

GVPT 473

Fall 2018
E. Uslaner
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MW 10-10:50 a.m.
Chincoteague 4121, x54151

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The U.S. Congress

This course will examine politics and policy-making in the U.S. Congress. We shall focus on what motivates members of Congress, how bills become (or don't become) laws, how Congress has changed over the past two decades, the roles of committees, parties, and the President in affecting Congressional decision-making, and elections and representation.

The course requirements include: (1) a midterm examination on covering material through Topic 4 (15 percent of your grade); (2) a 10 page paper in which you analyze the fate of a bill introduced in the 115th Congress (30 percent of your grade, due on December 4 **in class**); (3) a critique of another student's outline (see below, 5 percent of your grade); (4) a take-home final examination due on Tuesday December 19 by 9:00 a.m. in my office (40 percent of your grade); and (5) class participation in lectures and discussion sections (10 percent of your grade). **See the end of the syllabus for the take-home final and the requirements for the paper.** You are also required to turn in a one-page statement of your paper proposal by October 18. This paper will not be graded but if you do not turn it in on time, you will lose one-half a grade on your course paper.

We will also meet in groups to discuss paper outlines on December 3. The purpose of this class is to get feedback on your paper well before you have to turn it in. Students will critique each others' work and offer constructive suggestions for improvement. We will meet in groups of 3-4 students each (with Mr.Hightower). You will also be required to turn in five copies of a three-page outline of your paper by November 20. On November 29th, we will meet in groups. You will present your paper briefly to the group and one member of the group will write a one-page constructive critique of someone else's paper. Other students are expected to have read the outlines and we shall meet in groups to help each other. The one page critique will be graded and constitutes five percent of your grade in the course.

I encourage you to set up meetings on your paper with either Mr. Hightower or myself.

All written work must be your own. Copying the work of others, whether that of fellow students or anyone else, constitutes plagiarism. You need not copy a work in its entirety to plagiarize. The university defines plagiarism as using the works of others without attribution. I also include the use of others' words with attribution **if your use of others' words are excessive**. If you have any questions about what constitutes excessive use of other people's words, please ask me. The paper is an exercise in research, not retyping others' words. Should anyone have **any** questions, please feel free to consult me. **All cases of plagiarism will be referred to the University Honors Court.**

I expect you to take care with your writing. An excessive number of spelling and/or grammatical errors will lead to a reduction in your grade on both the paper and essay questions on examinations.

Please also note: the course paper is due *in class* on December 3, 2018 and the take home final is due in my office or Mr. Hightower's office by 10:00 a.m. on December 18, 2018. The Department of Government and Politics will not accept papers.

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER:

- * **OCTOBER 18: ONE-PAGE STATEMENT OF YOUR PAPER TOPIC**
- * **OCTOBER 22: MID-TERM EXAMINATION**
- * **NOVEMBER 26: PAPER OUTLINE FOR GROUP DISCUSSION ON 12/3**
- * **DECEMBER 3: COURSE PAPER DUE (IN CLASS)**
- * **DECEMBER 18: TAKE-HOME FINAL DUE (10:00 A.M. IN MY OFFICE OR MR. HIGHTOWER'S OFFICE).**

All papers and exams must be turned in with hard copies. There are simply too many papers for us to download. And, sorry, we do not discuss grades over e-mail. I am happy to send you the final examination with comments if you give me a stamped, self-addressed envelope. The paper will be graded before the examination is due. **You may send the paper outlines to others in your group by e-mail, but please bring copies for Mr. Hightower and myself to class in hard copy.**

Do not send us papers or any assignments as e-mail attachments, not even to show that you actually have done the work. All emails with attached assignments will be deleted as if we did not receive them. And you will lose a full grade on the hard copy when you submit it. There are no circumstances under which I will make an exception, so please don't ask

For all written work: Any citation style is fine, but: Any citations to a web page must give the full URL, not just www.nytimes.com (for example). And Wikipedia references are not allowed and will be penalized..

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FROM THE BSOS DEAN'S OFFICE.

