

WWS 594J
Legislative Politics

Nolan McCarty
304 Robertson Hall
x1862
nmccarty@princeton.edu
Secretary: Helene Wood (hwood@princeton.edu)
Office Hours: Thursday 10-12 and by appointment

This course is designed to provide students with some basic tools for analyzing legislative politics and the policymaking process. While some of the readings and topics are theoretical, our focus will be on how the theories and models might be applied by practitioners and organizations who need to evaluate the opportunities and threats from pending and potential legislation.

The main assignment for the course is a two-person group project where the group takes the position of some organization (interest group, corporation, union, etc) on a pending piece of legislation (or regulatory decision involving legislative oversight). The group will develop a strategic plan for dealing with the issue using the frameworks developed in the course. We will be working with Diane Jones, Princeton's director of Public Affairs in developing these projects and carrying out field research in Washington. The project will count 50% of the course grade. I will also ask students to write two short (2-3 pages) reaction papers to course readings. These reaction papers will be used to stimulate class discussion each week. These reaction papers and class participation will account for the remainder of the course grade.

In addition to the course readings, there are a number of publications that will be quite useful in helping you to find project ideas. These include:

Roll Call
New York Times
Washington Post
Wall Street Journal
Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report
National Journal
Trade, Professional, and Interest Group Publications

Schedule

Please complete the first week's readings before the first class. They will be available from outside my office beginning the week before Spring Break.

Session I: Introduction

Topics:

Theories of Representation
The Legislative Procedures
Agenda Setting

Readings:

Pitken, Hanna *The Concept of Representation* ch 10.
Mayhew, David. *Congress: The Electoral Connection*, Intro and chapter 1.
Arnold, R. Douglas. *The Logic of Congressional Action* ch. 1 and 6.
Olezcek, Walter *Congressional Procedures* (on reserve-skim)
"Lawmakers Call for Cuts, but Not in Their Programs," *CQ* 1/17/2004

Session II: Models of Collective Choice

Guest: Diane Jones, Director of Government Affairs, Princeton University

Topics:

The Median Voter Theorem
Agenda Control
Veto Power and Pivotal Politics
Strategic Disagreement

Readings:

Krehbiel, Keith *Pivotal Politics* ch. 2
Mayhew, David *Divided We Govern* Intro, ch. 3-4.
Gilmour, John *Strategic Disagreement* Intro, Chapters 1 and 4.
"Omnibus Appropriations: Round Two" *CQ* 1/10/2004.
"Battle Plan" *National Journal* 1/23/2004.

Session III: Committees, Parties and Voting

Topics:

Committees
Partisan Models
Roll Call voting analysis
Polarization

Readings:

Weingast, Barry and William Marshall "The Industrial Organization of Congress." *Journal of Political Economy* pp. 132-163.
Krehbiel, Keith *Information and Legislative Organization* p. 1-103.
Cox, Gary and Mathew McCubbins *Legislative Leviathan* part 2.
Krehbiel, Keith.1993. "Where's the Party?" *British Journal of Political Science* 23(2):235.
Poole, Keith and Howard Rosenthal ch 2-3 (optional)
McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal *Income Redistribution and the Realignment of American Politics* pp. 1-44.

Session IV: Legislative-Executive Relations

Topics:

Presidential Influence in Congress
Delegation to the bureaucracy
Budgetary politics

Readings:

Kernell, Sam *Going Public: New Strategies of Presidential Leadership*. ch. 1,2,4,5.
Canes-Wrone, Brandice "The President's Legislative Influence from Public Appeals." *American Journal of Political Science*.
Fisher, Louis *Congressional Abdication on War and Spending* ch .5
McCubbins, Mathew D., Roger Noll, and Barry R. Weingast. "Structure, and Process, Politics, and Policy: Administrative Arrangements and the Political Control of Agencies." *Virginia Law Review*.
Moe, Terry "The Politics of Bureaucratic Structure." in *Can the Government Govern?*
"Bush versus Highway Bill: Legislative Road Rage," *CQ* 2/14/2004
"Earmarks the Booming Way to Bring Home the Bacon." *CQ* 2/7/2004.

Session V: Interest Groups and the Media

Topics:

Lobbying
Campaign Finance
The Media

Readings:

Wright, John *Interest Groups and Congress* pp. 75-164
Birnbaum, Jeffrey *The Lobbyists* pp. 189-229.
Ansolobehere, Steven, John De Figueredo, and James Snyder “Why Is There So Little Money in U.S. Politics?”
Arnold, R. Douglas *Congress, The Press and Accountability* ch 1,3 and 9.
“Film Industry Warms to GOP as Best Bet for Tax Breaks.” *CQ* 2/14/2004
“Could It Be That The New Rules Are Actually Working?” *National Journal* 2/9/2004.

Session VI: Group Project Presentations