

# POLI 100B: The U.S. Congress

University of California, San Diego | Fall 2018 | Tuesday and Thursday, 2:00-3:20pm | Center 212  
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## Prof. Pamela Ban

Department of Political Science  
Office: Social Sciences Building 346  
Office Hours: Thursday, 10am-12pm  
Email: [pmban@ucsd.edu](mailto:pmban@ucsd.edu)

Teaching Assistant: Geoffrey Hoffman  
Office: Social Sciences Building 443  
Office Hours: Friday, 12pm-1pm  
Email: [gjh@ucsd.edu](mailto:gjh@ucsd.edu)

Teaching Assistant: Gregoire Phillips  
Office: Social Sciences Building 351  
Office Hours: Monday, 10am-11am  
Email: [g1philli@ucsd.edu](mailto:g1philli@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 debate the common criticism that “Congress is broken” and consider its effectiveness as an institution.

## Textbooks

The following books are required. They are available at the campus bookstore, as well as on reserve at the library.

- Stewart, Charles III. 2012. *Analyzing Congress*. 2nd ed. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company
- Sinclair, Barbara. 2011. *Unorthodox Lawmaking: New Legislative Processes in the US Congress*. 5th ed. New York, NY: SAGE

All other required readings will be posted on the course website (TritonEd).

## 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 October 30 and will cover material from the first part of the course.
4. **Final Exam (35%)**: The final exam will be cumulative and held at the time assigned by the university: Thursday, December 13 from 3:00pm-5:59pm (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 October 9. 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 review day on November 29.
- *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 questions asked with no impact on your participation grade. This grace day is to account for any reason why you may miss answering questions in class (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 for that class session.

### September 27 – Introduction

### October 2 – Constitutional Origins of Congress

Stewart, Chapter 2: "The Constitutional Origins of Congress," pp. 58-74 only

### October 4 – Development of Congress

Stewart, Chapter 3: "The History and Development of Congress"

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

## **October 9 – Spatial Modeling**

Stewart, Chapter 1: “An (Unusual) Introduction to the Study of Congress,” pp. 2-23, 47-52 only

## **October 11 – Congressional Elections I: Candidates**

Stewart, Chapter 4: “The Choices Candidates Make: Running for Congress”

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

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

## **October 16 – Congressional Elections II: Voters**

Stewart, Chapter 5: “The Choices Voters Make”

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.

## **October 18 – Congressional Elections III: Regulation**

Stewart, Chapter 6: “Regulating Elections”

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>.

## **October 23 – Parties and Leadership**

Stewart, Chapter 7: “Parties and Leaders in Congress,” pp. 254-276 only

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

## **October 25 – Committees in Congress**

Stewart, Chapter 8: “Committees in Congress”

## **October 30 – MIDTERM (IN-CLASS)**

### **November 1 – Congressional Oversight and Hearings**

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*

### **November 6 – Rules and Process I: House**

Sinclair, Chapter 2: "Multiple Paths: The Legislative Process in the House of Representatives"

### **November 8 – Rules and Process II: Senate**

Sinclair, Chapter 3: "Routes and Obstacles: The Legislative Process in the Senate"

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

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

### **November 13 – Policymaking I**

Sinclair, Chapter 5: "Omnibus Legislation, the Budget Process, and Summits"

Sinclair, Chapter 8: "High-Stakes Budget Politics: The 2013 Government Shutdown and the Ryan-Murray Deal"

### **November 15 – Policymaking II**

Sinclair, Chapter 7: "Making Nonincremental Policy Change through Hyperunorthodox Procedures: Health Care Reform in 2009-2010"

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

### **November 20 – 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.

### **November 27 – Polarization / Is Congress Broken?**

Readings TBA.

**November 29 – Review**

**December 4 – Simulation Day 1**

**December 6 – Simulation Day 2**

**December 13, 3:00pm-5:59pm – FINAL EXAM (Location TBA)**