These are university policies that you need to know with amendments as noted:

- The university permits students to present one note per semester for a medical excuse for a regular class session (not classes when assignments are due or tests are given). However, I do not require attendance. However, you can't do well in participation if you do not come to class.
- Any student with a disability should speak to me as soon as possible. I will make every effort to accommodate students who are registered with the Disability Support Service (DSS) Office and who provide me with a University of Maryland DSS Accommodation form.. Only written DSS documentation of the accommodation will be considered. This form must be presented to me no later than October 8, 2018. I am not able to accommodate students who are not registered with DSS or who provide me with documentation which has not been reviewed and approved by UM's DSS Office after October 8, 2018.
- The university's policies on illness and religious holidays can be found at: More detail on documenting an illness of a student can be found at <http://www.president.umd.edu/policies/v100g.html>. More detail on excused absences for religious observances and participation in university activities at the request of University authorities can be found below under the "Assessment" heading at this link <http://www.testudo.umd.edu/soc/atedasse.html>.
- On the date for the midterm examination:: "On exam day, students should arrive to class with no more in their hands than UM Student I.D, paper and pen. If students must bring items to class, students must deposit items in a box at the front of the class. Student will receive a zero on the exam if during the exam a student is caught with anything more than a writing implement and paper."
- "Students are expected to treat each other with respect. Disruptive behavior of any kind will not be tolerated. Students who are unable to demonstrate civility with one another, the teaching assistants, or me will be subject to referral to the Office of Student Conduct or to the University Campus Police. You are expected to adhere to the Code of Student Conduct."
- Students may bring their laptops to class to take notes only. If a student is found to be using a lap top for any other reason than taking notes, then, that student will lose the privilege of bringing their computer to class. All technological devices, except a laptop computer are prohibited in this class including MP3 devices, smart phones, phones, calculators, gaming devices, etc. If these devices are seen and/or used during the class, the student will be asked to leave the class immediately. If these devices are seen and/or used during an exam, the exam will be collected from the student and the student will no longer be allowed to continue taking the exam. The exam score will be noted as 0".
- **Very critically, the university policy on missed assignments is:** “ For a major

assignment/exam, I will require a Health Center or medical doctor's health excuse. If you do not inform me or if you do not present me with timely documentation, you will receive an F for the assignment/exam/paper. Note: In the case that you are unable to get a written medical excuse, you may ask your provider for a copy of your medical notes for the specific visit(s) in question.

- If you have a medical excuse for a major assignment, you need to contact me **prior to missing the assignment, paper, or examination**. If you have a legitimate excuse, you may take a make-up examination at the first date that your doctor tells me (in writing) that you are able to complete the assignment, but no later than one week after the due date (unless there are extenuating circumstances). If you miss an assignment or an examination without a certified medical excuse, I will deduct a full grade for the first day. By the second day, we will not accept a late paper/exam and the grade will be F. **Papers must be handed in by hard copy in class the day the assignment is due. Grade deductions begin at the end of the class when the assignment is due.** The final examination is due by 10 a.m. on December 18. Papers received at 10:01 will lose a full grade. There are no exceptions, so if you are worried about getting to campus by 10, it is best to leave very early.

Four books are required for the course. Three are available at the University Book Center and the Maryland Book Exchange. They are:

David R. Mayhew, Congress: The Electoral Connection
L.C. Dodd and B.I. Oppenheimer, eds., Congress Reconsidered, 11th edition
Mann and Ornstein, It's Even Worse Than It Looks

You will also be reading

T.R. Reid, Congressional Odyssey. This is out-of-print and dated, but nothing better has ever been written. A scanned copy will be available on ELMS.

Other assignments are available on ELMS.

The topical outline and reading assignments are as follows:

<u>Week/Date</u>	<u>Topic/Assignments</u>
8/27 (1)	Introduction
8/29	NO CLASS
9/3	NO CLASS LABOR DAY
(2) 9/5 9/12, 9/17, 24	Policy Formation in Congress Reid, entire
9/10 9/19	NO CLASS ROSH HASHANAH NO CLASS YOM KIPPUR
(3) 9/26 10/1. 3	What Motivates Members of Congress? Mayhew, entire Roll Call, "Cramer Gets Closer to Constituents on the Radio," on ELMS Schulz, "What Calling Congress Achieves," on ELMS *Lieber , "When to Call Your Elected Representatives for Help" on ELMS
10/5	Conducting research for the course paper (in sections) Ms. Judy Markowitz, GVPT reference librarian, will discuss resources for the paper. The class will meet in McKeldin 6107.

