

**POLS 228 U.S. Congress
Summer 2008**

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The purpose of POLS 228 is to introduce undergraduates to the study of the U.S. Congress. The Congress is a number of things: a major actor in American government and the cornerstone of American federalism, a collective decision making process, a legislature with similarities and differences *vis a vis* legislatures in other democratic governments, the second most studied part of American politics (elections are the first), and a possible producer of and, often, impediment to innovative and effective public policies. Congress is also a great internship for college students.

Because it is a very complex institution with a long history, it is easy for students to get lost in Congress's complexity. Of course, by describing in great detail Congressional institutions and processes and how Members of Congress (MCs) behave, congressional scholars have contributed to this complexity. But congressional scholars have also tried to simplify their students' task by developing and testing fairly broad theories about Congress and legislative politics, theories that can provide road maps for getting through all the complexity. Much of the on-going scholarly research on Congress is devoted to trying to determine which of these theories are better guides. At this point in time several of them seem pretty useful.

Our goal in POLS 228 will be to introduce students to both the complexity and theoretical contours of Congress. The textbook by Roger Davidson and Walter Oleszek, *Congress and its History*, will provide an up to date introduction to Congress.

The class lectures will also try to cover both theoretical and descriptive material, with a little more emphasis on the former than the latter. Some xeroxed hand outs may also be provided. In addition to class readings, students will be given an opportunity to work through some important congressional processes for themselves in a class room simulation. The simulation will take several weeks in the latter part of the course.

The requirements for POLS 228 are to attend class, do all of the assigned reading and take a quiz and midterm exam on the readings, participate in and complete all of the writing assignments for the class simulation, and take the final exam.

Students should be prepared every class to answer and raise questions about what is going on in Congress every week. Newspapers (paper and on-line) and a variety of web sites are good sources of such information. See, for example, <http://www.congress.com/>; www.congresslink.org; www.thomas.gov; www.firstgov.gov/Agencies/Federal/Legislative.shtml; thehillblog.com; www.dailykos.com; americablog.blogspot.com; <http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/TheNote/story?id=156238>; Congressional Quarterly [<middayupdate-owner@cq.com>](mailto:middayupdate-owner@cq.com) Subject: CQ Today Midday Update

You can also go to Google, type Congress, and click on news or better yet, set up a **Google Alert** for Congress—doing this will result in your receiving an email of every news and/or blog story published anywhere that has “Congress” in its title. This can also be done for “House” and “Senate” and particular parties, committees, members, and policy issues. I will probably assign different students or groups of students to do different weekly searches.

Grades in POLS 228 will be determined as follows:

Quiz	15
Midterm Exam	30%
Final Exam	15
Simulation Assignments	30 (10 each)
Class Attendance (15 classes) and participation	10
	100%

Tentative Schedule

I Introductions

- Week 1** (June 17, June 19) Read D O and L Preface and Chapters 1, 2, and 3)
A) Introduction: goals of course. Things you'll know about by August 5.
B) The two congresses idea and Congressional institutionalization.

II Main Features of Congress

Week 2 (June 24, June 26) Read D O and L's Chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7)

- A) Electoral Control Theory

*****SHORT QUIZ JUNE 26**

Week 3 (July 1, July 3) Read D O and L, Chapters 8, 9, 10, 11)

- A) Leaders
Role of party leaders in:
Arnold
Mayhew
Cox and McCubbins
Weingast and Marshall
Fiorina 1 and 2
- B) Committees
Role of committees in:
Arnold
Mayhew
Cox and McCubbins
Weingast and Marshall
Fiorina 1 and 2

*****FIVE PAGE LEGISLATIVE BIOGRAPHY BY DUE MONDAY, JULY 1**

Week 4 (July 8, July 10), Feb 2 Read D O and L, Chapter 12, 13, 14)

- A) Rules and Procedures
Smith
Krehbiel
Shepsle

- Riker
- Others
- B) Decision making in Congress
 - Riker's size principle
 - Arnold's leaders
 - Mayhew
 - Pierce's Path dependency
- C) Congress and President
 - Theories of split control
 - Mayhew
 - Krehbiel
 - Lisa Martin

Week 5 (July 15, July 17) Read D O and L, Chapters 15 and 16)

- A) Congress and the courts
- B) Interest groups
- C) **Budgetary process**
- D) Congress and national security policy
 - Carsey and Rundquist
- E) Conclusions

*****MIDTERM EXAM JULY 17**

*****SHORT UPDATE OF YOUR REPRESENTATIVE'S
LEGISLATIVE ORIENTATION THIS SUMMER**

III Simulation

Week 6 (July 22, July 24) Read rules and get started.

