

Political Science 155/155L: Congress

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Winter, 2022
Zoom Office Hours: Mon, Wed 1-2
and by appointment

“Laws are like sausages. It’s better not to see them being made.”



This is a course on the U.S. Congress. This course is designed to be a total "immersion" into the legislative process, particularly the U.S. House of Representatives. Each house of Congress has formal and informal hierarchies of influence, norms, expectations for behavior, complicated rules, and traditions. These factors affect the goals of individual members of Congress and how members act to achieve their goals. At the same time, the legislature is part of a larger political system. Members work in the context of constituent desires, interest group activity, the presidency, the bureaucracy, the mass media, and electoral politics. The goal of this class is to learn how this congressional system works by looking at it from the inside.

This course will be taught in a mixed-mode format. The current plan is that most of the lectures and all of the simulation meetings will be live. This may change if COVID worsens. Lectures will be taped and posted on Gauchospace. However, when setting your schedule, you should assume that all lectures will be live.

The core of Political Science 155/155L (the lab is required) is a simulation of the U.S. House of Representatives, called SIMCONG. In SIMCONG, students act as legislators, the president and his or her advisors, and lobbyists. The legislators play the roles of real members of Congress and represent their districts in a legislative situation. The partisan and ideological balance and the regional distribution of SIMCONG representatives, as well as the rules and procedures regulating the flow of legislation, are as authentic as possible. A separate committee of students acts as the president and his or her advisors. They are responsible for developing and implementing a comprehensive presidential program. Three groups of lobbyists--representing labor and the left, business and the right, and environmental and consumer groups--develop their respective legislative programs and attempt to gain their passage.

Two papers, a procedure quiz, a midterm, a thesis/research statement, and a final examination are the basis for grades. The papers and the procedure quiz are integral parts of participation in the simulation. The quiz will test your understanding of legislative procedure as described in the assigned reading; it is intended to hasten your mastery of procedure and thereby facilitate the playing of your role. The first paper is a description of the person or organization you are assigned to play in the simulation. The second paper, a SIMCONG evaluation, will consist of a recapitulation of some of your SIMCONG experiences and an analysis of those experiences based on the readings, lectures, and some outside research. To help you get started on your papers, you will be required to submit a thesis/research statement in the seventh week. The thesis/research statement will describe the problem you will discuss, present a thesis, and

identify five or more academic sources for your paper. The paper is not intended to be a simple journal of your experiences. It is intended to be a serious academic paper in which you analyze your experiences using theories of congressional behavior. Both papers are described in more detail in the [Paper Requirements Page](#). Late papers will be accepted, but they will be penalized. See the paper requirements page for paper topics and other details. During the class, everyone is required to write legislation. The midterm and final examinations will be based on class readings, lectures, and discussions.

Evaluations of SIMCONG participation by the professor, the teaching assistants, and the student advisors will have an important influence on your course grade. These evaluations will be made on the basis of qualitative and quantitative participation. Qualitative participation can be conceived in terms of: (1) responsiveness to the opportunities and restraints imposed by a particular constituency or other situation--i.e., realistic behavior; (2) legislative effectiveness--i.e., the ability to accomplish specified policy objectives within SIMCONG; and (3) faithfulness in playing the character you are assigned. Quantitative participation refers to the amount of time and effort you put into the course. A portion of your participation grade will depend on quasi-objective indicators such as press releases, attendance records, voting records, campaign finance records, interest group ratings, and bills introduced and passed. **Please note that attendance is required even if your character has nothing to do at a class meeting.**

Grades for PS 155 will be based on the following factors:

- 10% Participation proposal
- 5% Procedure quiz
- 15% Midterm
- 5% Thesis/research statement
- 20% The evaluation paper
- 20% SIMCONG participation grade
- 25% Final examination

Final course grades for Political Science 155 (but not the Lab) will be determined by creating an additive index based from the above factors and applying a curve to the resulting index.

Grades for PS 155L, 2-unit laboratory grade: SIMCONG participation grade

Covid-19 Classroom Rules:

- Student non-compliance with COVID-19 health and safety requirements or with related directions from the instructor is a violation of the UCSB Standards of Conduct and will be adjudicated accordingly.
- All students in this course, as a condition of physical presence in this classroom (including for exams), must be compliant with the UC SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) Vaccination Program at all times.
- Instructors have been asked by the administration to direct any student who is not masked to don their mask immediately or leave the classroom. If a student still does not comply,

the instructor may cancel the class meeting and leave. Non-compliant students will be [reported to the Office of Student Conduct](#) for disciplinary measures.

Class Participation - Class participants are asked to help create a constructive learning environment in the following ways:

- Please show respect for other students; this includes not interrupting or attacking them personally in class.
- Discussions should take place within a context of academic inquiry and the spirit of understanding diverse perspectives and experiences.
- Any personal information shared by students in class should be considered confidential.