(4) How Congress Has Changed: Norms

10/10,

10/15

10/17

Dodd and Oppenheimer, chs.1 (Sinclair), 13 (Koger), 16 (Binder/Maltzman)

Wolfensberger, "Civility, Society, and Politics: Is There a Problem?" on ELMS.

Freeman, "Mitch McConnell: The Power of 41 Senators" on ELMS

*Stolberg and Fandos, "As Gridlock Deepens in Congress, Only Gloom Is Bipartisan" on ELMS

*Killgough, "Joe Manchin Wants Senators to Sign a Pledge: Don't Campaign Against Each Other"

*Moderate GOP Charlie Dent Not Running for Reelection" on ELMS

*Weigel, "How the Clinton-gingrich Years Became 'The Good Old Days': Republicans Revisit 1994," on ELMS

10/22

MIDTERM EXAMINATION

(5)

10/24, 26 Parties and Committees in Congress

Dodd and Oppenheimer, chs.2 (Aldrich/Rohde), 7 (Smith/Gann), 8 (Binder),
9 (Dodd/Schraufnagel)

Jonas, "The Most Talented Politician of Our Time," on ELMS

*Kane, "Discipline and Herding Cats" on ELMS

*Berry, "Tea Party Decline" on ELMS

(6)

10/31, 11/5 What Do Constituents Want from their Members of Congress?

Wolfensberger. "Does Congress Care About Public Opinion?" on ELMS

Jacobson, "It's Nothing Personal: The Decline of the Incumbency Advantage in US House Elections," Journal of Politics, 77 (2015), on ELMS

Lapinski, Levendusky, Winneg, and Jamieson, "What Do Citizens Want from Their Member of Congress?" Political Research Quarterly, on ELMS

Travis Dorman and Rachel Ohm, "U.S. Rep. Duncan rejects town hall requests, citing extremists," on ELMS

*Colorado, Guns, and Politics," on ELMS

*Bustos and Johnson, "Hope from the Heartland" on ELMS

(7)

11//7, 12 The Freedom Caucus, Gridlock, and Constituencies

Mann and Ornstein, Part I.

Madonna and Kosar, “The House Freedom Caucus wants looser party control on the floor. This is what would happen if they got it,” on ELMS

Bade and Cheney, “Freedom Caucus Seeks to Make McCarthy Pay to Become Speaker” on ELMS

Bade and Caygle, “Freedom Caucus Stiffs GOP on Campaign Cash, on ELMS

Roll Call, “For Freedom Caucus, No Place Like Home,” on ELMS

Roll Call, “Gohmert Gets Into Beef With Photographer During Sessions Hearing,” on ELMS

Roll Call, "Johnson's Office Sends Cease and Desist Letter to Constituent," on ELMS

Bernstein, “Kansas Lawmaker Who Opposed Farm Bill Faces Blowback,” on ELMS

Alberta, “This Is Place That Just Sucks Your Soul,” on ELMS

11/14 Video: PBS John McCain

11/19 Video, McCain; Video, “The Circus: Checking and Balancing”

11/19 Discussion of “The Circus” and “John McCain” videos (continues in sections 11/2 4)

11/21 NO CLASS, THANKSGIVING

11/26 Guest lecture, Margaret White, Nolabels.org

11/26 Paper outlines for group discussions due

11/28 Guest lecture, Lawrence Haas, on bipartisanship between President and Congress

12/3 Group Meetings

(8)

12/5, 10 Congressional Elections

Dodd and Oppenheimer, chs. 3 (Erikson/Wright) , 4 (Jacobson), 5 (Jordan et al), 18 (Dodd/Oppenheimer)

12/3 **Course paper due in class.**

TAKE-HOME FINAL EXAMINATION

Fall 2018

E. Uslaner

This examination is due on in either my office, or Mr. Hightower's office by 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday, December 18, 2018. We leave at precisely 10:00 a.m. Late papers without a medical excuse will lose a full grade the first day and will not be accepted after one day.

You have been selected as an advisor to either Democrat Alice Fortitude, a Marine veteran who has never held elective office, or to Earl Grey, the Republican who captured the seat from a veteran Democrat in 2010 as the Tea Party movement propelled many Republican challengers into victory, but lost his reelection in 2012. He came back to win the seat in 2014 and 2016 in close races against the long-term Democratic incumbent Jack Wolfman. The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee was wary of supporting Wolfman again in 2018 after two losses and threw its support behind Fortitude.

