

PSCI-3041-001: THE AMERICAN CONGRESS

Date and Time – Tuesday, Thursday – 9:30 to 10:45 AM

Location – HLMS 241

Instructor: Dr. Mike Kanner

Contact information

E-Mail – michael.kanner@colorado.edu

Office Location: Ketchum 122

Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday, Friday – 10:30 to 11:30 AM

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

I have taught most of the subfields of political science. Within American politics, I have taught American political systems (PSCI 1101) as well as the presidency, parties and interest groups, symbolic politics (the rhetoric of politics), public policy and national security organizations. 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.

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:

Davidson, Roger H.; Walter J. Oleszek, Francis E. Lee and Eric Schickler. 2016. *Congress and Its Members, 15th 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.

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 (4 out of 6 questions) | 20 points |
| Exam 2 (6 out of 8 questions) | 30 points |
| Final (8 out of 10 questions) | 40 points |
| Attendance | 10 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 | |
|-------------------|---|
| 29 – Syllabus | 31 – CM, Ch. 1 |
| September | |
| 5 – CM, Ch. 3 | 7 – CM, Ch. 4 |
| 12 – Dodd, Ch. 3 | 14 – Dodd, Ch. 4 |
| 19 – CM, Ch. 5 | 21 – Dodd, Ch. 5 |
| 26 – Exam | 28 – Dodd, Ch. 1 |
| October | |
| 3 – Dodd, Ch. 11 | 5 – CM, Ch. 6 |
| 10 – Dodd, Ch. 7 | 12 – Dodd, Ch. 2 |
| 17 – CM, Ch. 7 | 19 – CM, Ch. 8 |
| 24 – Dodd, Ch. 13 | 26 – CM, Ch. 9 |
| 31 – Dodd, Ch. 9 | |
| November | |
| | 2 – Exam |
| 7 – CM, Ch. 10 | 9 – Dodd, Ch. 15 |
| 14 – CM, Ch. 11 | 16 – CM, Ch. 12 |
| 21 – Fall Break | 23 – Thanksgiving |
| 28 – Dodd, Ch. 16 | 30 – CM, Ch. 13 |
| December | |
| 5 – CM, Ch. 14 | 7 – Dodd, Ch. 12 |
| 12 – CM, Ch. 15 | 14 – Dodd, Ch. 18 |
| Final Exam- TBD | |
| CM | <i>Congress and Its Members, 15th Edition.</i> |
| Dodd | <i>Congress Reconsidered, 11th Edition.</i> |

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

Accommodation for Disabilities

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to your professor a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner (for exam accommodations provide your letter at least one week prior to the exam) so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Contact Disability Services at

303-492-8671 or by email at dsinfo@colorado.edu. If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see [Temporary Injuries guidelines](#) under the Quick Links at the [Disability Services website](#) and discuss your needs with your professor.

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. In this class, (insert your procedures here).

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

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 differences of race, color, culture, religion, creed, politics, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and gender expression, age, disability, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. For more information, see the policies on classroom behavior and the student code.

Sexual Misconduct, Discrimination, Harassment and/or Related Retaliation

The University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder) is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working, and living environment. CU Boulder will not tolerate acts of sexual misconduct, discrimination, harassment or related retaliation against or by any employee or student. CU's Sexual Misconduct Policy prohibits sexual assault, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, intimate partner abuse (dating or domestic violence), stalking or related retaliation. CU Boulder's Discrimination and Harassment Policy prohibits discrimination, harassment or related retaliation based on race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation or political philosophy. Individuals who believe they have been subject to misconduct under either policy should contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) at 303-492-2127. Information about the OIEC, the above referenced policies, and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding sexual misconduct, discrimination, harassment or related retaliation can be found at the [OIEC website](#).

Honor Code

All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to the [academic integrity policy](#) of the institution. Violations of the policy may include: plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access, clicker fraud, resubmission, and aiding academic dishonesty. All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to the Honor Code Council (honor@colorado.edu; 303-735-2273). Students who are found responsible for violating the academic integrity policy will be subject to nonacademic sanctions from the Honor Code Council as well as academic sanctions from the faculty member.

Additional information regarding the academic integrity policy can be found at <http://honorcode.colorado.edu>