Week 7 (July 29, July 31)

*****TURN IN THREE (3) MOVES AS HER/HIS REPRESENTATIVE AND OFFER
THREE (3) JUSTIFICATIONS FOR THESE MOVES**

IV COURSE CONCLUSIONS

Week 8 (August 5) **FINAL EXAM**

*****TURN IN 3 PAGE SUMMARY OF YOUR REPRESENTATIVE'S SENATOR'S
ROLE**

Appendix I

An Online Packet of Readings About Congress

(Google UIC Library, Go To Alphabetical List of Electronic Resources, JSTOR, type in the title and/or author)

These are some of the research articles that will be referred to in the class and text. You may want to read the originals as we go along. These articles, as well as other articles from refereed political science journals, can also be the subjects of **extra credit reports**.

Partisanship, Blame Avoidance, and the Distribution of Legislative Pork, Steven J. Balla; Eric D. Lawrence; Forrest Maltzman, Lee Sigelman, *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 46, No. 3 (Jul., 2002), pp. 515-525

Policy and Pork: The Use of Pork Barrel Projects to Build Policy Coalitions in the House of Representatives, Diana Evans, *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 38, No. 4 (Nov., 1994), pp. 894-917

The Power of Subcommittees. Richard L. Hall, C. Lawrence Evans *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 52, No. 2 (May, 1990), pp. 335-355

Representation and Public Policy: The Consequences of Senate Apportionment for the Geographic Distribution of Federal Funds, Frances E. Lee, *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 60, No. 1 (Feb., 1998), pp. 34-62

Senate Representation and Coalition Building in Distributive Politics, Frances E. Lee, *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 94, No. 1 (Mar., 2000), pp. 59-72

Political Parties and the Distribution of Federal Outlays, Steven D. Levitt, James M. Snyder, Jr., *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 39, No. 4 (Nov., 1995), pp. 958-980

The Impact of Federal Spending on House Election Outcomes, Steven D. Levitt, James M. Snyder, Jr., *The Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. 105, No. 1 (Feb., 1997), pp. 30-53

The Institutionalization of the U.S. House of Representatives, Nelson W. Polsby *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 62, No. 1 (Mar., 1968), pp. 144-168

The Growth of the Seniority System in the U. S. House of Representatives Nelson W. Polsby, Miriam Gallaher, Barry Spencer Rundquist, *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 63, No. 3 (Sep., 1969), pp. 787-807

A Dead Senator Tells No Lies: Seniority and the Distribution of Federal Benefits Brian E. Roberts, *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (Feb., 1990), pp. 31-58

Corrupt Politicians and Their Electoral Support: Some Experimental Observations
Barry S. Rundquist, Gerald S. Strom, John G. Peters, *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 71, No. 3 (Sep., 1977), pp. 954-963

The 2000 Illinois Tenth Congressional District Race, **Barry Rundquist, Ola Adeoye, Julia Dowse, Chris Christenson, Randy Smith**, *PS: Political Science and Politics*, Vol. 34, No. 2 (Jun., 2001), p. 270

Bill Construction in Legislative Committees: A Study of the U. S. House
Barry S. Rundquist, Gerald S. Strom, *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (Feb., 1987), pp. 97-113

A Revised Theory of Winning in House-Senate Conferences, **Gerald S. Strom, Barry S. Rundquist**, *The American Political Science Review* > Vol. 71, No. 2 (Jun., 1977), pp. 448-453

The Institutional Foundations of Committee Power, **Kenneth A. Shepsle, Barry R. Weingast**, *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 81, No. 1 (Mar., 1987), pp. 85-104

Limitation of Statutes: Strategic Statutory Interpretation, John Ferejohn and Barry Weingast,

<http://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&lr=&q=info:-fD-8mUKY5EJ:scholar.google.com/&output=viewport>

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES SIMULATION SUMMER 2008

This simulation is designed to familiarize students first hand with the legislative process in the U.S. Congress. To that end, each student will take the role of a United States representative and act the way he or she would likely act in particular circumstances based on what you know about the representative, the ins and outs of the legislative process, and the specific policy issue involved.