Democrats had put considerable resources into recruiting both women and military veterans to challenge vulnerable Republicans. Fortitude was thus an ideal candidate—a strong defender of America's role as a military power who rose to the rank of Lt. Colonel and served alongside Major Harvey Wallbanger, whom she married when they both retired from the armed forces. Wallbanger served as the Director of Citizens for Gun Safety in their home state of Transylvania. He and Fortitude also worked with groups of "Dreamers" to help them to organize a drive for citizenship. Fortitude and Wallbanger call themselves "progressive centrists" and argue that Grey has become too close to President Trump.

Even as Grey was originally elected with backing from the Tea Party, he has moved to the center and opposed the President's positions on trade and immigration. The 7th Congressional district of Transylvania, which he represents, has a diverse population—which has led Grey to support a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants who came to the United States as children. Grey still supports most of President Trump's agenda and has defended the President against attacks by Fortitude.

The races for the seat have been very competitive in recent years. Wolfman had won convincingly from 1992 to 2008, averaging 60 percent of the vote. Grey's victory in 2010 was narrow (only 51 percent against Wolfman) and Wolfman reclaimed his seat in 2012 with 55 percent of the vote. Grey took the seat back in 2014 with 53 percent and won with 52 percent in 2016.

Wolfman had been a consistent liberal when he was in the House. He was close to organized

labor, environmental organizations, and women's organizations. These groups urged him to run again in 2018. He considered running but ultimately decided not to run. He has not been close to Fortitude and she has shied away from ties to these organizations. She calls herself "an independent Democrat, not bound to any ideology and seeking to find solutions that bring people together." She has promised her constituents not to support Nancy Pelosi as Democratic leader and has opposed impeaching Donald Trump. "The better solution is to elect a Democratic President in 2020 to work with the Democratic Congress we will elect in 2018." But she has promised to work to overturn the Trump tax cuts, to restore the changes to the Affordable Care Act, and to push for legislation that affirms Second Amendment rights but also places "reasonable restrictions on who can buy automatic weapons" and to require "licensing of guns just as we license automobiles."

Grey has supported the President on almost all of his legislative agenda. He was a strong supporter of the tax cuts. Even as he supports a compromise on immigration for undocumented immigrants, he also supports Trump's insistence to build a wall on the border with Mexico. "I don't believe Alice Fortitude's promise not to back Nancy Pelosi as Democratic leader. If not Nancy Pelosi, then who will she support?"

Although he was elected with Tea Party support, Grey often felt that it was more important to become a key player in Congress rather than to be a strong ideologue. He worked with Speaker The 7th district had been competitive in the 1980s, voting for Reagan in 1980 and 1984, but shifting toward the Democrats beginning in 1988, when Michael Dukakis carried it with 54 percent of the vote. Bill Clinton scored decisive victories in the district, as did Democratic candidates for Governor and Senator. The Republicans briefly won a majority in the state legislature in their nationwide sweep in 1994, but they lost it two years later. So many observers were stunned when the Republicans won large majorities in the state legislature and carried five of the eight House seats, as well as winning both the Governorship and a U.S. Senate seat. While the Democrats came back to win control of both houses of the state legislature in 2012, the Republicans cut the Democratic majorities to razor-thin margins and won control of the Governorship. In 2018 the Democrats recruited their favorite candidate, Ronald Bump, who has served in the state legislature and is an independent business executive who has promised to spend \$10 million of his own money to win the race. "Bump not Trump" is his campaign slogan and he says, "Donald Trump and Earl Grey want to take away your health care. Alice Fortitude wants to protect Obamacare and I want to expand it in Transylvania. Everyone will be covered, as I cover all of my employees and their families. It's not fair that I get good health care just because I am wealthy. When you make a lot of money you need to give a lot back. That's our message and we won't forget the average person."

Grey is hoping that 2010, 2014, and 2016 were not flukes. He is hoping to get reelected and Republicans believe that they have a chance to turn Transylvania into a red state. Grey has established a strong constituency service record with half of his staff based in the district. Grey has served on the House Budget Committee where he has worked closely with Speaker Paul Ryan to hold down federal spending. But he has also been a member of the Veterans Affairs Committee, where he has worked to provide increased support for veterans hospitals in the 7th district.

The district is a mixture of urban and suburban neighborhoods, with a per capita income close

to the nation's average. The urban areas have substantial black and Hispanic populations.

