

**Syllabus**  
**Northern Illinois University**  
**The U.S. Congress – fall 2017**  
**POLS 307 – Section 001 (6683)**

**Professor – Dr. Scot Schraufnagel**

**Class Time** – Tuesday and Thursday 12:30 p - 1:45 p

**Class Location** – DuSable 459

**Office Hours** – 2:00 – 4:30 T, W, & TH; and by appointment. Contact April Davis at 815-753-1012 to set an appointment.

**Graduate Assistant Office Hours** – 10:30 to Noon, T & R; DuSable 476.

**Office Location** – 413 Zulauf Hall

**Office Phone Number** – (815) 753-7040

**E-mail** – [sschrauf@niu.edu](mailto:sschrauf@niu.edu)

Note: E-mail should NOT be used as the sole means of communication with the professor.

There is no guarantee that I will receive the correspondence or receive it in a timely fashion.

You should plan to talk to me in person before and after class or in office hours regarding planned absences and other important matters. Phone calls, especially during office hours are a good way to communicate, as well. **No grades can be given out over the phone or by e-mail.**

**Required Text:**

Dodd, Lawrence C. and Bruce I. Oppenheimer. 2017. *Congress: Reconsidered*, 11<sup>th</sup> Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications

**Recommended Text:**

Schraufnagel, Scot. 2011. *A Historical Dictionary of the U.S. Congress*. Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, Inc. a Division of Roman-Littlefield.

**Course Objectives** – This is a course on the United States Congress and is intended to familiarize students with practical aspects of the functioning of Congress, but also acquaint students with some of the major contemporary debates about the effectiveness of the U.S. legislature from a comparative perspective. Students successfully completing the course will gain an appreciation for the multifarious institutions that make up the U.S. Congress; pros and cons of specific institutional arrangements; improve their social science related vocabulary; and become more familiar with the way laws are made (or not made) today.

**Evaluation Process:**

The course will be graded on a total points system and there will be a possible 300 points for the course. There will be three section exams, a research paper, and a final exam. The first two section exams will be worth 30 points and the third exam 40 points, the paper is worth a total of 100 points but is turned in twice. The first time the paper is turned in it will be worth 25 points and the second time it will be worth 75 points. The final exam is worth 100 points.

A (285-300 Points)

A- (270-284 Points)

B+ (260-269 Points)

B (250-259 Points)

B- (240-249 Points)

C+ (230-239 Points)

C (200-229 Points)

D (180-199 Points)

F (< 180 Points)

### **Section Exams/Final Exam:**

The section exams and the final exam will consist of multiple choice questions and the exams will be taken on-line through the Blackboard website. Because the exams are taken on-line, from home, they are open book and open notes. Yet, please be aware there will not be sufficient time to look up the answers to the exam questions during the time allotted for you to take the exam. Once you open an exam the clock starts and there is no stopping the clock during the exam. Specifically, the first two section exams will last 45 minutes, the third section exam will last 60 minutes and the 50 question final exam will last 75 minutes. On the final exam each question is worth two points. All exams will be open for a 10 hour window, on a Thursday, and you must complete the exam during that time period. The exact dates are provided in the class schedule below. Once the allotted time for an exam is over you will have a 60 second grace period to finish up and submit. Each minute you run over the allotted time will result in two points being subtracted from your score. *Note: If you have multiple windows open and are trying to complete the exam while looking for the answers using Google, on-line course materials, or the textbook you will increase the risk of technical problems that could result in your test "freezing-up" or some other related technology issue. The best thing to do is prepare well in advance before opening an exam. Because the exams are available in a 10-hour window and the exams can be taken from anywhere, there will be no make-up exams.*

### **Paper Assignments:**

*Introduction Paper:* The paper is submitted the first time, via Blackboard (which uses Safe Assign Software) by midnight on the date specified in the class schedule. This paper should detail your research question, explain to the reader why this is an important question, and also provide a literature review. There is no predetermined number of references. At minimum, you will want to cite the major works in your research area from the top political science journals (*American Political Science Review*, *American Journal of Political Science*, and *Journal of Politics*). An appropriate length might be somewhere between 600 and 1200 words.

*Final Paper:* The final paper must address the feedback provided by the professor on the Introduction Paper. This paper should be submitted via Blackboard (which uses Safe Assign Software) by midnight on the date specified in the class schedule. The paper will consist of an improved first half of the paper and you will add to this a research design, which spells out the steps you would take to carry out the research. The best final papers will include an appendix, which communicates progress made toward actually conducting the research. For instance, the Appendix might include a survey instrument or an interview script. If you are using archival data, your Appendix might include the sources where the data can be obtained, and a descriptive table; perhaps a display of values on the dependent variable.

