

Political Science 228  
Spring 2004  
M.W. 11:00 – 12:15

Professor Ragsdale  
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Hours:  
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## CONGRESS AND AMERICAN POLITICS

**OVERVIEW:** The course considers two central roles of the U.S. Congress in American politics: representation and policy making. First, how representative is the body of the concerns and interest of American citizens? Has Congress been captured by special interest or does it accommodate a wide range of demands extant in the nation? Second, how effective is Congress as a policy making institution? Can legislation effectively deal with the central problems facing contemporary America? These themes are considered through an exploration of election, types of representation, the behavior of lawmakers, and the policy consequences of the choices made by the body. The course thus considers the link between those who govern and those who are governed by looking at the branch that was presumed by the founders to make the connection most successfully.

**EXAMS:** There will be two exams during the semester—a midterm worth 30% of the total grade and one final worth 30% of the total grade. Each exam is worth 100 points. The final covers only the second half of the course and is not cumulative. The exams involve two components: a short essay portion in which key concepts and terms are identified and their significance briefly discussed and a long essay component dealing with themes drawn from lecture and reading. **NO** make-up exams will be given without a written medical excuse. Nor will any “dead grandmother excuses” be accepted unless the student provides positive evidence that the purported “death” really took place and the “dead person” was really a member of the student’s immediate family. **NO** incompletes will be given for the course. Yes, **NO** means **NO**.

**IN-CLASS SIMULATION:** The remaining 40 percent of the grade involves an in-class simulation of the U.S. Senate. The simulation is worth 130 points. Each student is assigned the role of a senator and must make moves appropriate to that senator as the course and simulation proceed. Details of the simulation will be handed out separately. There are three requirements within the simulation. 1. Each student writes a 5-page political profile of the senator and the kinds of political moves the senator is likely to make. 2. Each student makes three moves as her/his senator and offers 3 justifications for these moves. 3. Each student writes a 3-page summary of the senator’s overall involvement in the simulation, outlining what the senator 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 senator in the Senate. As one of the three moves, each student must submit a piece of legislation consistent with the legislation that the senator might introduce in the “real world.” Attendance is critical for the class since moves may be made against your senators and if you are not present at any time during the simulation, you will lose 5 points from your total simulation score. Also, if you are not actively involved in the simulation at all times, 5 points will be deducted from the total simulation score.

**BOOK:** Roger Davidson and Walter Oleszek, *Congress and Its Members*

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## CONGRESS AND AMERICAN POLITICS

### COURSE OUTLINE

TOPIC	ETA
I. Introduction: Congressional Government Reading: D&O, Chapter 1	January 14

### CONGRESS AND REPRESENTATION

II. Sources of Representation: Congressional Elections Reading: D&O, Chapter 4	January 14, 21
III. Multiple Meanings of Representation, Part I: Dyadic Forms Reading D&O Chapter 5	January 26, 28
***Select a Senator	January 26***
IV. Multiple Meanings of Representation, Part II: Collective Forms	February 4, 11

### CONGRESS INSIDE OUT

V. Inside Congress: Organized Disorganization	
A. Decentralization: Internal Dynamics Reading D & O, Chapter 8	February 11
B. "Congress at Work:" Committees Reading: D&O, Chapters 7	February 16, 18
C. Leadership or Fellowship? Reading: D&O Chapter 6	February 22

\*\*\*\*\*MIDTERM EXAM.....Wednesday, February 25\*\*\*\*\*

**CONGRESS AND POLICY MAKING**

- VI. The Legislative Process and Policy Making: March 1, 3  
The Rules of the Garbage Can  
Reading: D&O, Chapter 9
- VII. The Dreaded Budget Process March 8, 10  
Reading: D&O, Chapter 13
- VIII. Agenda Setting: Relations with the President March 15, 17  
Reading: D&O, Chapter 10, 12

**\*\*\*POLITICAL PROFILE OF SENATOR (FIVE-PAGE PAPER) DUE\*\*\*  
March 15**

**\*\*\*INTRODUCTION OF ONE-PAGE BILL AND JUSTIFICATION DUE\*\*\*  
March 15**

**\*\*\*SPRING BREAK—BACK TO YOUR HOME STATE March 22-March 26**

- IX. Defense and Foreign Policy: Relations with the President II March 29  
Reading: D&O, Chapter 14

**\*\*\*\*\*FINAL EXAM MARCH 31\*\*\*\*\***

**\*\*\*\*\*SIMULATION MADNESS\*\*\*\*\*  
April 5-28**

**\*\*\*\*\*SUMMARY PAPER (Three pages) DUE\*\*\*\*\*  
WEDNESDAY MAY 5 at 5:00 pm**

## U.S. SENATE SIMULATION Spring 2004

The 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 senator and act the way she or he would act in particular circumstance based on what you know about the senator, the ins and outs of the legislative process, and the specific policy issue involved.

