

POLI 100B: The U.S. Congress

University of California San Diego | Winter 2020 | Tuesday & Thursday, 9:30-10:50am | Center 214
Updated January 6, 2020

Prof. Pamela Ban

Department of Political Science
Office: Social Sciences Building 377
Office Hours: Thursday, 2-4pm
Email: pmban@ucsd.edu

Teaching Assistant: Zoe Nemerever
Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 11am-12pm
Office Hours Location: Social Sciences Building 324
Email: znemerev@ucsd.edu

Grader: Summer Bales
Office Hours: By Appointment
Email: sbales@ucsd.edu

Course Description

The United States Congress is the most studied branch of U.S. Government, and it is central to our understanding of policy, elections, and representative democracy. The purpose of this course is to examine two fundamental questions: (1) what do members of Congress do and why and (2) how do the individual and collective actions of members of Congress explain national policy? We will examine the process of legislating as well as the role of political parties, leaders, and interest groups. Throughout, we will study how Congress has evolved and consider its effectiveness as an institution.

Textbooks

The following book is required (print or e-book version). It is available at the campus bookstore, as well as on reserve at the library.

- Shipan, Charles R., E. Scott Adler, and Jeffery A. Jenkins. 2019. *The United States Congress*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company

All other required readings will be posted on the course website:

<https://canvas.ucsd.edu/courses/10234>.

Course Requirements and Grading

1. **Participation** (20%): You are expected to come to class prepared to discuss central questions that arise from course readings and lectures. Participation will be comprised of your responses to in-class questions. (See the section *Participation with Clickers* below for more information.)
2. **Simulation** (15%): There will be an in-class simulation game of Congress during the last two class sessions, where you will play a member of Congress. Students will be required to submit a pre-simulation assignment and participate in their roles during the simulation. More information will be distributed in class.
3. **Midterm Exam** (30%): The midterm will be held during class on **Thursday, February 6** and will cover material from the first part of the course. (Please note that exams cannot be made up without well-documented evidence of an emergency.)
4. **Final Exam** (35%): The final exam will be cumulative and held at the time assigned by the university: **Tuesday, March 17** from 8:00-10:59am (Location TBA).

Participation with Clickers

You are expected to come to class prepared to discuss ideas and themes from our course materials and lectures. Evidence has shown a strong relationship between active participation and student learning. In a large class like ours, there is a risk that students will miss out on the opportunity to meaningfully discuss and consider course materials. For this reason, I will use clickers with a policy that is designed to encourage, not penalize, participation in class:

- *Official clicker period*: We will begin experimenting with clickers during the second week, but the official period where clicker responses will be counted towards your grade will not start until January 16th. This will give you time to find a clicker to borrow or purchase and get used to using them during class. We will use clickers through (and including) the final day of the simulation on March 12th.
- *Grading*: One point per day will be awarded simply for responding to the clicker questions asked in class that day, regardless of whether or not your answers are correct. To receive this point, you must answer the majority of clicker questions asked during that day's class.
 - You may miss one day of clicker questions with no impact on your participation grade. This grace day is to account for any reason why you may miss answering questions in class, excused or unexcused (i.e. if you forget your clicker or if you need to miss class for any reason). We will automatically apply this policy to your participation grade at

the end of the quarter; you do not need to inform us when you will be taking advantage of this policy.

Subject Pool Extra Credit

One way to learn more about political science is to be a participant in ongoing research projects. You may earn 1 point of extra credit towards your overall grade by participating in the Omnibus Political Science Survey (OPSS). You will be contacted by email during the term with information regarding the survey and how you can complete it.

As an alternative to participating in the study, you may choose to complete an article review assignment instead. This assignment involves locating a political science scholarly journal article online (that is not used in our class) and writing a 500 word review of that article. You should explain its significance within the context of political science and demonstrate that you have read the article carefully.

You may choose either the subject pool participation or the article review alternate assignment for the extra credit point. If you choose the article review assignment, you must submit a digital copy of your assignment to the TAs with the subject line "OPSS Alternate Assignment" at least 1 week before the end of classes. Late submissions will not be accepted. The body of the email should include your name, student number, and a link to the article you chose to review.

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. Cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and will be subject to disciplinary action consistent with University rules and regulations. Note that this applies to exams, participation/clicker usage, and any other form of class assignment. Students are expected to familiarize themselves with University regulations regarding plagiarism and academic dishonesty.

Schedule

The readings listed under each date are to be completed BEFORE that class session.

January 7 – Introduction

January 8 – Origins and Development of Congress

Adler et al., Chapter 2: "The Historical Development of Congress"

Polsby, Nelson W. 1968. "The Institutionalization of the U.S. House of Representatives." *American Political Science Review* 62 (1): 144-168.

January 14 – Spatial Modeling

January 16 – Congressional Elections I

Adler et al., Chapter 4: “Elections”

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

January 21 – Congressional Elections II

Mansbridge, Jane. 2003. “Rethinking Representation.” *American Political Science Review* 97 (4): 515–528.

Gerber, Alan S., Donald P. Green, and Christopher W. Larimer. 2008. “Social Pressure and Voter Turnout: Evidence from a Large-Scale Field Experiment.” *American Political Science Review* 102 (1): 33–48.

January 23 – Congressional Elections III

Ansolabehere, Stephen, John M. De Figueiredo, and James M. Snyder. 2003. “Why Is There so Little Money in U.S. Politics?” *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* 17 (1): 105-130.

Draper, Robert. 2012. “The League of Dangerous Mapmakers.” *The Atlantic*. <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/print/2012/10/the-league-of/309084>.

January 28 – Committees

Adler et al., Chapter 5: “Committees”

January 30 – Parties and Leadership

Adler et al., Chapter 6: “Parties”

Excerpt from Robert Caro, *Master of the Senate*, Chapters 15, 21, 24, 25.

February 4 – Congressional Oversight

Adler et al., Chapter 10: “Congress and the Bureaucracy”

McCubbins, Mathew D., and Thomas Schwartz. 1984. “Congressional Oversight Overlooked: Police Patrols versus Fire Alarms.” *American Journal of Political Science* 28 (1): 165–179.

Excerpt from Cramer, *What It Takes*

February 6 – MIDTERM (IN-CLASS)

February 11 – Rules and Process I: House

February 13 – Rules and Process II: Senate

Bettelheim, Adriel. 2013. "Senate Goes Nuclear." *CQ Weekly*.

Smith, Steven. 2010. "The Senate Syndrome." *Brookings*.

February 18 – Policymaking I

Adler et al., Chapter 7: "Policy Making"

February 20 – Policymaking II

Adler et al., Chapter 8: "The Legislative Effectiveness of Congress and Its Members"

Steinhauer, Jennifer. 2015. "A Congress That Doesn't Want to Weigh In on War." *The New York Times*.

February 25 – Lobbying and Interest Groups

Leech, Beth L. 2011. "Lobbying and Interest Group Advocacy" in Frances E. Lee and Eric Schickler, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of the American Congress*. Oxford University Press, pp. 598-617.

Moore, Ryan T, Eleanor Neff Powell, and Andrew Reeves. 2013. "Driving support: workers, PACs, and congressional support of the auto industry." *Business and Politics* 15(2): 137-162.

February 27 – Polarization

March 3 – In-class Review

March 5 – Simulation Day 1

March 10 – Simulation Day 2

March 12 – Simulation Day 3 and Wrap-Up

March 17, 8:00am-10:59am – FINAL EXAM (Location TBA)