More specifics regarding each assignment are provided in the grading rubrics that appear at the end of this syllabus. Assignments must be typed, double-spaced, with font Times New Roman-12. Margins should be 1.25 inches left and right and 1.00 inch top and bottom. Failure to follow these guidelines will result in a lower score.

**Extra-Credit Assignments:**

There will be extra-credit available for attending specific events on campus this fall. Some of you will have more availability than others when it comes to attending these events.

Unfortunately, I will not be able to schedule these in a manner that will give every student equal opportunity to gain extra-credit. For instance, students who work fulltime, while going to school fulltime, may not be able to attend these events. The first event will be on October 19<sup>th</sup> at 5:00p in the Holmes Student Center (HSC) Sky Room. Then there will be two events on November 3<sup>rd</sup>. The first is from 10:00 to 11:15a in the Sandberg Auditorium of the HSC and the second will be in the same room on the same date from 1:00 to 2:00p. A fourth event will be held on November 16<sup>th</sup> from 2:00 to 3:00, with the location yet to be determined. The first event you attend will earn you 5 points on your final exam, the second event 4 points, and third and fourth events 3 points each. As proof of attendance you simply need to type up a couple of sentences that state something you learned at the event. These short narratives will be due on the first class date following the event. The due dates are mentioned in the schedule below.

**CLASS SCHEDULE**

| <i>Date</i> | <i>Lecture Topics/Exams and Assignments</i>                                    | <i>Reading Assignment</i>   |
|-------------|--|---|
| 08/29/2017  | Discuss the History of Congress  | Chronology: Website   |
| 08/31/2017  | Discuss the History of Congress<br>(GA Leads Discussion)                       | Chronology: Website   |
| 09/05/2017  | Glossary – Terms Available on BB   | Glossary A-D  |
| 09/07/2017  | Glossary – Terms Available on BB   | Glossary E-J  |
| 09/12/2017  | Glossary – Terms Available on BB   | Glossary L-P  |
| 09/14/2017  | Glossary – Terms Available on BB<br><b>Section Exam I - (2:00 to Midnight)</b> | Glossary Q-Z  |
| 09/19/2017  | Stages of a Congressional Campaign   | <i>Congress Reconsidered</i> –<br>Parts 1 & 2                           |
| 09/21/2017  | Knowing the District &<br>Incumbency Advantages                                | <i>Congress Reconsidered</i> –<br>Parts 1 & 2                           |
| 09/26/2017  | Successful Campaigns &<br>The Lack of Competition                              | <i>Congress Reconsidered</i> –<br>Parts 1 & 2                           |
| 09/28/2017  | Negative Campaigns &<br>Election Summary                                       | <i>Congress Reconsidered</i> –<br>Parts 1 & 2                           |
| 10/03/2017  | Congressional Leaders  | <i>Congress Reconsidered</i> –<br>Parts 1 & 2                           |
| 10/05/2017  | Congress and the Media<br><b>Section Exam II - (2:00 to Midnight)</b>          | <i>Congress Reconsidered</i> –<br>Parts 1 & 2                           |
| 10/10/2017  | Party In Congress<br><i>Discuss Paper Topics</i>                               | <i>Congress Reconsidered</i> –<br>Parts 3, 4 & 5<br>Independent Reading |
| 10/12/2017  | Hill Committees &<br>The Decline of Party?<br><i>Discuss Paper Topics</i>      | <i>Congress Reconsidered</i> –<br>Parts 3, 4 & 5<br>Independent Reading |