### **REQUIREMENTS:**

There are three requirements for the simulation:

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

### **RULES:**

THE PLAYERS of the simulation consist of members of the Senate from various states played by students. The President, the House of Representatives, and the press is played by the simulation coordinator, none other than Professor Ragsdale. (So, be sure to be nice to her, because she IS powerful.) Attendance is taken of the Senate (just like in the real world). IF a senator is missing on a given day of the simulation, s/he loses 5 points from the total simulation score. (GO DIRECTLY TO JAIL! And there are no GET OUT OF JAIL FREE cards)

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

- A. Independent Moves: These are made by individual senators 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 senator making such an independent move must draft the bill in exact language (and for the sanity of the Senate) on a single sheet of paper.
2. A different kind of independent move involves a senator engaging in some activity for the folks back home. This may mean returning to the state for some local event, securing an amendment for “ear marked” money for a state pet project, or offering some other form of amendment on a piece of legislation. Because this is the most simple and most boring form of an independent move and senator can make, you 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 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 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 reactions to something another senator the president, the House, or the press has done. These reactions may be either public or private. That is, you may designate that you want everyone to know your reaction or you may simply want to notify another senator privately of your reaction.
6. You may hold a news conference to criticize another member(s), attack/support the president, respond to charges of schandal 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 Senate business. If you have a question about whether something you are thinking about is a proper independent move, talk to the simulation coordinator.

Every senator must introduce at least one piece of legislation as one independent move. NO EXCEPTIONS. (See the sample legislation and justification below.)

JUSTIFICATIONS: Each of the three moves require an accompanying justification (between ½ to 1 page in length) that briefly outlines WHY the senator made the move s/he did and WHAT you think will happen. Does the move make sense given what you know about the senator? Is it designed to help her/his reelection goals, succeed with the passage of a bill, 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 the “right” way. For instance, someone playing Sen. Barbara Boxer, Democrat from California and long-time supporter of abortion rights would not introduce a pro-life bill.

- B. Outside Moves: These moves come from the President, the House, or press and act as wild cards at any time during the simulation. The simulation coordinator has the ability to make unlimited outside moves. (See, I told you to be nice to the simulation coordinator.)

**A SAMPLE BILL**  
The Joe Camel Tobacco and Smoking Ban  
Sponsor: Senator Clinton  
S. 100

A bill to prohibit the production, distribution, and sale of all tobacco and tobacco related products.

Section 1: The production of tobacco will be prohibited after January 1, 2003. Tobacco farmers will be compensated for the loss of revenue generated from their crops based on an average of the money earned in the past years.

Section 2: The distribution of any tobacco products—cigarettes, cigars, pipe tobacco, loose tobacco, chewing tobacco, and all other forms of tobacco not named—to wholesalers and retailers is prohibited.

Section 3: The sale of any items stated in section 2 is prohibited. A fine of \$100,000 will be assigned for any single instance in which a wholesaler or retailer is found to have sold the aforementioned products.

Section 4: Any individual found smoking or using any tobacco products shall be subject to a similar \$10,000 fine.

Section 5: The law shall take effect on January 1, 2005.

**JUSTIFICATION:**

Senator Hillary Clinton has been a long-time proponent of health care and an antagonist of the tobacco industry. She is looking for an issue that will distinguish her from senior senator from New York, Charles Schumer who is an outspoken critic of the National Rifle Association. While first lady, Clinton worked on health care matters. There is considerable support across the country and in New York in particular for tough anti-smoking legislation and this bill will not only provide her national visibility but help with her visibility in New York state on matters other than New York City after September 11. This will help her move forward in establishing a reelection base. The bill will likely be assigned to the Health, Education, and Labor of which she is a member. Senator Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts is the chair of this committee and will likely view it favorably. The White House will hate it. The bill is likely to be very controversial and although it may make it out of committee, it is not clear that it will pass on the floor. However, it will gain Clinton visibility and respect for taking on tough issues.

**POLITICAL PROFILE OF U.S. SENATORS**  
**ASSIGNMENT DUE: MARCH 15**  
**NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED**

In preparation for the simulation, each student is assigned the role of a U.S. Senator. To become familiar with that senator, a five page political profile of the senator is required. The paper is due

