

# POLS 3210: United States Congress

Dr. Keith E. Lee Jr.

Spring 2021

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Class Hours: MWF 10:00-10:50 am

Class Room: West Hall 2308

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## 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.

## Books

There are no required books for this class. Required readings will be posted to BlazeView.

## Course Assignments

Three Exams (Dates on Calendar Below)

Legislative History Paper

## Grading

Each exam and the paper are worth 25% of your final grade.

## Course Policies:

- **Office Hours and Contact:** Office hours are stated on the front page of the syllabus. Students should use my email address on the first page of the syllabus to contact me.
- **Attendance and Absences:** There is not an attendance policy for this course, however it is the student's responsibility to keep up with the course schedule.
- **Academic Dishonesty:** Cheating, including plagiarism, will result in an "F" in the course.
- **Changes to the Syllabus:** I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus at any time. Students will be notified when changes are made.
- **Classroom Behavior:** Disruptive behavior will be handled immediately. The first offense will be a warning and you will be asked to leave the class. The second offense will result in a reduction in your final letter grade.

## University Required Syllabus Statements

Students with disabilities who are experiencing barriers in this course may contact the Access Office for assistance in determining and implementing reasonable accommodations. The access Office is located in Farbar Hall. The phone numbers are 229-245-2498 (V), 229-375-5871. For more information, please visit VSU's Access Office or email: [access@valdosta.edu](mailto:access@valdosta.edu).

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By taking this course, you agree that all required course work may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin, a tool within BlazeVIEW. For more information on the use of Turnitin at VSU see Turnitin for Students.

## **Class Schedule**

**Week 01, 01/11 - 01/15:** Course Introduction

**Week 02, 01/18 - 01/22:** New Institutionalism, APD, and the Study of Congress

- Monday - MLK Holiday (University Closed)

**Week 03, 01/25 - 01/29:** American Legislative Development, 1780s-1900s

**Week 04, 02/01 - 02/05:** American Legislative Development, 1910s-Present

**Week 05, 02/08 - 02/12:** Exam Week

- Friday - Exam I

**Week 06, 02/15 - 02/19:** Elections

**Week 07, 02/22 - 02/26:** Candidates, Voters, and Representation

**Week 08, 03/01 - 03/05:** Parties and Leaders

**Week 09, 03/08 - 03/12:** Conditional Party Government and Cartel Theory

**Week 10, 03/15 - 03/19:** Exam Week

- Wednesday - University Mandated Wellness Day
- Friday - Exam II

**Week 11, 03/22 - 03/26:** Committees

**Week 12, 03/29 - 04/02:** Policymaking

- Thursday - Legislative History Paper Due by 5:00pm
- Friday - University Mandated Wellness Day

**Week 13, 04/05 - 04/09:** Analyzing Congress - Spatial Voting Theory

**Week 14, 04/12 - 04/16:** Analyzing Congress - Salience and Sophistication

**Week 15, 04/19 - 04/23:** Presentation Week I

- Monday - Exam III

**Week 16, 04/26 - 04/30:** Presentation Week II

**Week 17, 05/03 - 05/07:**

- Monday - University Mandated Reading Day