**CONGRESSIONAL POLITICS**

POL: 790:304:01 Instructor: Nicole M. Bizzoco, MA

Rutgers University Office Hours: Tues / Thurs 1:15 – 2:15PM

Fall 2014 Office: 303 Hickman Hall

Class Hours: Tuesday / Thursday, 4:30 – 5:50PM Email: [nmb130@rutgers.edu](mailto:nmb130@rutgers.edu)

Room: Van Dyck Hall, Room 211

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

The purpose of the course is to learn about the history, development and current state of Congress. The course will examine various internal (i.e. institutional rules and procedures) and external (i.e. elections, interest groups) dimensions of the Congress, as well as focus on the policy process and examine the interaction of legislative branch with other political actors. The general goals of the course are: (1) to provide an understanding of the historical foundations of the modern Congress; (2) provide knowledge about the complex rules, procedures and structures that dictate Congressional functioning and; (3) enable students to develop a more thorough understanding of the American political system as a whole, by examining the interrelationships between Congress and other government actors throughout the policymaking process.

**REQUIRED TEXTS**

1. Davidson, Oleszek, Lee & Schickler (2013), *Congress and Its Members*, 14th edition, CQ Press.
2. Additional reading selections posted to Sakai

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADING**

Your final grade is a product of three components:

1. **Two Exams (70% combined):** 
   1. **Midterm Exam (35%):** consisting of short answer and application (essay) questions
   2. **Final (35%):** non-cumulative, same general format as midterm
2. **Critical Analysis Paper (30%):** Students are required to complete a **10-12** page (double-spaced) paper which critically analyzes a topic related to Congressional politics. Paper topic to be submitted to instructor for approval via Sakai by **November 4th.**

\*NOTE: One extra-credit opportunity, worth 5 pts on whichever exam you receive a lower score on, is available in November. See course schedule for deadline, details will be provided in class.\*

**MAKE-UP EXAMS**

If for any legitimate reason (medical or family emergency) you are unable to take an exam as regularly scheduled, you must obtain a note from your Dean in order to take a make-up exam and contact me immediately to let me know that you are unable to take the exam as scheduled. Make-up exams apply to emergency situations ONLY. No exceptions to this policy will be made.

**CLASS CONDUCT**

The classroom is a special environment in which students and faculty come together to promote learning and growth. It is essential to this learning environment that respect for the right of others seeking to learn, respect for the professionalism of the instructor, and the general goals of academic freedom are maintained. *Respectful* expression of individual opinions related to the course discussions is greatly encouraged. Student conduct which disrupts the learning process, will not be tolerated and may lead to disciplinary action or removal from class per university policy.

**Plagiarism and Cheating**

Plagiarism and cheating are serious offenses at Rutgers. The minimum punishment is the receipt of a grade of an F in the course.. For further information you can consult the university’s policy

<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/files/documents/AI_Policy_9_01_2011.pdf>

Section II specifically discusses the definitions of cheating and plagiarism. If you any questions concerning academic writing, see the Rutgers Learning Center, or come to my office hours.

**COURSE WEBSITE - SAKAI**

Our class Sakai website will have a variety of resources to help you throughout the semester. Here you will find assigned readings that are not in the text book, supplemental recommended readings, and lecture notes (found in the “Resource” section). The Sakai site also contains a discussion forum and chat room. Please use these areas to post materials you may find to be helpful to others as well as any questions you may have about the course. If you have a question, chances are that other people will as well, so please post them in the chat room so everyone can benefit from them. I check the chat room regularly and will answer any questions then.

To access the class Sakai website, (1) sign on to sakai.rutgers.edu, (2) sign in using your RU screen name, and (3) click on the class tab at the top of the page.

**COURSE OUTLINE AND ASSIGNMENTS**

**Week 1 (Sept 2 & 4)**

COURSE INTRODUCTION / HISTORY OF THE INSTITUTION

\*No required reading for Week1, though some short recommended readings will be available on Sakai.

**Week 2 (Sept 9 & 11)**

THE US CONGRESS - OVERVIEW AND FOUNDATIONS

Required Readings

Davidson et al, Chps. 1 & 2

**Week 3 (Sept 16 & 18)**

CONGRESSIONAL RECRUITMENT & ELECTIONS

Required Readings

Davidson et al, Chps 3& 4

**Week 4 (Sept 23 & 25)**

REPRESENTATION – WHO CONGRESS REPRESENTS, AND HOW

Required Readings

Readings for this week available via Sakai under “Week 4” in Resources

**Week 5 (Sept 30 & Oct 2)**

HILL VS. HOME STYLES

Required Readings

Davidson et al, Ch.5

Fenno article, on Sakai

**Week 6 (Oct 7 & 9)**

LEADERSHIP AND PARTIES IN CONGRESS

Required Reading

Davidson et al, Ch. 6

**Week 7 (Oct 14 & 16)**

COMMITTEES

Required Readings

Davidson et al, Ch. 7

Committee articles on Sakai

**Week 8 (Oct 21 & 23)**

\*No required readings this week

**Tuesday: Exam review**

**Thursday: MIDTERM EXAM**

**Week 9 – (Oct 28 & 30)**

CONGRESSIONAL RULES / DELIBERATION

Required Readings

Davidson et al, Chps. 8 & 9

**Week 10 (Nov 4 & 6)**

CONGRESSIONAL – PRESIDENTIAL RELATIONS

Required Readings

Davidson et al, Ch. 10

Selections from *Veto Bargaining* and Executive Orders article (all on Sakai)

**Week 11 (Nov 11 & 13)**

CONGRESS AND THE BUREAUCRACY / CONGRESS AND THE COURTS

Required Readings

Davidson et al, Chps 11 & 12

**Week 12 (Nov 18 & 20)**

CONGRESS AND INTEREST GROUPS / CONGRESSIONAL BUDGETS AND DOMESTIC

POLICYMAKING

Required Readings

Davidson, Chps 13 & 14

Bizzoco – The Intersection of Presidential “Going Public,” Interest Groups and Congress (paper/presentation on Sakai)

\*Extra credit opportunity TOMORROW, Nov. 21st. Former Senator Alan Simpson, Scott Hall 135, 11:30AM\*

**Week 13 (Nov 25 / No Class Thursday Nov 27 – Thanksgiving break)**

CONGRESS, FOREIGN POLICY, AND MATTERS OF NATIONAL SECURITY

Required Readings

DAVIDSON, Ch. 15

Additional War Powers readings on Sakai

**Week 14 (Dec 2 & 4)**

A GRIDLOCKED CONGRESS AND THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Required Readings:

Davidson Ch. 16

Additional Readings on Sakai

**Week 15 (Dec 9/ No class Thursday Dec 11 – Reading day**

**FINAL EXAM REVIEW**

***CRITICAL ANALYSIS PAPER DUE* TODAY, Dec 9th, by MIDNIGHT via Sakai!!!!**

**FINAL EXAM: MONDAY, DECEMBER 19th, 8:00AM – 11:00AM**