

POLI 790 - INDEPENDENT STUDY
 READINGS ON CONGRESS
 Three Credits
 Spring 2024

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION AND ACCESSIBILITY

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Email is the best way to contact me. Please include "POLI 790" in the subject line to make sure the email does not get lost. Allow 24 hours for a response during the week (Monday-Thursday) and 48 hours during the weekend (Friday-Sunday).

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course is designed to offer an overview into different parts of the literature on the American legislature. You will be reading and critiquing contemporary scholarly works published in this area in order to build up your understanding of Congress and conduct research in this area. This course will also help you develop some of the professional skills necessary to approach the academic job market.

INSTRUCTIONAL AND TECHNOLOGY INFORMATION

We will meet as often as you need. I would like to meet at least twice -- once after your funding proposal is turned in, and then again after Spring Break so we can touch base regarding your replication and extension paper.

I am always available via email to answer questions, but the onus is on you to keep track of your readings and ensure material is turned in on time.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Your grade will be determined using the following weights:

Area	Weight
Five-Point Memos	40%
Replication and Extension Paper	40%
Funding Proposal	20%
Total	100%

FIVE-POINT MEMOS (40% of Grade):

Knowing how to synthesize articles and books into small pieces that you can fit into a lit review is a learned skill that takes practice. It is crucial that you develop this skill before you take your comprehensive exams, as that is the point of a comprehensive exam. It is also crucial you learn how to summarize and connect articles if you want to write a solid literature review for articles.

To that end, you will complete a one-page "Five-Point Memo" for each assigned reading. In that page, you will provide the following information:

1. A one-sentence summary of the article.
2. A one-paragraph explanation of where this piece fits in the literature.

3. An explanation of the methodological approach:
 - a. Dependent variable used
 - b. Independent variable used
 - c. Hypotheses
 - d. Underlying approach (observational, experimental, archival, etc.)
 - e. Method and model
4. A one-paragraph discussion of what the authors found
5. One way to build on the research moving forward (which can include a criticism of the piece, but if you do that, you also have to offer a way to fix the issue)

You can email your summaries directly to me. You must send me the first five topics' worth of summaries by Monday, March 4th (the first day of Spring Break), and send me the remaining five topics' worth of summaries by Monday, April 22nd. You can send them all at once by the due date, or you can send them weekly, that is up to you.

Each set of memos will receive a check-plus, a check, or a check-minus. I will be grading them based on (1) your ability to explain the theory; (2) your ability to explain the method; and (3) your ability to build on the readings. At this point in your academic career, I expect to see that you can work through the theory and methods and offer a solid idea for building on the research.

REPLICATION AND EXTENSION PAPER (40%):

Doing research is hard. One way to build your research skills is to work through somebody else's theory and data analysis and then, using a combination of theory and your own data skills, try to extend their findings. This is how I got my first publication!

To that end, throughout the semester, you will be working on a replication and extension paper (8-10 pages including graphs and tables) in which you replicate an existing congressional politics piece and then extend it to either a new question, or answer the paper's question differently.

To make this task manageable, you will work on it in three parts. When you complete each of these tasks, you must submit the information to me by the appropriate due date.

1. **Select an article to replicate and extend [Due at 11.59 PM on Monday, February 12th]**
 - a. Whatever article you pick, make sure it has the data and code stored on the faculty member's website or on ICPSR or Harvard Dataverse
 - b. You can pick an article that we read in class, but you cannot pick one of mine
2. **Provide an outline of the theory behind the original article, a well-reasoned explanation for your extension, and an initial data analysis [Due at 11.59 PM on Monday, March 11th]**
3. **Provide a final paper (8-10 pages, double spaced, including graphs + tables) that explains the original paper, shows you can replicate the original analysis, and then shows and explains your extension [Due at 11.59 PM on Monday, April 29th]**
 - a. You will also turn in your Stata .do file or your .R script to me for review

Broadly speaking, if you want to use this paper for more than one class, that is fine as long as you get permission IN WRITING from the other faculty member to do so. If you decide to go this route, however, you (1) have to inform me of this decision and (2) will be held to a higher standard because you are extending two classes' worth of effort to complete this paper.

