

POLS 4211: LEGISLATIVE POLITICS & BEHAVIOR

TR 11:00 am - 12:15 pm

A & S 2-36



Dr. Keith Lee

A & S 2-09

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Office Hours:

Tuesday & Thursday

9:00 - 10:30 am; 1:00-2:00 pm

or by appointment.

Course Description:

Many people disapprove of the way “[Congress handles its job](#),” but very few fully understand or appreciate the complexity of Congress. Hence, most people love their individual member of Congress, but disapprove of the institution as a whole ([Fenno’s Paradox](#)). This course will explore how Congress as an institution functions in our political system so that you can better understand and articulate this paradox and hopefully develop a greater appreciation for such a spectacular institution. At its core, Congress embodies the American tradition of rugged individualism coupled with collective action.

We will begin the class with a brief introduction of the institution (week 1) followed by a survey of historical change in Congress (week 2). Weeks 3 and 4 will be devoted to Congressional campaigns and elections, always a timely topic, along with a conversation about how members of Congress function at home compared to how they function in D.C. The second part of the class will focus on the partisan divide in Congress and how, despite this, Congress can still be effective in legislating and decision making (weeks 6 - 9). Next, we will cover Congress’s role in the federal system, particularly how it shares power with two other branches of government and navigates public opinion/organized interests (weeks 11-14). Finally, we will spend a week discussing the current Congress and how Congress might evolve, ending our semester long conversation about Congress in Trump’s America.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Recognize the collective action dilemma Congress faces and how it contributes to Fenno’s Paradox
2. Compare a member of Congress’s “Home Style” and “Hill Style”
3. Hypothesize about the future of Congress by analyzing Congressional history
4. Synthesize Congress’s role in our federal system and describe the relationship between Congress, public opinion, and organized interests

Required Textbooks:

Davidson et al. *Congress and its Members*, 16th Edition
Dodd & Oppenheimer *Congress Reconsidered*, 11th Edition

Course Requirements:

- **Section Exams:** There will be three exams over the course of the semester. Each exam will only assess the prior 4 weeks of course content. The exams will be a combination of multiple choice and short answer questions.
- **Quizzes:** There will be periodic reading quizzes. Students should refer to the calendar below to ensure they are prepared for the possibility of a quiz. Reading quizzes can come from any chapter previously covered since the start of class (for section I) or since the last exam (for section II and III).
- **Short Essay:** You will draft two short essays (500-750 words) during the course of the semester. A list of questions will be posted in GeorgiaView and you will choose two of the questions to answer in essay form.
- **Final Exam:** There will be a two-hour in-class final exam administered on **Tuesday, December 12 from 10:30 am - 12:45 pm**. Students with an A in the course prior to the final exam will be allowed to exempt the final exam.
- **Extra Credit:** I do give extra credit. However, you **must** complete all assignments in order for extra credit to be added to your grade. In other words, to receive *extra* credit you must do all of the *regular* credit.

Grade Distribution:

Quizzes	15%
Short Essay 1	10%
Short Essay 2	10%
Section I Exam	15%
Section II Exam	15%
Section II Exam	15%
Final Exam	20%
<hr/> Total	<hr/> 100%

Letter Grade Distribution:

≥ 90 points	A
80 points - 89 points	B
70 points - 79 points	C
60 points - 69 points	D
≤ 60	F

Course Policies:

- **Office Hours and Contact:** Office hours are stated on the front page of the syllabus. I will be in my office to assist students during the times listed UNLESS an emergency arises in which case I will post an announcement to GeorgiaView. Students should contact me via GeorgiaView for all course related issues. However, you should use the email address on the front page of the syllabus to contact me regarding other matters, e.g., letter of recommendation, future course offerings, research opportunities, etc.
- **Late Policy:** No assignments will be accepted after the due date. Every assignment will be posted with ample time to complete them, thus a medical/family emergency on the due date is not an acceptable excuse. Get your work done early and you should not have any issues.
- **Attendance and Absences:** Students can miss two classes without penalty. Each additional missed class will result in a 5 point deduction in the course.
- **Classroom Behavior:** Instructors have the responsibility to set and maintain standards of classroom behavior appropriate to the discipline and method of teaching. Students may not engage in any activity which the instructor deems disruptive or counterproductive to the goals of the class, especially speaking while others are speaking. Disruptive behavior will result in the student being asked to leave.
- **Technology:** I have banned technology from my classrooms in the past, but I know how valuable technology can be in the note taking and learning process. Therefore, I am going to allow electronic devices in the classroom. However, I reserve the right to revoke this privilege in the event that it becomes a problem. Please sit in the back of the classroom if you are going to be using your laptop so that you do not distract your neighbor behind you when you inevitably stumble on Twitter, Reddit, Tumblr, and any other sites that may tempt you.
- **Cheating:** Cheating, which includes plagiarism, will result in a 0 for the assignment. Plagiarism prevention will be used for the short essay assignments. Cheating on exams will result in a 0 for the exam.

