

Didion's 6072 Syllabus

Legislative Management and Congress

PAD 6072.10 -- Fall Semester

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Course Description

An analysis of Congress as a management system will be undertaken in this course including an examination of its internal administration and its role in formulating federal policy through legislation. Topics will include staffing practices, leadership roles, Congressional rules and procedures, oversight functions, the importance of coalition building and outside influencers.

Course Objectives

1. To acquire an extensive background of knowledge of the United States Congress. Specifically, students will learn about the body's constitutional and historical foundations, and how and why the legislature has changed (structurally and managerially) over time.
2. To understand how Congress makes public policy, what forces affect the legislative process, and the ways in which industry, the White House, federal agencies and nonprofit groups are involved in that process.
3. To understand what a Congressional member faces when he/she comes to Washington for the first time. To be informed on how the basic functions of Congress change when the majority party changes.
4. To practice and apply the research and analytic skills necessary to navigate and manage the legislative process from a variety of different perspectives.

Course Overview

This three-part course analyzes Congress from managerial, political and practical perspectives. In the first part of the course we will examine pressures faced by elected officials involving fundraising, party politics, establishing an office and a presence among peers, committee selection and participation, and electorate expectations. We will evaluate whether the existing electoral process yields a Congress that adequately represents the interests of the United States and analyze suggestions for reform.

The second part of the course turns to policymaking. What role do industries, nonprofits, federal agencies and the White House have in the development and passage of legislation and the policy process? How does the financial budgeting process influence policy development and implementation? Are coalitions and grass roots initiatives productive or counterproductive to the legislative process? What is the role of staff versus the elected Member?

In the final part of the course we will discuss and analyze efforts to reform Congress and the overall policymaking process. We will apply what we learned during class discussions, readings, and lectures from guest speakers to identify and describe specific opportunities for reform. These will include political, financial, structural and procedural concerns in an effort to identify potential remedies.

For each class students will briefly present a current news article that exemplifies the complexities of legislative activities. No duplication please – so be prepared with a backup.

Course Goals

At the end of this course students should be able to: (1) describe and critically evaluate the practical pressures faced by a Congressional Member and the quality of representation produced by the current system of elections, party loyalties and electoral expectations; (2) explain the roll that various interest groups have on the development of policy proposals and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the congressional policymaking process; and (3) critically analyze the impact of proposals to reform Congress.

Required Readings

The following books are available for purchase in the GW bookstore or through Amazon.com.

Walter J. Oleszek, *Congressional Procedures and the Policy Process*, 8th edition (Congressional Quarterly Books, 2004).

David H. Rosenbloom, *Building a Legislative-Centered Public Administration: Congress and the Administrative State, 1946-1999*. (University of Alabama Press, 2000).

Mayer, Kenneth R. and David T. Canon. 1999. *The Dysfunctional Congress? The Individual Roots of an Institutional Dilemma*. Boulder: Westview Press.

Mann, Thomas & Norman J. Ornstein, 2006. *The Broken Branch, How Congress Is Failing America and How to Get It Back on Track*. Oxford University Press 2006.

Kennedy, Sheila & David Schultz, 2011, American Public Service, Constitutional & Ethical Foundations, Jones & Bartlett Learning International.

Davidson, Oleszek, Lee, Schickler, 2014, *Congress And Its Members*, 14th. Edition Sage Publications Inc.

As appropriate, the professor will post on Blackboard other relevant writings (such as newspaper articles) depending on current events as they emerge.

Course Requirements

In addition to your class participation, there are three assignments for this course: A "practical" assignment; a "theory" assignment; and an "applied" assignment. These papers should draw, in part, on course readings and incorporate outside readings and activities. They are as follows, and will be discussed further in class.

- **Practical Assignment:** Attend a congressional committee hearing which you will evaluate in light of criteria that will be discussed during the second class meeting. This short paper (approximately 7 pages) is a formal, analytical essay. You should attend the hearing as soon as possible, so that you can incorporate some of the concepts and readings we will be discussing. The professor will distribute a guidance sheet for this assignment in class on September 10. This assignment is due at the beginning of class on October 1.
- **Theory Assignment:** This will take the form of a take home exam and will consist of "Identifications" (in which you must briefly identify the term and state its significance) and essays (one essay will be mandatory; the other essay will provide choice). The emphasis for this exam is on concepts, ideas and theory and on your ability to synthesize and analyze. This will be distributed on October 29 and is due at the beginning of class on November 19.
- **Applied Assignment:** This assignment will draw on course readings and your own outside research. Choose a piece of current legislation. You are to act as consultant to a "leader" (broadly defined). Advise the leader on how best to manage legislation (from her or his perspective) and build a coalition. What kind of policy is proposed (based on the typologies discussed this semester)? What are the implications of this type of policy? What is your best strategic advice to the leader? The instructor will distribute a guidance sheet for this assignment in class on November 12. This is due at the beginning of class on December 10.

