

PSCI-3041-001: THE AMERICAN CONGRESS

Date and Time – Monday, Wednesday, Friday – 11 to 11:50 AM
Location – RAMY N1B23
Instructor: Dr. Michael D Kanner

Contact information

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Office Location: Ketchum 114F
Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday, Friday – 12:30 to 1:30 (or by appointment)

Communication Policies

The best way to contact me is by e-mail. My normal response time is 8 to 12 hours (although it may just be an acknowledgment).

Instructor Biography

In addition to political science, I teach for the international affairs and Farrand Hall residential academic programs. Although I have taught in most subfields of political science, my focus is on American foreign policy and institutional decision-making. While my bachelor's degree at the US Military Academy was a concentration in engineering, my masters are in managerial science from Troy State University and international relations from Salve Regina University. My Ph.D. from the University of Colorado, Boulder focused on political psychology and foreign policy decision making.

Prior to teaching, I had a career in the Department of Defense serving as an operations officer from brigade to theater Army level in the United States, Latin America, and Europe. My final assignment was as a Senior Plans and Policy analyst at Headquarters, US Army Europe where I dealt with issues related to the end of the Cold War including political violence and force transition. Additionally, I was an analyst/investigator on several special study groups including the Defense Department's *Joint Low-Intensity Conflict Study Group*, the Army War College's *Living Expert System (Senior Leader Decision Support System) Concept Study Group*, and SAIC's *Military Forces in Preventive Diplomacy Study Group*.

My approach to congress is to look at it as a decision-making body and its members as rational actors. That means they have personal goals that influence their behavior and public policy.

Course Description (from course catalog)

Provides intensive examination of the role of Congress in American government, including congressional elections, representation, the organization of Congress, and congressional policy making. Examines larger context of congressional politics, including political parties, the president, and interest groups. Prereq., PSCI 1101

Objectives

1. Identify the constitutional powers of Congress.
2. Explain the informal powers of Congress.
3. Discuss the factors in congressional campaigns and elections.
4. Examine the role of political parties in Congress.
5. Explain how committees and rules affect legislation.
6. Relate how congress interacts with the president; the bureaucracy; and the courts.
7. Describe how policy is developed.

Overview of Class and Responsibilities

Each of us has roles in the classrooms. As the instructor, I am a resource and moderator. As students, you have responsibility for your learning.

Instructor

I will be on time and prepared to lead the class. A normal class will start with an introduction of the subject. This is not a lecture and will highlight key aspects of that day's readings along with asking the class for comments about these points. Class will usually end with a discussion period on a question raised by the reading (e.g., What do you see as the proper role of Congress in security policy?).

Student

Your first responsibility is to show up to class and to be on time. Readings are only part of the class. I also consider lateness is a sign of disrespect to the other students.

Second, do the readings in advance of attendance. Class is based on discussions, so being uninformed will decrease everybody's learning experience. You should analyze each reading for these elements.

1. Identify the assumptions that frame the argument.
2. Examine the accuracy and validity of these assumptions.
3. Analyze how these assumptions result in different perspectives about the world.
4. Compare the different policies that may come from the different assumptions.

Finally, keep up with the news. It is always an interesting time to study politics. We will be using current events to illustrate and apply what we learn in class.

Required Texts

There are two texts required for this class. They should be available as a bundle from the CU Bookstore; however, you can use the e-book version if you prefer.

Davidson, Roger H.; Walter J. Oleszek, Francis E. Lee and Eric Schickler. 2018. *Congress and Its Members, 16th Edition*. Washington, D.C. Sage/CQ Press.

Dodd, Lawrence C. and Bruce I Oppenheimer. 2016. *Congress Reconsidered, 11th Edition*. Washington, D.C. Sage/CQ Press.

Articles containing recent research will also be posted on CANVAS. You need to read these on the day for which they are signed.

Grading

Final grades are based on a 100-point scale.

A	94-100	B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D+	67-69	F	0-59
A-	90-93	B	83-86	C	73-76	D	63-66		
		B-	80-82	C-	70-72	D-	60-62		

Your final grade will be a function of the points you achieve. Points are allocated on the following basis.

Exam 1	25 points
Exam 2	25 points
Final Exam	35 points
Attendance/Participation	15 points
Total	100 points

Exams. All the exams are in-class and have the same format of questions requiring short paragraph answers. Each question will be worth five (5) points. Review sheets for the exams will be published 1-2 weeks in advance of the exam.