Academic integrity – Students attending the University of California are expected to understand and subscribe to the ideals of academic integrity and to bear individual responsibility for their work. Any work (written or otherwise) submitted to fulfill an academic requirement must represent a student’s original work. Any act of academic dishonesty, such as cheating or plagiarism, will subject a person to university disciplinary action. Using or attempting to use materials, information, study aids, or commercial “research” services not authorized by the instructor of the course constitutes cheating. The Campus Regulations have the following to say about plagiarism: "Representing the words, ideas, or concepts of another person without appropriate attribution is plagiarism. Whenever another person's written work is utilized, whether it be a single phrase or longer, quotation marks must be used and sources cited. Paraphrasing another's work, i.e., borrowing the ideas or concepts and putting them into one's 'own' words, must also be acknowledged." In addition, submitting the same paper to two classes is also considered cheating because the work is not original for both classes. Any act of plagiarism or other form of cheating will be rewarded with an automatic "F" and referral to the administration for further punishment (typically a two-quarter suspension for plagiarism).

I realize that few of you (and hopefully none) would cheat. However, some students do not know acceptable reference styles. You don't want to be in the position of having the TA wonder if you are plagiarizing or just don't know how to use quotation marks. In practical terms, this means that you must learn to use quotation marks, footnotes, and citations for your term papers and other writing assignments. You can find details about citation styles in Diana Hacker's *A Pocket Style Manual*. Another source is the *Chicago Manual of Style*, which you can find here: <https://www.library.ucsb.edu/node/2379>.

I strongly recommend that students take notes by hand, not by computer. Recent studies have shown that students learn material better and perform better on tests when they take notes by hand. See Robinson Meyer, “To Remember a Lecture Better, Take Notes by Hand” (posted on Gauchospace) and Pam Mueller and Daniel Oppenheimer, “The Pen Is Mightier Than the Keyboard: Advantages of Longhand Over Laptop Note Taking.” *Psychological Science* 25 (June, 2014):1159-68.

No recordings (via any medium, from audio to video) of lectures, class discussions, or sections may be made without my prior written permission.

Campus Resources for Students - If you experience difficulty in this course for any reason, please don't hesitate to consult with me or your teaching assistant. If you have a disability that may prevent you from fully demonstrating your abilities, you should contact me as soon as possible so we can discuss accommodations necessary to ensure your full participation and facilitate your educational process. A wide range of services is available to support you in your efforts to meet the course requirements:

- Campus Learning Assistance Service: 893-3269. CLAS helps students increase their mastery of course material through course-specific tutoring and academic skills development. Check out our tutorial groups and drop-in tutoring schedules posted on our web site: www.clas.ucsb.edu. Sign up for services at the CLAS main office, Building 477 9-5 daily.
- Counseling and Psychological Services: (893-4411, ww.counseling.ucsb.edu) offers counseling for personal concerns, self-help information, and connections to off-campus mental health resources.
- Disabled Students Program: 893-2668; www.sa.ucsb.edu/dsp. DSP provides academic support services to eligible students with temporary and permanent disabilities. Students with disabilities may request academic accommodations online through the UCSB Disabled Students Program at <http://dsp.sa.ucsb.edu/>. Please make your requests for accommodations through the online system as early in the quarter as possible to ensure proper arrangements.
- If you are facing any challenges in food or housing and believe this may affect your performance in the class, you are urged to meet with a Food Security and CalFresh Advocate who is aware of the broad variety of resources that UCSB has to offer. See their drop-in hours at food.ucsb.edu. You are also urged to contact the professor if you feel comfortable doing so.

Gender and Sex Discrimination Policy and Student Support: Under Title IX, university students are protected from harassment and discrimination based on gender and sex. If a student feels uncomfortable or in need of support at any time related to their gender, sex, and/or sexual orientation, please contact your instructor (me) and/or your TA immediately. UCSB's Resource Center for Sexual and Gender Diversity (<http://wgse.sa.ucsb.edu/sgd/home>) is also available to advocate and be of and support to students.

Required Texts:

SIMCONG: A Simulation of the U.S. House of Representatives (Posted below on this GauchoSpace page)

R. Douglas Arnold, *The Logic of Congressional Action*

Thomas Mann and Norman Ornstein, *It's Even Worse Than It Looks* or *It's Even Worse Than It Was* (1st or 2nd ed.)