Participation & Readings

This will be discussed extensively during the first class session. Briefly, however, participation means coming to every class, on time and prepared to ask and answer questions as well as engage in dialogue and debate with your classmates. This, by definition, also includes reading and thinking critically about assigned works and staying up-to-date on current legislative affairs. There may be unannounced short tests and/or written reading summaries that relate directly to the assigned readings.

Grades

Your grades for PAD 6072 will be determined on the following basis:

Practical Assignment	20%
Theory Assignment	25%
Applied Assignment	25%
Participation & Readings	30%

Policies in Public Administration and Public Policy Courses

1. Incompletes: A student must consult with the instructor to obtain a grade of I (incomplete) no later than the last day of classes in a semester. At that time, the student and instructor will both sign the CCAS contract for incompletes and submit a copy to the School Director. Please consult the SPPPA Student Handbook or visit home.gwu.edu/~moses/Incompletes.doc for the complete CCAS policy on incompletes.
2. Submission of Written Work Products Outside of the Classroom: It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that an instructor receives each written assignment. Students can submit written work electronically only with the express permission of the instructor.
3. Submission of Written Work Products after Due Date: Policy on Late Work: All work must be turned in by the assigned due date in order to receive full credit for that assignment, unless an exception is expressly made by the instructor.
4. Academic Honesty: Please consult the “policies” section of the GW student handbook for the George Washington University Code of Academic Integrity. Note especially the definition of plagiarism: “intentionally representing the words, ideas, or sequence of ideas of another as one’s own in any academic exercise; failure to attribute any of the following: quotations, paraphrases, or borrowed information.” All examinations, papers, and other graded work products and assignments are to be completed in conformance with the George Washington University Code of Academic Integrity.

5. Changing Grades After Completion of Course: No changes can be made in grades after the conclusion of the semester, other than in cases of clerical error.

6. The Syllabus: This syllabus is a guide to the course for the student. Sound educational practice requires flexibility and the instructor may therefore, at her/his discretion, change content and requirements during the semester.

CLASS SESSIONS

(This schedule is as accurate as possible. Any changes will be announced.)

Week 1 (Aug. 27) FIRST DAY OF CLASS

INTRODUCTION TO COURSE

Class Plan:

- Introduction of instructor
- Expectations
- Introduction of students
- Questions and answers

Week 2 (Sept. 3) NO CLASSES – LABOR DAY

Week 3 (Sept. 10) CONSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT OF CONGRESS

Class Plan:

- What are the purposes of Congressional rules?
- Is the overlap of powers *fundamental* to national decision-making?
- To what extent are local concerns prevalent in Congressional proceedings?
- How are new communication technologies changing Congress, Congressional management and the relationships between Members and organized and un-organized constituents?

Readings Due:

- Oleszek, Chapters 1 and 10
- The Legislative Process—available at <http://thomas.loc.gov/home/lawsmade.toc.html>
- Mann & Orenstein, Chapter 2
- Kennedy & Schultz, Chapters 3 & 4

Assignment Handed Out: Practical Assignment

Week 4 (Sept. 17) CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET PROCESS & POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Class Plan:

- Is policy made before or after the budgeting process?
- What are the different ways in which policy is influenced by budgeting?
- Describe the steps of budgeting from Congressional, and Administrative perspectives.
- What are the links and connections between budget formulation and committee staff activities?
- Who do you think has greater influence over policy development -- Congressional committee staff, elected Members of Congress, agency leaders, OMB, public interest groups or other groups?

Readings Due:

- Oleszek, Chapters 2 & 3
- Rosenbloom, Chapter 1
- Kennedy & Schultz, Chapters 6 & 7
- Davidson, Oleszek & Lee, Chapter 11

Week 5 (Sept. 24) ATTEND HEARINGS & WORK ON PRACTICAL ASSIGNMENT

Week 6 (Oct. 1) BUDGET PROCESS & POLICY DEVELOPMENT (continued)

Class Plan:

- How has the budget process changed over the last 50 years?
- What caused the process to change?
- What causes delays in budget votes?
- Discuss budgeting terms and their “strategic” use.