Thirty-three percent of the grade in POLS 228 will come from your participation in the simulation. The simulation is worth **130 points**. Each student is assigned the role of a representative and must make moves appropriate to that representative as the course and simulation proceeds. Details of the simulation are included below. There are three requirements for the simulation. *First*, each student writes a five **(5) page political profile of the representative and the kinds of political moves the representative is likely to make**. *Second*, each student makes **three (3) moves as her/his representative and offers three (3) justifications for these moves**. *Third*, each student writes a **3-page summary of the representative's overall involvement in the simulation**, outlining what the representative accomplished, who attempted to block her/him, how successful she/he was, and how well what happened in the simulation fits with what would "really" happen with the representative in the House. As one of the three moves, each student must submit a piece of legislation consistent with the legislation that the representative might introduce in the "real

world.” Attendance during the simulation is critical since moves may be made against your representative, and if you are not present at any time during the simulation you will lose **five (5) points** from your total simulation score. Also, if you are not actively involved in the simulation during a class, 5 points will be deducted from the total simulation score.

REQUIREMENTS

There are three requirements for the simulation:

- 1) A 5 page paper offering a political profile of the representative you play.
- 2) 3 independent moves accompanying ½ to 1 page justifications for the moves.
- 3) A three page paper summarizing your role in the simulation.

RULES:

The Players of the simulation consist of members of the House as played by students. The President, the Senate, and the press is played by the simulation coordinator. Attendance is taken at the beginning of each session of the House. If a representative is missing on the day of the simulation, s/he loses 5 points from the total simulation score.

The moves of the simulation are of two types: independent moves and outside moves.

A) **INDEPENDENT MOVES:** These are made by individual representatives to make something happen. Independent moves can be made publicly or secretly. The moves must be submitted in writing to the simulation coordinator at the beginning of a class hour along with a one-page justification.

Independent moves can be of several types:

- 1) One required form is the introduction of a piece of legislation. The representative making such an independent move must draft the bill in exact language (and for the sanity of the House) on a single sheet of paper.
- 2) A different kind of independent move involves a representative engaging in some activity for the folks back home. This may mean returning to the district for some local event, securing an amendment to “ear mark” money for a district pet project, or offering some other form of amendment on a piece of legislation. Because this is the simplest form of an independent move by a representative, students may make only one such move.
- 3) Amendments can only be brought up at the appropriate time: in committee when the chair of the committee is marking up the bill and when the chair is willing to accept the amendment, or on the floor when **the Majority Leader or Speaker???** has decided to bring the bill to a vote.
- 4) For committee chairs or subcommittee chairs, one common independent move is to call for *hearings* on a particular topic or a piece of legislation. Another independent move involves deciding when and how to “mark-up” a bill (that is, to review and possibly amend the language of the bill) to the chair’s liking.
- 5) You may also count as an independent move your member’s reactions to something another representative, the president, the Senate, or the press has done. These reactions may

be either public or private. That is, you may decide that you want everyone to know your reaction or you may simply want to notify another representative privately of your reaction.

6) You may hold a news conference to criticize another member or members, attack or support the president, or respond to charges of scandal or impropriety made against you.

7) Note: One type of activity that does not qualify as an independent move is *voting* on a piece of legislation. This is merely considered House business. If you have a question about whether something you are thinking about is a proper independent move, talk to the simulation coordinator.

JUSTIFICATIONS: Each of the three moves requires an accompanying justification (between ½ to 1 page in length) that briefly outline why the representative made the move s/he did and what you think will happen as a result. Does the move make sense given what you know about the representative? Is it designed to help her/his reelection goals, improve the bill's chances of passage, make a deal with the White House, etc. The justifications need not be elaborate but they are designed to ensure that you play a senator in the "right" way. For instance, someone playing Speaker Nancy Pelosi (California Democrat), a long time supporter of abortion rights, would not tend to introduce a pro-life bill.

OUTSIDE MOVES: These moves come from the President, the Senate, or press and act as wild cards at any time during the simulation. The simulation coordinator has the ability to make unlimited outside moves.