|            |  |   |
|------------|--|---|
| 10/17/2017 | Types of Legislation<br><i>Discuss Paper Topics</i>  | <i>Congress Reconsidered –<br/>Parts 3, 4 &amp; 5<br/>Independent Reading</i> |
| 10/19/2017 | Submitting Legislation &<br>Committee Referral<br><i>Discuss Paper Topics</i>  | <i>Congress Reconsidered –<br/>Parts 3, 4 &amp; 5<br/>Independent Reading</i> |
| 10/24/2017 | <b>1<sup>st</sup> Extra-credit assignment is due</b><br>Calendars<br><i>Discuss Paper Topics</i>                               | <i>Congress Reconsidered –<br/>Parts 3, 4 &amp; 5<br/>Independent Reading</i> |
| 10/26/2017 | House and Senate Floors<br><b>Part I of Paper Due (Midnight)</b>   | <i>Congress Reconsidered –<br/>Parts 3, 4 &amp; 5</i>                         |
| 10/31/2017 | Both Floors &<br>The President's Options   | <i>Congress Reconsidered –<br/>Parts 3, 4 &amp; 5</i>                         |
| 11/02/2017 | All Committees in Congress   | <i>Congress Reconsidered –<br/>Parts 3, 4 &amp; 5</i>                         |
| 11/07/2017 | <b>2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Extra-credit assignments<br/>are due</b><br>Legislative Committees &<br>Committee Leaders | <i>Congress Reconsidered –<br/>Parts 3, 4 &amp; 5</i>                         |
| 11/09/2017 | Committee Workload &<br>Committee Assignments  | <i>Congress Reconsidered –<br/>Parts 3, 4 &amp; 5</i>                         |
| 11/14/2017 | The President and Congress   | <i>Congress Reconsidered –<br/>Parts 3, 4 &amp; 5</i>                         |
| 11/16/2017 | Policy Making  | <i>Congress Reconsidered –<br/>Parts 3, 4 &amp; 5</i>                         |
| 11/21/2017 | <b>4<sup>th</sup> Extra-credit assignment is due</b><br>Interest Groups & Congress<br><b>Final Paper Due (Midnight)</b>        | <i>Congress Reconsidered –<br/>Parts 3, 4 &amp; 5</i>                         |
| 11/23/2017 | THANKSGIVING – No Class  |   |
| 11/28/2017 | Lobbying &<br>Policy Subsystems  | <i>Congress Reconsidered –<br/>Parts 3, 4 &amp; 5</i>                         |
| 11/30/2017 | Expectations and Innovations<br><b>Section Exam III - (2:00 to Midnight)</b>   | <i>Congress Reconsidered –<br/>Parts 3, 4 &amp; 5</i>                         |
| 12/05/2017 | Course Review – Exam III   | Review All Readings   |
| 12/07/2017 | Course Review – Exams I & II   | Review All Readings   |
| 12/12/2017 | <b>Office Hours held in the Classroom, Noon to 1:50 –<br/>Final Exam 2:00 to Midnight</b>                                      |   |

**Disclaimer** – Test times and reading assignments are subject to change. Regular attendance in class will assure students have all the needed information to successfully complete the course.

**Academic Integrity:**

Good academic work must be based on honesty. The attempt of any student to present as his or her own work that which he or she has not produced is regarded by the faculty and administration as a serious offense. Students are considered to have cheated if they copy the

work of another during an examination or turn in a paper or an assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else. Students are responsible for plagiarism, intentional or not, if they copy material from books, magazines, or other sources without identifying and acknowledging those sources or if they paraphrase ideas from such sources without acknowledging them. Students responsible for or assisting others in, either cheating or plagiarism on an assignment, quiz, or examination may receive a grade of F for the course involved and may be suspended or dismissed from the university.

A faculty member has original jurisdiction over any instances of academic misconduct that occur in a course which the faculty member is teaching. The student shall be given the opportunity to resolve the matter in meetings with the faculty member and the department chair. If the facts of the incident are not disputed by the student, the faculty member may elect to resolve the matter at that level by levying a sanction no greater than an F for that course. The faculty member shall notify the student in writing whenever such action is taken, and the Office of Community Standards and Student Conduct shall receive a copy of the Academic Misconduct Incident Report indicating final disposition of the case, which will be placed in the student's judicial file. In all matters where the charge of academic misconduct is disputed by the student or if the faculty member feels a sanction greater than an F in the course is appropriate (such as repeated offenses or flagrant violations), the faculty member shall refer the matter to the Office of Community Standards and Student Conduct making use of the Academic Misconduct Incident Report. Additional sanctions greater than an F in a course can be levied only through the University Judicial System. With regards to finding the student either responsible or not responsible for his or her action, the ruling of the Judicial Hearing Board shall be binding. In cases where there is either a finding of responsibility or an admission of responsibility by the student, any recommendations by the hearing board regarding the course grade are non-binding on the instructor, who remains solely responsible for assigning a course grade, consistent with the policies set forth in the course syllabus.

### **University Attendance Policy:**

The University does not use a "cut" system. Each instructor decides whether to excuse class absences and determines how to permit make-up work.

If a student will be absent from classes for a week or more because of an accident, illness, or other emergency, instructors will be notified of the absence only if students or their parents request it through the Division of Student Affairs. Health Services will not release information about students unless they provide a written request.

Leaves of absence will be granted for volunteer services related to disaster relief in accordance with applicable Illinois statutes or executive orders issued by the State of Illinois in response to emergency situations. To initiate a leave of absence, students should contact their College Dean's office, or the vice provost (or the vice provost's delegate) for any student who has no college affiliation. Following the period of volunteer service, Registration and Records will facilitate reenrollment of the student.

