

# POLS Y319: The United States Congress

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Office Hours: By appointment.  
Office:

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Class Hours:  
Class Room:

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## Course Description

This course offers students the opportunity to study the legislative branch of the American national government. Topics covered include the structure and process of the Senate and House of Representatives, Congressional elections, the roles of parties, interest groups, and lobbyists. We will also cover the specifics of the legislative process. Finally, we will consider the relationship between Congress and the other branches of government.

## Course Objectives

1. Understand Congressional procedure and practice.
2. Learn about Congressional elections.
3. Situate Congress within a broader context — e.g. other branches of government — and learn about the constraint of public opinion.

## Associate Instructor

The associate instructor (AI) for this course is

## Required Books

There are no required books for this course. All course readings will be posted on the course Canvas website.

## Course Policy

The details of the course are outlined below.

## Grading Policy

- 40% of your grade will be determined by a midterm examination. This exam will cover all of the material that was covered prior to the date of the exam.

- 40% of your grade will be determined by a final examination. This exam will cover all of the material that was covered prior to the date of the exam but *not* the material covered before the midterm exam. In other words, this exam is not cumulative. Nevertheless, because many of the concepts in this course build on one another, knowledge of the material covered earlier in the semester will be essential for successfully completing this exam.
- 20% of your grade will be determined by a series of short quizzes administered via Canvas. Note that these quizzes *must* be taken by the assigned due date. Late quizzes will *not* be accepted.

### **Make-up Policy**

Unless you have communicated with me *before* the day of the exam, I do not allow make-up exams. If you miss the exam without communicating with me beforehand, you will receive a zero on the exam.

### **Extra Credit Policy**

Extra credit is not offered in this course.

### **Health and Safety**

IU is following recommended public health guidance in response to the pandemic. In recognition of all IU community members owe to each other, we expect every member of the IU community to adhere to all current policies and practices. For current information on that guidance, see <https://covid.iu.edu>. I will make every effort to resolve concerns informally but, if I cannot, I will follow usual procedures outlined in the Student Code of Conduct, including submitting a written report to the Dean of Students.

As your instructor, my first obligation is to ensure the immediate safety of the classroom. Students who engage in uncomfortable or threatening behaviors, including an unwillingness to follow campus policies regarding masking, will be asked to leave the classroom that day for their own safety and the safety of those around them.

All members of the IU community including students may report student conduct and wellness concerns to the Division of Student Affairs using an online form located at <https://studentaffairs.indiana.edu/student-support/get-help/index.html>.

### **Attendance Policy**

Attending class is tremendously important. Learning takes place through engagement with the material and with your peers. Therefore, I expect you to attend every class session. If you know that you will not be able to attend class for some particular week, please email me a week in advance to let me know that you will not be in attendance. Excused absences include religious observances or other university-sanctioned absences. If you are sick or are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, *please do not worry about your attendance*. Focus instead on getting healthy.

### **The Honor Code and Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is a serious offense. If you are using someone's words without proper citation, you are guilty of plagiarism. See the IU [policy handbook](#) for a more thorough definition. Any work that is suspected of containing plagiarism will receive a zero and will be reported to the appropriate University committee. If you are in doubt, cite your sources!

## Students with Disabilities

If you require assistance or accommodations for a disability, please get in touch with me as soon as possible. You can reach me via email or by attending office hours. You must have established your eligibility for disability support services through the Office of Disability Services for Students in Wells Library, W302, 812-855-7578.

## Class Schedule

Students must read the following before the class meeting to which they are assigned. The readings will be available on the course Canvas website. Note that these readings are subject to change. Any adjustments will be communicated in advance.

### Week 1

8/24: Introduction & The Two Congresses

- Schaeffer, Katherine. 2021. "The changing face of Congress in 7 charts." *Pew Research Center*.

8/26: Evolution of the Modern Congress, pt. 1

### Week 2

8/31: Evolution of the Modern Congress, pt. 2

9/2: Congressional Recruitment & Candidacy

- Fowler, Linda L. 1996. "Who Runs for Congress?" *Political Science & Politics* 29 (3): 430-434.

### Week 3

9/7: Making It: The Electoral Game, pt. 1

- Berkowitz, Bonnie, and Chris Alcantara. 2019. "How to run for Congress." *The Washington Post*.