Bryan W. Marshall and Bruce C. Wolpe, *The Committee*, 2nd ed

Roger Davidson & Walter Oleszek, *Congress and its Members*, 16th or 17th ed. (e-book)

The following abbreviations are used for assigned readings in the schedule below:

"Text"—Davidson et al., *Congress & Its Members*

"Manual"-- *SIMCONG Manual*

"Arnold"--Douglas Arnold, *Logic of Congressional Action*

"Marshall & Wolpe"-- Bryan Marshall and Bruce Wolpe, *The Committee*

"Mann et al."—Thomas Mann & Norman Ornstein, *It's Even Worse Than It Was*

"Price"—David Price, *The Congressional Experience*

Simulation Meeting and Office Hour Zoom links will be published on Gauchospace.

Nectir accounts are required (www.ucsb.nectir.io). You must sign up for the class channel and appropriate party caucus and committee channels.

Friday Committee Meeting Times (11:00-11:50)

Wednesday Caucus/Conference Times (11:00 - 12:00)

Wednesday House Floor Session (3:00-5:30 p.m.)

Monday Rules Committee Meeting (5:15 p.m.)

Daily Schedule (The schedule may change to accommodate guest speakers or alternative lecture topics. News items about current politics may be added to the reading list.)

Date	Class Period (MWF 11-12)	Reading	Lab (Wed 3:00-5:50)
Mon, 1-3	Introduction	Text, ch. 1, 2, 5	
Wed, 1-5	Congressional Committees I	Text, ch 7	Watch "PPT3- Thinking like a politician"
Fri, 1-7	Congressional Committees II	Manual: pp 1-44	
Mon, 1-10	Party leadership I	Manual: pp 46-end	

	<i>Role Preferences Due - Online</i>		
Wed, 1-12	Party leadership II	Text: ch 6, 8	3:00 Lecture on Library Research 4:00 Lecture on Parliamentary Procedure
Fri, 1-14	A Theoretical Framework regarding Committees <i>Role assignments distributed</i>		
Mon, 1-17	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	U.C. Holiday	
Wed, 1-19	A Rational Choice View of Congress	Arnold, part I, text: ch 9	3:00-4:00 Quiz on Procedure (20 minutes) 4:00 Caucuses meet to make committee assignments & discuss strategy. Democrats and Republicans meet in their caucus rooms; other groups meet separately
Fri, 1-21	Arnold on Congress	Arnold, parts II-III	
Mon, 1-24	Congress & the Executive <i>1st Bills Due</i>	Text: ch 10-11	

Wed, 1-26	Congress & Lobbying	Text: ch 12-13	1 st Daily Session State of the Union address Chair training on procedure
Fri, 1-28	Committees Meet <i>Participation Paper Due Saturday, Jan 29</i>		
Mon, 1-31	The Senate 5:15 - Rules Comm	Text: ch 15 Carney, "Meet the Make the Senate Great Again Caucus"	
Wed, 2-2	Party Caucuses Meet	Marshall & Wolpe, Preface to 2 nd ed.,& ch 1-4	3:00-3:50 Daily Session 4:30-6:00 Midterm online (50 minute exam)
Fri, 2-4	Committees Meet		
Mon, 2-7	Congress & the Budget	Text: ch 14	
Wed, 2-9	Party Caucuses Meet	Marshall & Wolpe, ch 5-7	Daily Session
Fri, 2-11	Committees Meet		
Mon, 2-14	The Politics of Gridlock	Mann & Ornstein, ch. 1-4, 6-7 Text, ch 3	
Wed, 2-16	Party Caucuses Meet		Daily Session

	<i>Thesis/Research Statement Due</i>		
Fri, 2-18	Committees Meet		
Mon, 2-21	Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	U.C. Holiday	
Wed, 2-23	Party Caucuses Meet		Daily Session (Budget Deadline)
Fri, 2-25	Committees Meet		
Mon, 2-28	Amateur vs. Professional Legislatures	David Ray, "The Sources of Voting Cues in Three State Legislatures." <i>Journal of Politics</i> , 44 (1982): 1074-87	
Wed, 3-2	Party Caucuses Meet		Final Daily Session
Fri, 3-4	Women in Congress <i>2nd Paper Due</i>	Jennifer Lawless & Richard Fox, <i>Women, Men, & U.S. Politics</i> , ch 3,7 Recommended: "This Changes Everything." Film currently on Netflix: https://www.netflix.com/title/81110773	Mark Barabak, "In Nevada, Women Have Taken Charge." <i>Los Angeles Times</i> , March 16, 2021, a2 Anna Palmer, "So Did the Year of the Woman Really Change Anything?" <i>Politico</i> , Dec. 10, 2019
Mon, 3-7	Campaign Finance - I	Text, ch 4	
Wed, 3-9	Campaign Finance - II	Text, ch 16	Optional Lecture/Discussion: How to Land a Job in Washington & How to Start a Career in Politics. Visitors are welcome
Fri, 3-11	Conclusions		

***** FINAL EXAM Online, Thursday, 2 hours on March 17, between 12:00 - 3:00 p.m. *****