Students are expected to comply with each individual instructor's established attendance policy. It is recommended that students avoid registering for classes in which they would amass significant absences. In the case of an absence due to required attendance at a university-

sponsored event such as a department trip, performing arts activity, ROTC function, or athletic competition, reasonable attempts shall be made by faculty members to allow the student to make up missed work. Students are responsible for completing the work assigned and/or due on the days they are absent for university-sponsored events. Both the sponsoring unit and the student should inform the faculty member as soon as possible in the semester in order for arrangements to be made for completing missed assignments, examinations or other required course work. The student is required to provide each instructor with an official notification in advance of the absence (e.g., a letter from the chair of the sponsoring department, the head of the sponsoring unit, or the coach).

### **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:**

A student who believes that reasonable accommodations with respect to course work or other academic requirements may be appropriate in consideration of a disability must (1) provide the required verification of the disability to the Disability Resource Center, (2) meet with the Disability Resource Center to determine appropriate accommodations, and (3) inform the faculty in charge of the academic activity of the need for accommodation. Students are encouraged to inform the faculty of their requests for accommodations as early as possible in the semester, but must make the requests in a timely enough manner for accommodations to be appropriately considered and reviewed by the university. If contacted by the faculty member, the staff of the Disability Resource Center will provide advice about accommodations that may be indicated in the particular case. Students who make requests for reasonable accommodations are expected to follow the policies and procedures of the Disability Resource Center in this process, including but not limited to the Student Handbook.

A wide range of services can be obtained by students with disabilities, including housing, transportation, adaptation of printed materials, and advocacy with faculty and staff. Students with disabilities who need such services or want more information should contact the Disability Resource Center at 815-753-1303.

### **Undergraduate Writing Awards:**

The Department of Political Science will recognize, on an annual basis, outstanding undergraduate papers written in conjunction with 300-400 level political science courses or directed studies. Authors do not have to be political science majors or have a particular class standing. Winners are expected to attend the Department's spring graduation ceremony where they will receive a certificate and \$50.00. Papers, which can be submitted by students or faculty, must be supplied in triplicate to a department secretary by February 28. All copies should have two cover pages - one with the student's name and one without the student's name. Only papers written in the previous calendar year can be considered for the award. However, papers completed in the current spring semester are eligible for the following year's competition even if the student has graduated.

### **Department of Political Science Web Site:**

Undergraduates are encouraged to consult the Department of Political Science web site on a regular basis. This up-to-date, central source of information will assist students in contacting faculty and staff, reviewing course requirements and syllabi, exploring graduate study, researching career options, tracking department events, and accessing important details related to

undergraduate programs and activities. To reach the site, go to <http://polisci.niu.edu>. Also, if you would like to receive the department's e-announcements that feature information on internships, scholarships, lectures, POLS club activities, and other important information via email, please let me know and I will make sure you are added to the list.

**INTRODUCTION PAPERS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED FOR CREDIT AFTER  
NOVEMBER 1<sup>ST</sup>, 2017 & FINAL PAPERS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED FOR CREDIT  
AFTER DECEMBER 12, 2017**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Grading Rubric for Introduction Paper  
Fall 2017**

Assignment is submitted on time (0 - - - - - 5 pts.) \_\_\_\_\_

Topic is discussed with professor before due date (0 - - - - - 5 pts.) \_\_\_\_\_

Introduction is comprehensive (0 - - - - - 10 pts.) \_\_\_\_\_  
(Answers the question "So what?" and is grounded in existing research)

Well-written (proofreading issues) (0 - - - - - 5 pts.) \_\_\_\_\_

Total Score \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Grading Rubric for Final Papers  
Fall 2017**

Assignment is submitted on time (0 - - - - - 10) \_\_\_\_\_

Significant improvements to the Introduction (0 - - - - - 20) \_\_\_\_\_

Students hypotheses are backed by quality theory (0 - - - - - 20) \_\_\_\_\_  
(‘Quality theory’ is defined as face valid explanations for why one thing should cause another.)

Research Design is well-organized and complete (0 - - - - - 10) \_\_\_\_\_

Grammar (minus one for each set of three obvious errors) (0 - - - - - 15) \_\_\_\_\_

Extra-credit – Possible additional points for an  
extraordinarily comprehensiveness design. \_\_\_\_\_

Total Score \_\_\_\_\_

Note: The Final Papers are only “scored” not graded. However, if a student sets an appointment to meet with me during the inter-semester break the paper can be discussed in detail at that time.