Georgia College Policies

- **Religious Observance Policy:** Students are permitted to miss class in observance of religious holidays and other activities observed by a religious group of which the student is a member without academic penalty. Exercising of one's rights under this policy is subject to the GC Honor Code. Students who miss class in observance of a religious holiday or event are required to make up the coursework missed as a result from the absence. The nature of the make-up assignments and the deadline for completion of such assignments are at the sole discretion of the instructor. Failure to follow the prescribed procedures voids all student rights under this policy.
- **Assistance for Student Needs Related to Disability:** If you have a disability as described by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504, you may be eligible to receive accommodations to assist in programmatic and physical accessibility. Disability Services can assist you in formulating a reasonable accommodation plan and in providing support in developing appropriate accommodations to ensure equal access to all GC programs and facilities. Course requirements will not be waived, but accommodations may assist you in meeting the requirements. For documentation requirements and for additional information, we recommend that you contact Disability Services located in Lanier Hall at 478-445-5931.
- **Student Rating of Instruction Survey:** Near the end of the semester, you will be asked to complete an online survey. Your responses are valued because they give important feedback to instructors to help improve student learning. All responses are completely confidential and your name is not stored with your responses in any way.
- **Academic Honesty:** The integrity of students and their written and oral work is a critical component of the academic process. The submission of someone else's work as one's own is plagiarism and will be dealt with using the procedures outlined in the GC Catalog. Remember that allowing another student to copy one's own work violates standards of academic integrity.
- **Fire Drills:** Fire drills will be conducted annually. In the event of a fire alarm, students will exit the building in a quick and orderly manner through the nearest hallway exit. Learn the floor plan and exits of the building. Do not use elevators. If you encounter heavy smoke, crawl on the floor so as to gain fresh air. Assist disabled persons and others if possible without endangering your own life. Assemble for a head count on the front lawn of main campus or other designated assembly area.
- **Electronic Recording Policy:** Electronic video and/or audio recording is not permitted during any class unless the student obtains permission from the instructor and every student present. If permission is granted, any distribution of the recording is prohibited. Violation of this policy is grounds for removal from the class and referral for disciplinary action. Students granted specific electronic recording accommodations from Disability Services do not require special permission; however, the instructor must be notified. Any distribution is prohibited.

Course Outline:

CM = Congress and its Members; **CR** = Congress Reconsidered

Week 1: Introduction to the Course

Tuesday 8/22: Course Introduction

Reading: Syllabus

Thursday 8/24: In Search of the Two Congresses

Reading: Chapters 1 - 2 (CM)

Week 2: Patterns and Dynamics of Congressional Change

Tuesday 8/29: The New World of U.S. Senators

Reading: Chapter 1 (CR)

Thursday 8/31: Leading and Reclaiming Power: Majority Leadership in the House

Reading: Chapter 2 (CR)

Week 3: Elections, Constituencies, and Representation

Tuesday 9/5: Recruitment and Candidacy

Reading: Chapters 3 - 4 (CM)

Thursday 9/7: Elections

Reading: Chapters 3 - 4 (CR)

Week 4: Representation

Tuesday 9/12: Constituency Representation

Reading: Chapters 5 - 6 (CR)

Thursday 8/14: Hill and Home Style

Reading: Chapter 5 (CM)

Week 5: Exam Week

Tuesday 9/19: Exam Review

Reading: Review Chapters 1 - 5 (CM) and 1 - 6 (CR)

Thursday 8/21: Exam Day

Reading: Review Chapters 1 - 5 (CM) and 1 - 6 (CR)

Week 6: Partisanship in Congress

Tuesday 9/26: The Dynamics of Party Government in Congress
Reading: Chapters 7 - 8 (CR)

Thursday 9/28: Partisanship and Policy
Reading: Chapters 9-10 (CR)

Week 7: Parties and Committees

Tuesday 10/3: Leaders and Parties in Congress
Reading: Chapter 6 (CM)

Thursday 10/5: Committees
Reading: Chapter 7 (CM)

Week 8: Fall Break

Fall Break on Tuesday October 10 – No Class
Short Essay 1 Due Sunday October 15 by 9 pm

Tuesday 10/10: Fall Break
Reading: None

Thursday 10/12: Congressional Rules and Procedures
Reading: Chapters 8 (CM) and 13 (CR)

Week 9: Legislative Effectiveness and Decision Making

Last day to drop with a “W” is Thursday October 19

Tuesday 10/17: Legislative Effectiveness
Reading: Chapters 11 - 12 (CR)

Thursday 10/19: Decision Making
Reading: Chapter 9 (CM)

Week 10: Exam Week

Section II Exam Thursday October 26

Tuesday 10/24: Exam Review
Reading: Review Chapters 6 - 9 (CM) and 7 - 13 (CR)

Thursday 10/26: Exam Day
Reading: Review Chapters 6 - 9 (CM) and 7 - 13 (CR)

Week 11: Separation of Powers

Tuesday 10/31: Congress and the President
Reading: Chapter 10 (CM) and 15 (CR)

Thursday 11/2: Congress and the Courts
Reading: Chapter 12 (CM) and 16 (CR)

Week 12: Congress and the Bureaucracy

GPSA Thursday November 9 – No Class

Tuesday 11/7: Congress and the Bureaucracy
Reading: Chapter 11 (CM)

Thursday 11/9: GPSA
Reading: None

Week 13: Congress, Organized Interests, and Policy Making

Tuesday 11/14: Congress and Organized Interests
Reading: Chapter 14 (CM) and 17 (CR)

Thursday 11/16: Policy Making
Reading: Chapters 14 - 15 (CM)

Week 14: Thanksgiving – NO CLASS; Give Thanks!

Week 15: Course Wrap Up

Short Essay 2 Due Sunday December 3 by 9 pm

Tuesday 11/28: The Two Congresses and the American People
Reading: Chapter 16 (CM)

Thursday 11/30: Congress in the Age of Trump
Reading: Chapter 18 (CR)

Week 16: Exam Week

Section III Exam Thursday December 7

Tuesday 12/5: Exam Review
Reading: Review Chapters 10 - 16 (CM) and 15 - 18 (CR)

Thursday 12/7: Exam Day
Reading: Review Chapters 10 - 16 (CM) and 15 - 18 (CR)