Attendance. Ten percent of winning is just showing up. Or in this case, ten percent of your grade is based on being in class and ready to participate. Absences will only be excused based on illness, incarceration, religious observation, work or ROTC commitments; or family emergencies. Documentation for the absence may be requested.

Class Schedule

August				
26 – Introduction; Syllabus	27	28 – CM 1	29	30 – CM 2
September				
2 – Labor Day (no class)	3	4 – CANVAS: Chergosky_Roberts	5	6 – CM 3
9 – CM 4	10	11 – Dodd 3	12	13 – Dodd 4
16 – CANVAS: Ragusa	17	18 – CANVAS: Jacobson	19	20 – CANVAS: Heberling_Larson
23 – CM 5	24	25 – Exam	26	27 – CM 6
30 – Dodd 1				

October				
	1	2 – Dodd 2	3	4 – Dodd 7
7 – CANVAS: Glaser_Berry	8	9 – CM 7	10	11 – Dodd 8
14 – Dodd 9	15	16 – Dodd 12	17	18 – CM 8
21 – Dodd 13	22	23 – CM 9	24	25 – Dodd 10
28 – Dodd 11	29	30 - Exam	31	
November				
				1 – CM 10
4 – Dodd 15	5	6 – CM 11	7	8 – CANVAS: McDonald
11 – CM 12	12	13 – Dodd 16	14	15 – CM 13
18 – Dodd 6	19	20 – CM 14	21	22 – Dodd 14
25 – Fall Break	26 – Fall Break	27 – Fall Break	28 - Thanksgiving	29 - Thanksgiving
December				
2 – CM 15	3	4 – Dodd 17	5	6 – CANVAS: Burns
9 – CM 16	10	11 – Dodd 18	12	
Final – Dec. 15, 1:30 to 4 PM				
Legend				
Dodd	Dodd, Lawrence C. and Bruce I Oppenheimer. 2016. <i>Congress Reconsidered, 11th Edition</i> . Washington, D.C. Sage/CQ Press.			
CM	Davidson, Roger H.; Walter J. Oleszek, Francis E. Lee and Eric Schickler. 2018. <i>Congress and Its Members, 16th Edition</i> . Washington, D.C. Sage/CQ Press.			
CANVAS	Article is available on CANVAS			

Policies (as established by the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education)

ACCOMMODATION FOR DISABILITIES

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit your accommodation letter from Disability Services to your faculty member in a timely manner so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities in the academic environment. Information on requesting accommodations is located on the [Disability Services website](#). Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or dsinfo@colorado.edu for further assistance. If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see [Temporary Medical Conditions](#) under the Students tab on the Disability Services website.

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation or political philosophy. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. Faculty will honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise faculty of this preference early in the semester so that they may make appropriate changes to their records. For more information, see the policies on [classroom behavior](#) and the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

HONOR CODE

All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to the Honor Code. Violations of the policy may include: plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access to academic materials, clicker fraud, submitting the same or similar work in more than one course without permission from all course instructors involved, and aiding academic dishonesty. All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to the Honor Code (honor@colorado.edu; 303-492-5550). Students who are found responsible for violating the academic integrity policy will be subject to nonacademic sanctions from the Honor Code as well as academic sanctions from the faculty member. Additional information regarding the Honor Code academic integrity policy can be found at the [Honor Code Office website](#).

SEXUAL MISCONDUCT, DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT AND/OR RELATED RETALIATION

The University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder) is committed to fostering a positive and welcoming learning, working, and living environment. CU Boulder will not tolerate acts of sexual misconduct intimate partner abuse (including dating or domestic violence), stalking, protected-class discrimination or harassment by members of our community. Individuals who believe they have been subject to misconduct or retaliatory actions for reporting a concern should contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) at 303-492-2127 or cureport@colorado.edu. Information about the OIEC, university policies, [anonymous reporting](#), and the campus resources can be found on the [OIEC website](#).

Please know that faculty and instructors have a responsibility to inform OIEC when made aware of incidents of sexual misconduct, discrimination, harassment and/or related retaliation, to ensure that individuals impacted receive information about options for reporting and support resources.

RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with

scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. For each class, check with your faculty member in advance so that you are aware of their specific requirements for accommodating religious observances.

See the [campus policy regarding religious observances](#) for full details.