1. It must be 5 (Yes, that is FIVE) FULL pages, double-spaced using a normal 12 point font and 1 inch margins. Anything less than that and you will be graded down accordingly.
2. You must use at least 3 (Yes, that is THREE) NON-Internet sources from those listed below. They are (a) *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report (CQWR)* Go to their quarterly index and look up your senator's name and see what activities/legislation she/he has been involved in. All senators appear in CQWR; (b) the newspaper in the senator's home state. Most of these are available in the library; (c) *The Almanac of American Politics* which covers each state and their elected officials; (d) *The National Journal* which is an insider Washington magazine that covers things in somewhat different light than the CQWR; national news sources such as (e) *The Washington Post*, (f) *The New York Times*, (g) *USA Today*, (h) television network news (CNN, CBS, ABC, NBC—through the Vanderbilt Archives or by other means) especially for visible senators these are good sources of news and (i) the home state paper for the senator. Again, if the proper sources are not consulted, you will be graded down accordingly.
3. You may use as many Internet sources as you wish, but you must use at least THREE (Yes, that is THREE) of them. These include:
  - a. [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov) to access the Senator's home page
  - b. [www.thomas.gov](http://www.thomas.gov) to access all legislation the Senator has sponsored and the status of this legislation
  - c. [www.opensecrets.org](http://www.opensecrets.org) to obtain the campaign funds received by the Senator
  - d. [www.fec.org](http://www.fec.org) to obtain the campaign funds received by the Senator
  - e. [www.cis.gov](http://www.cis.gov) Congressional universe to obtain other profiles of the Senator
  - f. lexis-nexis universe (if we can somehow gain access to it)
4. The paper MUST include a bibliography of the sources you used. You may cite the website of those items you took from the internet.

The profile MUST include five components.

First, look at the political background of the member. This should include an assessment of how long the senator has been in politics and when and how s/he got started in politics. Consider the political posts that the senator held before running for the Senate. Also discuss the senator's political base in her/his state. How safe is her/his seat electorally? Where does the senator up again for reelection? Are there any problems on the horizon?

Second, consider the kind of career the senator has had on Capitol Hill. How senior is she/he? On what committees does she/he serve? Subcommittees? Is s/he a chair of a committee or subcommittee? How close/important is s/he to leadership? Etc. What kind of access does s/he have to the White House? Or to the leadership? How visible is the senator nationally? Or is s/he more of a local figure? In doing work for the state, what kinds of things has the senator accomplished?

Third, outline the policy positions that the member has taken. What have been the member's key policy interests? What kinds of legislation has the member sponsored or passed?

Fourth, is the member identified with any major national interest groups—such as the National Rifle Association, the National Organization of Women, the National Association of Realtors, various pro-life or pro-choice groups, etc? For these groups, what kinds of legislation has the senator sponsored or helped pass? You may wish to talk about the ratings that these interest groups have given the member over the years.

Finally, given the profile that you have provided, consider the kinds of political moves that the senator would be likely to make in our simulation. Outline the kinds of legislation that s/he might be interested in introducing. Note the sorts of groups the senator might wish to be seen with, hold meetings with, etc. Also consider the kinds of efforts s/he should be engaging in “back home” in order to make solid or keep solid her/his political base.

Accompanying this 5-page paper will be the Senator's first “independent move”: the introduction of a one page bill consistent with her/his political profile. See below for more information on the nature of independent moves in general and bills as moves in particular.

To find out information about the Senator, check the following sources:

1. *The Almanac of American Politics* provides a strong focus on the political/electoral background of the senator.
2. *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Reports* (CQWR) often features individual senators and what they are up to. Check over the volumes for the past several years and see what is said about your senator.
3. *The New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Washington Post National Weekly Edition*, and the various news magazines have stories on members from time to time.
4. Local papers from the senator's state are good sources. Many of these are available in the library.
5. The Internet. Senators have their own home pages. In addition, the Congress itself has on-line summaries of all bills introduced, their sponsors, and status. I will discuss this more in class.

## SUMMARY SIMULATION PAPER

### Assignment Due:

A final 3-page summary paper is due which details the overall success and accomplishments of the senator in the simulation. This paper should include:

1. **WHAT** did the senator do during the simulation? Specifically, provide an overview and justification of the three moves the senator made. This part should include four components: (1) Spell out why you as the particular senator you are playing would make these moves. In other words, what were your goals in making the moves? Reelection? Help your presidential ambitions? Advance legislation that will help a key industry in your state? Etc. (2) Discuss what happened after you made the moves in the legislative process. If you introduced a bill, what was its' chances of success? What committee received it? What was the White House position? Etc. (3) Address who the moves affected within the Senate. Also not how they played with the president, if relevant. (4) Finally, considered what the consequences of the moves were based on everything that happened at the time the move is made.
2. Overall, what role did the senator play in the simulation beyond the three moves. Was she/he active in plotting party strategy? Was he/she instrumental in getting major legislation through? Did the senator do nothing?
3. **WHY** did the senator's role shape up the way it did. Were you muscled by some other member who has long hated your guts and you were unprepared? Are you already running for president? Does the White House refuse to return phone calls even though you are the longest serving member of the Senate?
4. **HOW** accurately do you feel you were able to play the senator? Based on your reading of *Congressional Quarterly Week Report* and other sources, how well do you think what happened in the simulation matched what would have happened on Capitol Hill.