bartels, *Presidential Primaries and the Dynamics of Public Choice*

Barbara Norrander, “Presidential Nomination Politics at the Dawn of the 21st Century” in Routledge, *United States Election Primer*, ch 2 (*Q*)

Gary C. Jacobson, “Polarization, Gridlock and Presidential Campaign Politics in 2016.” in *Annals*, September 2016 (*Q*)

December 5th - 14th — Final oral exams (as scheduled)