

COURSE SYLLABUS
POLI 391C: CONGRESS AND THE PRESIDENCY

Fall 2007
Tu Th 2:00 – 3:15
006 Gambrell Hall
University of South Carolina

Professor Charles J. Finocchiaro
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Course Webpage: <https://blackboard.sc.edu/>

COURSE OVERVIEW:

Many observers describe contemporary American politics as exhibiting high levels of polarization. Nowhere is this more evident than in the halls of Congress and the interactions between Congress and the President. The focus of this course is the numerous ways in which members of Congress and the President interact with one another. As such, most of our discussion will center on the interplay between the two branches over the extent of their constitutional powers. Students who successfully complete the course will be able to describe the primary constitutional powers ascribed to each branch, as well as the areas of dispute over the same. Additionally, students will be exposed to some of the methods of political science as applied to these topics by reading and critically synthesizing the key findings of recent research, in the process developing analytic skills that can be applied to contemporary political events.

COURSE MATERIALS:

Reading assignments will be drawn primarily from three assigned books, along with a few articles and excerpts available on Blackboard. Please bear in mind that readings may be added or dropped and the syllabus/schedule may be altered at the instructor's discretion.

Bond, Jon R., and Richard Fleisher, eds. 2000. *Polarized Politics: Congress and the President in a Partisan Era*. Washington, DC: CQ Press. ISBN: 1-56802-493-2

Fisher, Louis. 2007. *Constitutional Conflicts between Congress and the President*, 5th ed. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas. ISBN: 978-0-7006-1534-6

LeLoup, Lance T., and Steven A. Shull. 2003. *The President and Congress: Collaboration and Combat in National Policymaking*, 2nd ed. New York: Longman. ISBN: 0-321-10041-7

COURSE EVALUATION:

Grades for the course will be based largely on two exams. The midterm exam will comprise 30% of the course grade, while the final examination will contribute 45%. The remainder of the grade will be based on brief papers and presentations assigned during the semester (20%), as well as occasional unannounced quizzes (5%). The papers will form the basis of class discussion of both recent research and current events dealing with the subject for that particularly day. Students are expected to attend class regularly, and to come to class having done the assigned readings for the day and prepared to discuss them. This includes being able to identify the key argument and findings, discuss the implications, and identify the evidence, methods, and potential shortcomings. In accordance with university policy,

absence from more than 10 percent of scheduled classes is excessive, and may result in the reduction of one letter grade for the course.

Each exam and assignment will be graded numerically, with scores and approximate letter grades posted on Blackboard so that students know where they stand throughout the semester.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY, CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE, MAKE-UPS, & ACCESSIBILITY:

Students are expected to practice the highest possible standards of academic integrity. Any deviation from this expectation will result in a minimum of your failing the assignment, and may result in additional, more severe disciplinary measures up to and including referring you to the Office of Academic Integrity. Violations of the University's Honor Code include, but are not limited to, improper citation of sources, using another student's work, and any other form of academic misrepresentation. Also, students are expected to conduct themselves in a professional and civil manner. This includes avoiding disruptive activity by arriving to class on time, turning off cell phones, etc. For more information, see the Carolina Community Student Handbook (<http://www.sa.sc.edu/carolinacommunity/>).

It is imperative that students plan on taking each exam at its scheduled time. Makeup exams will **not** be offered except under the most extreme circumstances, involving events of an unforeseen nature—i.e., personal illness, death of an immediate family member, and incidents of similar gravity. Written documentation and advance notice must be provided.

Any student with a documented disability should contact the Office of Student Disability Services at 777-6142 to make arrangements for appropriate accommodations.

OFFICE HOURS:

Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:00 to 12:30

COURSE SCHEDULE*:

DATE	TOPIC	READING
8/23	Introduction to Course	
	<i>The Political Landscape</i>	
8/28	Separation of Powers	Fisher: Ch. 1
8/30	NO CLASS – American Political Science Association Conference	
9/4	Polarization in American National Government	B&F: Ch. 1
9/6	Polarization in American National Government	B&F: Ch. 2
9/11	Polarization in American National Government	B&F: Ch. 7
9/13	Partisanship in the U.S. Congress	B&F: Ch. 3
9/18	The Polarizing Presidency	Blackboard: Jacobson 1, 8

DATE	TOPIC	READING
<i>Inter-branch Competition Over Constitutional Powers</i>		
9/20	Bureaucratic & Judicial Staffing	Fisher: Ch. 2
9/25	Bureaucratic & Judicial Staffing	Fisher: Ch. 3
9/27	Oversight	Fisher: Ch. 6
10/2	Oversight	Blackboard: McCubbins
10/4	Fiscal Policy	Fisher: Ch. 7
10/9	MIDTERM EXAM	
10/11	NO CLASS – University Holiday (Fall Break)	
10/16	Fiscal Policy	L&S: Ch. 7
10/18	Foreign Policy	L&S: Ch. 5
10/23	Foreign Policy	Fisher: Ch. 8
10/25	War Power	Fisher: Ch. 9
10/30	War Power	Blackboard: Fisher
<i>The Legislative Power & Patterns of Policymaking</i>		
11/1	Policymaking	L&S: Ch. 1
11/6	Policymaking	L&S: Ch. 2
11/8	Presidential Leadership	L&S: Ch. 3
11/13	Presidential Leadership	B&F: Ch. 6
11/15	Presidential Leadership	B&F: Ch. 8
11/20	Legislative Politics	Fisher: Ch. 4
11/22	NO CLASS – University Holiday (Thanksgiving Recess)	
11/27	Legislative Politics	Fisher: Ch. 5
11/29	Civil Rights	L&S: Ch. 6
12/4	Social Welfare	L&S: Ch. 8
12/6	Course Debrief (last day of class)	
12/11	FINAL EXAM (2pm)	

* Any changes to the syllabus or schedule will be posted on Blackboard