I will provide more details about the format in the early part of the semester.

FUNDING PROPOSAL (20% of Grade):

A not-insignificant part of any job is putting together short (under five pages) funding proposals for projects. This means (1) figuring out how many hours a project will take; (2) figuring out the equipment you need to complete the project and its cost; (3) identifying how much you can complete on your own; (4) deciding how much research assistance you will need and its cost; and (5) getting people who know nothing about your research to understand what you are working on, why it is important, and why they should give you money to do it.

You will be putting together a short research proposal for your coding project, asking a university to provide you with money to hire talented undergrads to help collect your data. You will follow the guidelines for the Michigan State University Provost Undergraduate Research Initiative (PURI) grant, which will I provide to you, along with several examples.

Your funding proposal is due by 11.59 PM on Monday, February 12th.

I will pay particular attention to two things: (1) your ability to summarize your project for a broad general audience and (2) the reasonableness of your budget proposal. This means that if you are having your fictional students read and code Supreme Court cases, you need to time yourself doing the work and see how long it takes, so that you can realistically figure out how long undergrads will need to do the work and how long it will take you to finish.

GRADING SCALE

I will use the following scale to assign course grades:

Percentage	Grade
90-100%	A
87-89%	B+
80-86%	B
77-79%	C+
70-76%	C
67-69%	D+
60-66%	D
59% or less	F

Percentages greater than or equal to 0.5 will be rounded up to the next highest whole percentage (Example: 86.5% will found up to an 87%).

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:

Absolutely no form of academic dishonesty will be tolerated. Anyone found guilty of cheating, plagiarism, or any other violation of academic integrity will receive an automatic grade of 0.0 for the assignment. Additionally, all other penalties within the University will be pursued to the fullest extent. For more information about academic dishonesty, visit the [USC Office of Academic Integrity](#).

HONOR CODE:

Every student has a role in maintaining the academic reputation of the university. It is imperative that you refrain from engaging in plagiarism, cheating, falsifying your work and/or assisting other students in violating the Honor Code. Two important components of the Honor Code:

- Faculty members are required to report potential violations of the Honor Code to the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity.
- When a student is uncertain as to whether conduct would violate the Honor Code, it is their responsibility to seek clarification from the appropriate faculty member.

Your enrollment in this class signifies your willingness to accept these responsibilities and uphold the Honor Code of the University of South Carolina. Please review the [Honor Code Policies](#) as well as the [Code of Conduct](#). It is your responsibility to understand these policies.

CAROLINIAN CREED:

The community of scholars at the University of South Carolina is dedicated to personal and academic excellence. Choosing to join the community obligates each member to the Carolinian Creed. Academic and civil discourse are the cornerstones of the educational system and crucial to individual growth.

As a Carolinian:

- I will practice personal and academic integrity;
- I will respect the rights and dignity of all persons;
- I will respect the rights and property of others;
- I will discourage bigotry, while striving to learn from differences in people, ideas and opinions;
- I will demonstrate concern for others, their feelings and their need for conditions which support their work and development.

COLLABORATION:

A student's grades must represent the extent that individual mastered the course content. You should assume that you are to complete course work individually (without the use of another person or uncited outside source) unless otherwise indicated by the instructor. It is your responsibility to seek clarification if you are unclear about what constitutes proper or improper collaboration.

INCOMPLETE GRADES:

You may be assigned an 'I' (Incomplete) grade if you are unable to complete some portion of the assigned course work because of an unanticipated illness, accident, work-related responsibility, family hardship, or verified learning disability. An Incomplete grade is not intended to give you additional time to complete course assignments or extra credit unless there is indication that the specified circumstances prevented you from completing course assignments on time.

STUDENT SUPPORT RESOURCES

UNIVERSITY LIBRARY RESOURCES:

University Libraries has access to books, articles, subject specific resources, citation help, and more. If you are not sure where to start, please [Ask a Librarian](#). You can also [Book a Librarian](#) for a personal research consultation.