Readings Due:

- Rosenbloom, Chapter 2 & 3
- Oleszek, Chapter 4
- Davidson, Oleszek & Lee, Chapter 10 & 14

Assignment Due: Practical Assignment

Week 7 (Oct. 8) GWU Fall Break – No Classes

Week 8 (Oct. 15) THE GOOD, THE BAD & THE U.S. CONGRESS OR WHY THE CYNICS ARE WRONG

Guest Speaker: Julie Manes
Director of Government Relations
Red Cross

Week 9 (Oct. 22) ORGANIZING CONGRESS

Class Plan:

- Discussion of practical assignment.
- Why is the committee system used and how is it structured?
- How has Congress's organizational structure changed over time and what are the implications of these changes for policy formulation and implementation?
- What has been the impact of change on committees, their members, and their staff?
- What are the various types of committees?

Readings Due:

- Mayer & Cannon, Chapter 2
- Oleszek, Chapter 5

Week 10 (Oct. 29) ORGANIZING CONGRESS (continued)

Class Plan:

- Are committees centralized or decentralized?
- What does the internal distribution of committee power look like?
- What are the dynamics of the relationship between the committee and the parent chamber?
- Are committee staffs "too powerful"?

Week 11 (Oct. 29) ORGANIZING AND MANAGING THE CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE

Guest Speaker: Jared J. Brown (JJ)
President, Think Policy Consulting with nearly two decades of policymaking for Senator Hatch (R-UT).

Readings Due: Congressional Management Foundation, *Setting Course: A Congressional Management Guide, Edition for the 110th Congress*, chapters 12, 13, 14, and 15—on reserve at Gelman Library.

Assignment Handed Out: Theory Assignment

Week 12 (Nov. 5) MANAGING RULES AND PROCEDURES

Class Plan:

- How are decisions about legislation made on the House floor?
- How does this compare and/or contrast with decision making on the floor of the Senate?
- What is the nature of conference committees?
- How are differences between the House and the Senate reconciled?

Readings Due:

- Oleszek, Chapters 6, 7 & 8
- Davidson, Oleszek & Lee, Chapter 7 & 8

Week 13 (Nov. 12) BUILDING AND MANAGING COALITIONS

Class Plan:

- What are the strategies used in building and managing Congressional and advocacy coalitions?
- What is the nature of leadership in this context?
- Which types of policies call for which type of strategy?
- What is "grassroots activism" and how does it differ from "grass tops"? Can it be manufactured?

Readings Due:

- Kennedy & Schultz, Chapters 8
- Davidson, Oleszek & Lee, Chapter 13

Assignment Handed Out: Applied Assignment via Blackboard

Week 14 (Nov. 19) CONGRESSIONAL REFORM

Guest Speaker: Kelly Johnson
Vice President, Government Affairs
Campbell Soup

- Why do we need reform?
- What pressures outside of Congress have taken place to cause people to think that reform is needed?
- What is so bad about the current system? Could change be worse?

Readings Due:

- Mayer & Cannon, Chapters 3, 4 & 5
- Davidson, Oleszek & Lee, Chapter 16

Assignment Due: Theory Assignment

- Week 15 (Nov. 26) COALITION BUILDING SIMULATION
- We will use this class to conduct a coalition building exercise around a piece of actual legislation. Students will receive instructions as well as the piece of legislation in class.

Readings Due:

- There are no formal readings for this exercise. In order for you to be an active and effective participant, and in order for this to be a meaningful exercise, you will need to be familiar with current major legislative initiatives in Congress.

- Week 16 (Dec. 3) CONGRESSIONAL REFORM (continued)

Class Lecturer: TBD Charles Johnson III
Parliamentarian of the U.S. House of
Representatives (1994-2004) retired.

Class Plan:

- What is Legislative centered public administration?
- What is Congress's role in federal administration?
- How has Congress achieved this role?
- What are the implications for theory and practice of public administration?

Readings Due:

- Mann & Ornstein, Chapters 3 & 4
- Rosenbloom, Chapters 4 & 5

Assignment Due: Applied Assignment Due

- Week 17 (Dec. 10) Last Day of Classes

LEGISLATIVE-ADMINISTRATIVE RELATIONS & OVERSIGHT
Class Plan:

- Why is Congressional oversight important... or not?
- What are the sources of tension between Congressional committees and the Administration?
- How has oversight changed?
- How is oversight accomplished?
- What is the role of external actors in the oversight process?
- Is oversight a neutral process?
- How does all of this relate to what you read for last week's class?

Readings Due: Oleszek, Chapter 9

Hand Back Graded Applied Assignment.