You can choose to be an advisor to either Wolfman or to Grey. For either choice, you must put aside any partisanship you might have and give him the best advice you can. Again, you can only advise one of the two candidates.

Your chosen candidate would want your advice on the following questions: (1) Should he drift to the center, or should he veer more toward his party's base? (2) Should he maintain his current committee positions or seek assignment to a different committee? (3) Which issues should he stress and which should he avoid? (4) Should he try to paint his opponent as too ideologically extreme or might this strategy backfire? and (5) How would you design his strategy in 2018?

A strong answer must draw upon both course reading and lectures. *An answer that does not draw heavily upon both reading and lectures can receive a grade no higher than C. To receive a C, your answer must have at least 3 citations from the reading. To receive a grade higher than a C, your answer must have substantially more citations from the reading. The key to getting a good grade is to write a strong essay that relies upon a very wide range of readings; the more citations you have, the better your chances of a good grade are. Three citations does not guarantee a C or any other grade. The quality of your answer is key, but a good answer must rely heavily upon course readings.*

Three citations (or even 33) doesn't guarantee a grade higher than a C. However, too few citations will lead to a low grade regardless of the quality of your answer. But many citations will not make up for a weak argument.

COURSE PAPER REQUIREMENTS

Each student will prepare a paper of approximately 10 pages (typed and double-spaced) about a bill considered in a recent Congress. You must select a bill considered in the 115th Congress (2017-2018), but if you can make a good case for a bill considered in an earlier Congress, that will be acceptable providing you clear it with me or Mr. Hightower first.

You must hand in a one-page statement of the bill you intend to investigate by October 2. This paper will not be graded, but failure to turn in this short paper will lower your grade on the full paper by one-third of a grade for each day late. The full paper is due **in class** on December 2.

The bill need not have passed. The focus of your paper should be why the bill passed *or did not pass*. You should consider:

- the subject matter of the legislation—is this a bill with a lot of popular support or is it highly controversial? What can you find about public opinion on this bill (or the more general idea behind the legislation)? (If you can't find public attitudes about a specific bill on gun control, for example, what can you find about gun control in general?)
- who was in favor of the bill and who opposed it? What stand, if any, did the President take? What stand, if any, did the majority party leadership take in each House? Were the supporters or opponents “big players” in Congress?
- to which committee(s) was the bill referred? What happened in committee and subcommittee? Were the committee and subcommittee leaders favorable to the bill? What happened at the hearings for the bill? Who testified in favor of the bill and who testified against it? What was the balance of the testimony? Is there any evidence that the hearings made a difference in the outcome of the bill?
- for the House: did the bill make it out of committee and to the floor? If not, why not? Did the bill go to the House Rules Committee? If so, what happened (what type of rule did the bill get) and why? Was there a fight over the rule on the House floor? for the Senate: why was the procedure under which the bill was brought up (explain any unusual procedure).
- what were the coalitions in favor of and opposed to the bill? Can you find evidence of deals made between different factions that might help pass the bill?
- are there clear-cut electoral implications for how members might vote on the bill? Might these implications differ for Republicans and Democrats?
- finally, why do you think that the bill passed or failed? If the bill only passed one house, why did it pass that house?

Good places to begin are the online data bases (through the library) of CQ Magazine, CQ Almanac, and the National Journal Policy Database, as well as Congressional Publications (Proquest), and the web site for the Congress, www.thomas.gov. We will discuss other resources when the Government and Politics librarian, Judy Markowitz, talks to the class on October 5. The class will meet in McKeldin 6107.

A key requirement of the paper is that it follow our class discussion. The paper, like the take-home final, must have references to the lectures and especially to the readings. As with the take-home final, a paper with three or fewer references to the reading cannot receive a grade higher than a C. Three

references do not guarantee a C.

YOU MAY USE ANY FORMATTING STYLE YOU WISH—EXCEPT THAT ANY SOURCE YOU CITE MUST BE DETAILED. FOR BOOKS AND ARTICLES, YOU MUST CITE PAGE NUMBERS. FOR ANY MATERIALS ON THE WEB, YOU MUST CITE THE FULL URL, NOT JUST www.nytimes.com, but:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/04/us/politics/house-gop-again-votes-to-repeal-health-care-law.html>

This requirement overrides any decision to use specific citation styles.