ADDITIONAL ACCOMMODATIONS:

Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. If you have a disability and may need accommodations to fully participate in this class, contact the Student Disability

Resource Center: 777-6142, TDD 777-6744, email sasds@mailbox.sc.edu, or stop by Close-Hipp Suite 102. All accommodations must be approved through the Student Disability Resource Center.

Students with special needs should contact me immediately. Every effort to accommodate additional needs will be made.

MENTAL HEALTH AND COUNSELING SERVICES:

If stress is impacting you or getting in the way of your ability to do your schoolwork, maintain relationships, eat, sleep, or enjoy yourself, please reach out to any of our mental health resources. Counseling & Psychiatry offers individual and group counseling and psychiatric services. You can schedule an appointment at (803) 777-5223 or on MyHealthSpace. You can also call after-hours for crisis counseling. Wellness Coaching can help you improve in areas related to emotional and physical wellbeing, such as sleep, resiliency, balanced eating and more. Wellness Coaching appointments can be made by calling 803-777-6518. or on MyHealthSpace. Most of these services are offered at no cost as they are covered by the Student Health Services tuition fee. For all available mental health resources, check out [University Health Services Mental Health](#).

EXTENDED ABSENCES:

If you miss several classes in a row for illness or for familial or personal reasons, you should document your absence with the [Student Ombuds](#) as well.

COURSE READINGS

Readings are listed in the order I would suggest you read them, though feel free to go through them as you wish. Books are always listed first.

If you have a hard time finding any of the articles through the USC Library, check the authors' websites first, then ask me for a copy if you still cannot find them.

All books should be available through either the USC Library or through Interlibrary Loan if you decide not to purchase your own copies. Most are available for digital download.

Useful references (do not need to read, but might want eventually):

- Dodd, Lawrence C., Bruce I. Oppenheimer, and C. Lawrence Evans. 2020. *Congress Reconsidered*. 12th Edition. CQ Press.
- Stewart III, Charles. 2011. *Analyzing Congress*. 2nd Edition. W.W. Norton and Company.
- Oleszek, Walter J., Mark J. Oleszek, Elizabeth Rybicki, and Bill Heniff Jr. 2019. *Congressional Procedures and the Policy Process*. 11th Edition. CQ Press.

Topic 1: Congress and its Constituents

- Mayhew, David. 1974. *Congress: The Electoral Connection*.
- Carson, Jamie and Jeffery Jenkins. 2011. "Examining the Electoral Connection Across Time." *Annual Review of Political Science*. 14: 25-46.
- Fenno, Richard F. 1978. *Home Style: House Members in their Districts*.
- Grimmer, Justin. 2010. "A Bayesian Hierarchical Topic Model for Political Texts: Measuring Expressed Agendas in Senate Press Releases." *Political Analysis* 18(1): 1-35.

Topic 2: Basics: Ideology and Spatial Models

- Krehbiel, Keith. 1998. *Pivotal Politics: A Theory of US Lawmaking*. Ch. 1-2.
- Poole, Keith T. 1999. "NOMINATE: A Short Intellectual History." *The Political Methodologist* 9:1-6.
- Snyder, James M. and Timothy Groseclose. 2000. "Estimating Party Influence in Congressional Roll-Call Voting." *American Journal of Political Science* 44(2): 193-211.
- Clinton, Joshua, Simon Jackman and Douglas Rivers. 2004. "The Statistical Analysis of Roll Call Data." *American Political Science Review* 98 (2): 355-370.
- Clinton, Joshua D. 2007. "Lawmaking and Roll Calls." *Journal of Politics* 69(2): 457-469.
- Laver, Michael. 2014. "Measuring Policy Positions in Political Space," *Annual Review of Political Science* 17: 207-223.