9/9: Making It: The Electoral Game, pt. 2

- Goldmacher, Shane. 2013. "Why Would Anyone Ever Want to Run for Congress?" *The Atlantic*.

### Week 4

9/14: Being There: Hill Styles and Home Styles, pt. 1

- Fenno, Richard F. 1977. "U.S. House Members in Their Constituencies: An Exploration." *American Political Science Review* 71 (3): 883-917.

9/16: Being There: Hill Styles and Home Styles, pt. 2

### Week 5

9/21: Leadership and Parties in Congress, pt. 1

- Sprunt, Barbara. 2021. "GOP Ousts Cheney From Leadership Over Her Criticism of Trump." *National Public Radio*.

- Segers, Grace, and Rebecca Kaplan. 2021. "Elise Stefanik elected to House GOP leadership post." *CBS News*.

9/23: Leadership and Parties in Congress, pt. 2

- McPherson, Lindsey. 2018. "House Democrats Settle on Top Leaders, but Fight Over Speakership Remains." *Roll Call*.

**Week 6**

9/28: Committees: Workshops of Congress, pt. 1

- Blake, Aaron. 2021. "Marjorie Taylor Greene would be in rare company if she is kicked off her committees." *The Washington Post*.
- Khan, Mariam. 2021. "House votes to remove Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene from committee assignments." *ABC News*.

9/30: Committees: Workshops of Congress, pt. 2

- Clinton, Joshua D., and Lewis, David E., and Jennifer L. Selin. 2013. "Influencing the Bureaucracy: The Irony of Congressional Oversight." *American Journal of Political Science* 58 (2): 387-401.

**Week 7**

10/5: Congressional Rules and Procedures, pt. 1

- Everett, Burgess. 2019. "Republicans trigger 'nuclear option' to speed Trump nominees." *Politico*.
- Pengelly, Martin. 2021. "Senate filibuster reform would produce 'nuclear winter', says Mitch McConnell." *The Guardian*.

10/7: Congressional Rules and Procedures, pt. 2

**Week 8**

10/12: Review for Midterm

10/14: Midterm Exam

**Week 9**

10/19: Congress, Budgets, and Policymaking, pt. 1

- Scholtes, Jennifer, and Caitlin Emma. 2021. "'Going to be a long winter': Congress hits snooze on funding the government." *Politico*.

10/21: Congress, Budgets, and Policymaking, pt. 2

- Fitz, Marshall. 2021. "Immigration reform is a perfect fit for budget reconciliation." *Roll Call*.

**Week 10**

10/26: Decision Making in Congress, pt. 1

10/28: Decision Making in Congress, pt. 2

## **Week 11**

### 11/2: Congress and the President, pt. 1

- Bazelon, Emily. 2019. "What Happens When a President and Congress Go to War?" *The New York Times Magazine*.

### 11/4: Congress and the President, pt. 2

- Azari, Julia. 2021. "Presidents Used To Be The Faces Of Their Political Parties. Is That No Longer The Case?" *FiveThirtyEight*.

## **Week 12**

### 11/9: Congress and the Bureaucracy, pt. 1

- Stolberg, Sheryl Gay. 2021. "Can New Gun Violence Research Find a Path Around the Political Stalemate?" *The New York Times*.

### 11/11: Congress and the Bureaucracy, pt. 2

## **Week 13**

### 11/16: Congress and the Courts, pt. 1

- Leuchtenburg, William E. "When Franklin Roosevelt Clashed With the Supreme Court—and Lost." *Smithsonian Magazine*.

### 11/18: Congress and the Courts, pt. 2

## **Week 14**

No class — Thanksgiving break

## **Week 15**

### 11/30: Congress and Organized Interests, pt. 1

- Palmer, Annie. 2021. "Amazon launches website to go on the offensive against Congress' antitrust tech bills." *CNBC.com*.

### 12/2: Congress and Organized Interests, pt. 2

- Abramson, Alana. 2021. "How a Coalition of Business and Labor Groups Helped Save the Infrastructure Bill." *Time*.

## **Week 16**

### 12/7: Future Reforms?

### 12/9: Review for Final