PICKING A REPRESENTATIVE

There are of course 435 Representatives so there is no way a class of 25 or so can simulate the size of the House. Instead students will choose from among the following key House members of both parties:

[Speaker Nancy Pelosi, \(D\) since January 4, 2007](#)

[Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, \(D\) since January 4, 2007](#)

[Minority Leader John Boehner, \(R\) since January 4, 2007](#)

[Hon. Rahm Emanuel \(IL-05\) Democratic Caucus Chairman](#)

[Hon. Jan Schakowsky \(IL-09\) Chief Deputy Whip](#)

<http://appropriations.house.gov/>

[David R. Obey, Wisconsin, Chair](#)

[John P. Murtha, Pennsylvania](#) Defense subcommittee chair

[C.W. Bill Young, Florida](#) Defense subcommittee ranking member

[Jerry Lewis, California, Ranking Member](#)

[David E. Price, North Carolina](#) Homeland Security subcommittee chair

<http://armedservices.house.gov/>

[C.W. Bill Young, Florida](#) chair

[Duncan Hunter, California, Ranking Member](#)

[Kirk, Mark, Illinois, 10th](#)

<http://homeland.house.gov/>

[Bennie G. Thompson](#) (MS-2), Chairman of the full Committee on Homeland Security.

[Loretta Sanchez](#) (CA-47), Vice Chair of the full Committee and Chairwoman of the Subcommittee on Border, Maritime and Global Counterterrorism

Peter T. King (NY), Ranking Member

<http://www.rules.house.gov/>

[Chairwoman Louise M. Slaughter New York](#)

[James P. McGovern Massachusetts](#)

[David Dreier California](#), ranking minority member

<http://waysandmeans.house.gov/members.asp>

[Charles B. Rangel](#), NY *Chairman*

[Fortney Pete Stark](#), CA

[Jim McCrery](#), LA ranking minority member

<http://agriculture.house.gov/index.shtml>

<http://transportation.house.gov/>

<http://reform.house.gov/>

Rep. [Henry A. Waxman](#), (D-Calif.)

The Illinois House delegation consists of the following 19 representatives:

[Bean, Melissa L.](#), Illinois, 8th [Biggert, Judy](#), Illinois, 13th [Costello, Jerry](#), Illinois, 12th [Davis, Danny K.](#), Illinois, 7th [Emanuel, Rahm](#), Illinois, 5th [Gutierrez, Luis](#), Illinois, 4th [Foster, Bill](#), Illinois, 14th [Hare, Phil](#), Illinois, 17th [Jackson Jr., Jesse L.](#), Illinois, 2nd [Johnson, Timothy V.](#), Illinois, 15th [Kirk, Mark](#), Illinois, 10th [LaHood, Ray](#), Illinois, 18th [Lipinski, Daniel](#), Illinois, 3rd [Manzullo, Donald](#), Illinois, 16th [Roskam, Peter J.](#), Illinois, 6th [Rush, Bobby L.](#), Illinois, 1st [Schakowsky, Jan](#), Illinois, 9th [Shimkus, John](#), Illinois, 19th [Weller, Jerry](#), Illinois, 11th

Remember: there are currently 236 Democrats and 199 Republicans in the House so majority votes on the floor will tend to favor Democrats and the committees are stacked with more Democrats.

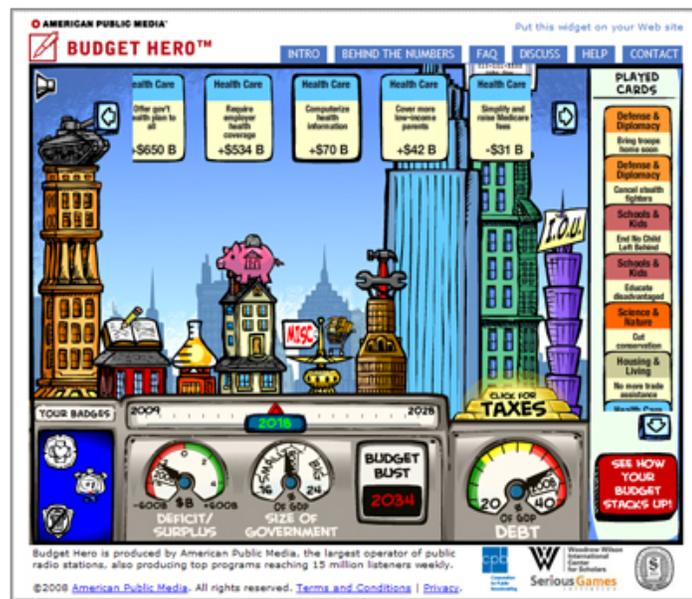
HOUSE RULES

<http://www.rules.house.gov/ruleprec/110th.pdf>

Wikipedia provides a short synopsis of House rules, as does the textbook..