Topic 3: Party Influence in Congress (2 weeks)

- Smith, Stephen. 2007. *Party Influence in Congress*.
- Curry, James M. 2015. *Legislating in the Dark: Information and Power in the House of Representatives*. University of Chicago Press.
- Lee, Frances E. 2016. *Insecure Majorities: Congress and the Perpetual Campaign*.
- Krehbiel, Keith. 1993. "Where's the Party?" *British Journal of Political Science* 23: 235-266.
- Smith, Steven S., Ian Ostrander, and Christopher M. Pope. 2013. "Majority Party Power and Procedural Motions in the U.S. Senate." *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 38(2): 205-236.

Topic 4: Veto Politics

- Cameron, Charles M. 2000. *Veto Bargaining: Presidents and the Politics of Negative Power*. Ch. 1-2.
- Groseclose, Tim and Nolan McCarty. 2001. "The Politics of Blame: Bargaining before an Audience." *American Journal of Political Science* 45(1): 100-119.
- McCarty, Nolan. 2009. "Presidential Vetoes in the Early Republic: Changing Constitutional Norms or Electoral Reform?" *Journal of Politics* 71(2): 369-384.
- Hickey, Patrick T. 2014. "Beyond Pivotal Politics: Constituencies, Electoral Incentives, and Veto Override Attempts in the House." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 44(4): 577-600.
- Hassell, Hans J.G. and Samuel Kernell. 2016. "Veto Rhetoric and Legislative Riders." *American Journal of Political Science* 60(4): 845-859.
- Lewallen, Jonathan. 2017. "The Issue Politics of Presidential Veto Threats." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 47(2): 277-92.

Topic 5: Legislative Agendas

- Madonna, Anthony J. 2011. "Winning Coalition Formation in the U.S. Senate: The Effects of Legislative Decision Rules and Agenda Change." *American Journal of Political Science* 55(2): 276-288.
- Wawro, Gregory J. and Eric Schickler. 2004. "Where's the Pivot? Obstruction and Lawmaking in the Pre-Cloture Senate." *American Journal of Political Science* 48(4): 758-774.
- Schiller, Wendy J. 1995. "Senators as Political Entrepreneurs: Using Bill Sponsorship to Shape Legislative Agendas." *American Journal of Political Science* 39(1): 186-203.
- Woon, Jonathan. 2009. "Issue Attention and Legislative Proposal in the U.S. Senate." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 34(1): 29-54.
- Binder, Sarah A. 1999. "The Dynamics of Legislative Gridlock, 1947-1996." *American Political Science Review* 93(3): 519-533.

Topic 6: Rulemaking, Rulebreaking, and Innovation (2 weeks)

- Shepsle, Kenneth. 2017. *Rule Breaking and Political Imagination*. University of Chicago Press.
- Reynolds, Molly E. 2017. *Exceptions to the Rule: The Politics of Filibuster Limitations in the U.S. Senate*. Brookings Institution Press.
- Black, Ryan C., Michael S. Lynch, Anthony J. Madonna, and Ryan J. Owens. 2011. "Assessing Congressional Responses to Growing Presidential Powers: The Case of Recess Appointments," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 41(3): 570-589.
- Wawro, Gregory J. and Eric Schickler. 2018. "Reid's Rules: Filibusters, the Nuclear Option, and Path Dependence in the U.S. Senate," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 43(4): 619-647.
- Curry, James M. and Frances E. Lee. 2020. "What Is Regular Order Worth? Partisan Lawmaking and Congressional Processes." *Journal of Politics* 82(2): 627-641.

Topic 7: Representation in Congress

- Schuit, Sophie and Jon Rogowski. 2017. "Race, Representation, and the Voting Rights Act." *American Journal of Political Science* 61(3): 513-526.
- Hertel-Fernandez, Alexander, Matto Mildemberger, and Leah C. Stokes. 2018. "Legislative Staff and Representation in Congress." *American Political Science Review* 113(1): 1-18.
- Lowande, Kenneth, Melinda Ritchie, and Erinn Lauterbach. 2019. "Descriptive and Substantive Representation in Congress: Evidence from 80,000 Congressional Inquiries." *American Journal of Political Science* 63(3): 655-659.
- Kujala, Jordan. 2019. "Donors, Primary Elections, and Polarization in the United States." *American Journal of Political Science* 64(3): 587-602.
- Lax, Jeffrey R., Justin H. Phillips, and Adam Zelizer. 2019. "The Party or the Purse? Unequal Representation in the U.S. Senate." *American Political Science Review* 113(4): 917-940.
- Carnes, Nicholas, and Noam Lupu. 2023. "The Economic Backgrounds of Politicians." *Annual Review of Political Science* 26:253-270.

