

**SEMINAR ON LEGISLATION AND PUBLIC POLICY  
POLITICAL SCIENCE 562  
2001 (Version 2)**

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The purpose of POLS 562 is to introduce graduate students to the literature on legislative institutions and policy making and to areas of legislative studies that merit additional research. A schedule of course readings is presented below and the syllabi of a couple previous courses, which include recent article literature and many of the recent and older books in the field, are appended. But the goal of this seminar is get students into doing legislative research. Accordingly, in addition to reading the assigned materialBwhich incidentally is mainly in recently published booksB the seminar will set about identifying data and getting it into an SPSS file. The first battle will be finding data that will allow us to do the research we want to do, recognizing of course that there are topics that merit research for which no data are available. Let=s make the data set a collective projectBor maybe several little collective projects. For example, a data set can be prepared for the U.S. Congress and its members at the state and congressional district level, for state legislatures at the sub-state level, or for non-American governments at the country or sub-country levels (As Ani and Melissa would say, the level is the thing).

There are several approaches to deciding what to gather data on. One is to think about what we want to know about legislatures generally, legislatures in democratic governments, or legislatures in democratic/capitalistic political economies. Legislatures are obviously pivotal to the functioning of democratic governments. What do we need to know to predict what they will do? Another is to read the conclusions of recent studies of legislatures and find some that don=t make any sense and are based on research designs that are flawed and that you can improve on. Another is to find a weird paradigmBi.e., one not usually employed by students of legislatures and derive some predictions about legislative organization, behavior, or policy based on the paradigm, then gather data to test these predictions. Various Feminist, Marxist, CATO Institute and neo-conservative, sociological, and psychoanalytic paradigms are more familiar and are not explored in legislative contexts very much. The rational choice paradigm with its many theoretical

derivations distributive politics, party politics, ideological politics--and the more general spatial theory currently dominate legislative studies. These paradigms and theories and the research derived from them often produce anomalies and paradoxes that merit additional research.

Anyway, as you read the legislative literature, ask yourself: does this make sense(?), is it consistent with a particular paradigm(?) Is the research design it utilizes adequate(?) Your answers to such questions will help in deciding what data to gather.

The grade in POLS 562 will be based on two tests and the research paper that will grow out of the data set(s) we construct at the beginning of the course. 50% of the grade will be based on the research paper; 35% on the midterm, and 15% on the final. Students are expected to attend every seminar and to come prepared to participate by a) having done the readings and made a list of questions that trouble you about them, and b) making weekly progress on the research project.

## TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

### I Introductions

Week 1. August 20. Introductions. Assign: Charles Stewart III, *Analyzing Congress* (Norton, 2001), Chapters 1, 2, and 3.

### Part II In the Beginning was Congress ...

Week 2 August 27. Background: Spatial Models, History. Assign Stewart=s three constituency chapters.

Week 3. Sept. 3. Labor Day. No class.

Week 4. Sept. 10. Congressional Constituencies. Assign Stewart=s Committee Chapter, also the Groseclose and King, ACommittee Theories Reconsidered@ in Dodd and Oppenheimer, *Congress Reconsidered*, Seventh Edition, CQ 2001, (Ch 9) xeroxed.

Week 5. Sept. 17. Congressional committees. Assign: Cox and McCubbins, *Legislative Leviathan*, California, 1993.

Week 6. Sept. 24. Congressional Parties. Read and Assign: Charles Cameron, *Veto Bargaining*, Cambridge 2000, and David Epstein and Sharon O=Halloran, *Delegating Powers*, Cambridge.

Week 7. Congress and the President. Assign: Francis E. Lee and Bruce Oppenheimer, *Sizing Up the Senate* (Chicago, 1999); Lisa Martin, *Democratic Commitments*, Princeton.

Week 8. Oct. 1. Congressional Policy. Assign: Smith and Remington, *The Politics of Institutional Choice*.

### Part III Getting Beyond Congress

Week 9. Oct. 8. Institutional Development: Assign: Haggard and McCubbins, *Presidents, Parliaments, and Policy*, Cambridge, 2001.

Week 9. Oct. 15. Separation of Power Systems. Assign: G. Bingham Powell, *Elections as Instruments of Democracy*, Yale, 2000.

**Part IV Research on Legislatures**

Week 10 Oct. 22. Electoral Systems. Read papers from APSA panel by Keith Hamm, Nancy Martorano and others.

Week 11. Oct. 29. Comparative American State Legislatures.

Week 12. Nov. 5. TBD

Week 13. Nov. 12.

Week 14. Nov. 19.

Week 15. Nov. 26.

Week 16. Dec. 3.