Fyi:

Budget Hero Arrives Compliments of American Public Media



June 10th, 2008 by Phil Wilson

Now that the two major parties have chosen their candidates both are weighing their choices for a running mate. Perhaps your work on the National budget could put you on the short list.

The recently released on-line game “[Budget Hero](#)” launched in May by [American Public Media](#) in partnership with the [Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars](#), may not get you spot at the cabinet table; it could give you valuable insight into the budget process.

According to Michael Skoler, executive director of the Center for Innovation in Journalism at American Public Media, “*Budget Hero is a new type of journalism that gives people the big picture on the complex and fragmented federal budget process. We created this news game to help Americans feel they can understand and participate in the national debate over the election, the budget and the direction of our country.*”

Skoler shared with me that the game was in the talking stages for over a year and a half. “*We sometimes thought we were crazy to build something as ambitious as a game...something that was journalistically sound yet simple enough for all to understand and take part in.*” With the involvement of many firms, think tanks, the Budget Office, as well as help from game development consultant Ben Sawyer, Budget Hero soft launched in May.

“The saying ‘you can’t understand until you walk a mile in someone else’s shoes’ best describes Budget Hero,” said David Rejeski, who heads the Serious Games Initiative at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. *“The game empowers players to take on the role of our government officials and allows anyone to try out their solutions and ideas on how to manage the federal budget.”*

So let’s play...

Both audio and graphics are very appealing, giving you the feeling you’re playing inside a “[Schoolhouse Rock](#)” cartoon. Instructions are clear and easy to understand, completely unlike the legislation process you’d really have to endure in real life. Once through the “briefing” and just a few clicks into the game you realize this is much trickier than another round of Clue or game of Life with the family. And this definitely is no Guitar Hero (Slash would be so busted.)

View the introduction to Budget Hero

You can open up large categories of the budget and review “cards” that represent specific policy decisions. You make your policy decisions by “playing” the card or cards that align with the values you chose early in the game. So under Defense and Diplomacy, for example, you may choose to pull all troops from Iraq by 2010, withdraw troops over five years, or stay the course in Iraq and add two new Army divisions.

Your experience with the game is enhanced by working to achieve a variety of financial and policy goals. Financial goals might include balancing the federal budget by a certain year, eliminating the national debt or limiting the size of government by keeping it at a certain percentage of the Gross Domestic Product (or GDP, which measures the size of the economy). Policy goals might include providing universal health coverage, fully funding No Child Left Behind, or raising or lowering income taxes.

While it’s quite the juggling act and incredibly challenging, the real value is in the learning. I never really accomplished all that I wanted in my first session though, my fellow Americans, I’m not sure you would be that much worse off under my proposed budget...well maybe. However, I thoroughly enjoyed digging into the cards to explore the pros and cons. Even the best of intentions have their downsides. The site also allows you to learn how the choices were made for the game allowing even more insight to the process and the power of the decisions made.

And that’s the point of Budget Hero: finding out what impacts our federal budget from many sides. *“Budget Hero is unique in that it provides the player with immediate feedback on how their choices affect the federal budget in terms of revenues, spending, deficit and debt, and the economic, societal and individual impact of their policy choices,”* stated Skoler.

Not just a way for individuals to learn, Budget Hero also allows you to compare how your policy choices and budgets stack up to other players across a wide range of demographic groups based on gender, income, age, political loyalty or region. American Public Media is also hosting an online discussion for players of “Budget Hero” on group discussion site [Gather](#) in this area [here](#). Skoler adds, “*And the game collects the choices players make, as well as their comments, so our journalists learn how people think through the budget debate.*”

Budget Hero is also available [as a widget](#) for the websites of public radio and television as well as commercial news organizations. It’s likely you’ll hear more about it between now and November. So go play the game and, if all goes well maybe we’ll see you on the ticket. Me, I think I’ll take another crack at the family budget. We have a far less complicated foreign policy.