Topic 8: Nominations and Confirmations

- Ostrander, Ian. 2016. "The Logic of Collective Inaction: Senatorial Delay in Executive Nominations." *American Journal of Political Science* 60(4): 1063-1076.
- Box-Steffensmeier, Janet M., Charles P. Campisano, Matthew P. Hitt, and Kevin M. Scott. 2016. "Advising, Consenting, Delaying, and Expediting: Senator Influences on Presidential Appointments." *Studies in American Political Development* (30): 19-37.
- Hollibaugh, Gary E. and Lawrence S. Rothenberg. 2017. "The When and Why of Nominations: Determinants of Presidential Appointments." *American Politics Research* 45(2): 280-303.
- Dodds, Graham G. 2022. "Presidential Control of Independent Agencies Leadership and Personnel." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 52(1): 168-194.
- Black, Ryan C. and Ryan J. Owens. 2016. "Courting the President: How Circuit Court Judges Alter Their Behavior for Promotion to the Supreme Court." *American Journal of Political Science* 60(1):30-43.
- Cottrell, David, Charles R. Shipan, and Richard J. Anderson. 2019. "The Power to Appoint: Presidential Nominations and Change on the Supreme Court." *Journal of Politics* 81(3): 1057-1068.

Topic 9: Separation of Powers

- Kriner, Douglas L. and Eric Schickler. 2014. "Investigating the President: Committee Probes and Presidential Approval 1953-2006." *Journal of Politics* 76(2): 521-534.
- Eshbaugh-Soha, Matthew and Thomas Miles. 2011. "Presidential Speeches and the Stages of the Legislative Process." *Congress & the Presidency* 38(3): 301-321.
- Gelman, Jeremy, Gilad Wilkenfeld, and E. Scott Adler. 2015. "The Opportunistic President: How U.S. Presidents Determine Their Legislative Programs." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 40(3): 363-390.
- Clark, Tom S. 2009. "The Separation of Powers, Court-Curbing and Judicial Legitimacy." *American Journal of Political Science* 53(4):971-989.
- Harvey, Anna and Barry Friedman. 2009. "Ducking Trouble: Congressionally Induced Selection Bias in the Supreme Court's Agenda," *Journal of Politics* 71(2): 574-592.
- Lane, Elizabeth A. "A Separation-of-Powers Approach to the Supreme Court's Shrinking Caseload." *Journal of Law and Courts*, 10(1): 1-12.

Topic 10: Congressional Hodge Podge

- Kornberg, Maya. 2023. *Inside Congressional Committees: Function and Dysfunction in the Legislative Process*.
- Box-Steffensmeier, Janet M., Dino P. Christenson, and Alison W. Craig. 2019. "Cue-Taking in Congress: Interest Group Signals from Dear Colleague Letters." *American Journal of Political Science* 63(1): 163-180.
- Thomsen, Danielle M. 2023. "Competition in Congressional Elections: Money versus Votes." *American Political Science Review* 117(2): 675-691.
- Thomsen, Danielle M. and Aaron S. King. 2020. "Women's Representation and the Gendered Pipeline to Power." *American Political Science Review* 114(4): 989-1000
- Porter, Rachel and Sarah A. Treul. Forthcoming. "Evaluating (In)Experience in Congressional Elections." *American Journal of Political Science*.
 - https://rachelpporter.org/files/porter_treul_ajps.pdf
- King, Jonathan M., Jessica A. Schoenherr, and Ian Ostrander. "Dropping the Anchor: Gender and Judicial Nominations." Working Paper.