



PSC 300: Congress in the Washington Context

First Summer Session 2009

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Course Description

Welcome to Washington. Congress in the Washington Context is an experiential course designed to put students in direct contact with people who work in and with Congress. While a Congress course at UNCG (PSC 333, The U.S. Congress) can provide students with a background in legislative process and elections, and an insight into the decision making calculus of strategic politicians, it can't bring students to Washington to interact with members of Congress, their staffers, and the myriad people – lobbyists, journalists, civil servants – who work with Congress. That's what this course does.

From May 21 to June 9, students will meet with, learn from, and ask questions of various political actors. The parallel goals for the course are, first, to understand how these political and policy actors work in and with Congress. And second – and just as importantly – to learn how the people we meet got involved with government in the first place. How might their professional experiences inform and influence your career goals? How did they get their jobs? What particular skills do they consider to be crucial in their professions?

Students will spend the final two weeks of the course completing a research paper on a topic of their choosing, in consultation with the instructor. Once back from Washington, we will not meet again as a class. Students will be responsible for making sure that I receive papers in an acceptable format by the last day of the first summer session, Wednesday, June 24.

Finally, students have a responsibility to UNCG, the instructor, and each other to arrive at designated meeting places on time, and *to treat all the public servants and professionals who have volunteered their time with respect*. This means you must wear appropriate attire, listen to presentations attentively, and be prepared to ask questions. Remember that your behavior will contribute to the continuation – or termination – of this program. Students must also be flexible. The Washington portion of the syllabus is not written in stone. Appointments may be cancelled or changed, possibly even on the very day they are scheduled. Keep your calendars free Monday through Friday, even for example if the syllabus indicates a morning meeting only. Evenings, weekends, and most Fridays are your own.

Course Goals

By the end of the session, students should develop/improve important skills related to:

- integrating course readings and experiences into a journal and research paper that include observations and analysis of Congress;
- engaging in a dialogue with political and policy actors during question-and-answer sessions;
- presenting themselves in a professional manner in a way that reflects well on the class and UNCG.

Course Requirements

• Reading

The following book is required for the course:

Mann, Thomas E. And Norman J. Ornstein. 2006. *The Broken Branch: How Congress is Failing America and How to Get It Back on Track*. Oxford University Press.

The following books are recommended:

Davidson, Roger and Walter Oleszek. 2008. *Congress and Its Members*, Eleventh Edition. Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press.

Loomis, Burdett A. and Wendy J. Schiller. 2006. *The Contemporary Congress*, Fifth Edition. Thomson-Wadsworth.

If you have taken PSC 333, the U.S. Congress, bring along your copy of *Congress and Its Members*, and please be amenable to sharing it with others in the class who do not own it. If you have never taken a course on the Congress, *The Contemporary Congress* provides a shorter, very accessible introduction to the institution. All of these books are available used from Amazon. There will be supplementary required readings that I will hand out or provide via Blackboard.

• Journals

I will periodically ask you to turn in journal entries of 750 to 1,000 words on questions that I will pose. The questions I ask will require that you integrate readings with class meetings.

• Research Paper

While in Washington, students are responsible for coming up with a paper topic that I must approve. I am flexible on the type (e.g., data-based research, literature review, interviews) and topic, as long as the topic relates in some way to the Congress. Students who wish to complete data-based research should consult me on data sources. Papers are due to me by **Wednesday, June 24 at Noon**.

• Attendance

Attendance at all class events is mandatory. No exceptions.

Grading

The overall course grade will be determined as follows:

Attendance & participation	40%
Observational journal	30
Research paper	<u>30</u>
	100%

• Cheating & Plagiarism

Student work in this course is bound by the university's Academic Integrity Policy, which addresses the consequences of cheating and plagiarism, and is available at <http://academicintegrity.uncg.edu/complete/>. All work for this course must be completed individually, with each student responsible for his or her own work.

• Miscellaneous

Under normal circumstances, incompletes are not available. Exceptions will be made for any students who secure internships requiring that they remain in Washington after our three-week stay.

The Washington Metro web site has a handy trip planner utility. You can use it to help navigate your own explorations of the area:

http://www.wmata.com/tripplanner_d/TripPlanner_Form_Solo.cfm.

If you find yourself at a loss for what to do and see next, members of Congress often have "Visiting Washington, DC" pages with helpful information (see, *e.g.*, <http://burr.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=ConstituentServices.VisitingDC>). You can also check out <http://www.thedistrict.com/placestogo.html> for up-to-date information on what to see, what special exhibitions are in town, what's closed for renovation, etc.

Course Outline

Date	Time	Topic	Location
May 21	9:00	Introduction to Congress	Opus Hall
	11:00	Capitol Tour	Capitol Visitor's Center • Union Station [R]
	1:00	Meet with Rep. Brad Miller (D, NC-13)	1722 Longworth • Capitol South [O,B]
	5:30	UNCG Student-Faculty-Alumni Reception	Capitol Visitor's Center Atrium

Readings	<u>Navigating Congressional Policy Processes</u> (H) Rep. Miller (H & Bb) <i>Congress and Its Members</i> , chs. 1 & 2 <i>The Contemporary Congress</i> , chs. 1 - 3		
May 22	9:00	Congressional Leadership • Thom Little, UNCG	Opus Hall
Readings	<u>Transformational Leader or Faithful Agent?</u> (H) OR <u>Parties & Leadership in the Senate</u> (H) <i>Congress and Its Members</i> , ch. 6 & 8 <i>The Contemporary Congress</i> , ch. 6		
May 25	Memorial Day - No Class		
Readings	Make some progress on <i>Broken Branch</i>		
May 26	11:00	Congress & Organized Interests	Opus Hall
	1:30	Walter White, Vice President, Verizon	1300 I St., NW • Metro Center [R]
Readings	<u>Buying Time</u> <i>Congress and Its Members</i> , ch. 13		
May 27	10:00	The Role of Expertise: Think Tanks • Business Executives for National Security (BENS)	1717 Pennsylvania Ave., NW Suite 350 Farragut North [R]
	2:00	Congressional Elections • Charlie Cook, <i>The Cook Political Report</i>	Watergate Office Building Foggy Bottom-GWU [O,B]
Readings	<u>The Political Demography of Think Tanks</u> (H) BENS-related information: http://www.bens.org/mis_support/current-update.pdf http://www.bens.org/mis_support/DisasterResourceGuide_07-08.pdf <u>Congress: The Second Democratic Wave</u> (H) <u>Partisan Surge & Decline in Congressional Elections</u> (H) <i>Congress and Its Members</i> , chs. 3 & 4 <i>The Contemporary Congress</i> , ch. 4		
May 28	2:00	Executive-Congressional Relations: The Budget Process • Jonathan Mattiello, State Justice Institute	444 N. Capitol St., NE Suite 515 Union Station [R]
Readings	<u>The Congressional Budget Process</u> (H) <u>Pork Barrel Politics</u> (Bb) <i>Congress and Its Members</i> , chs. 7 & 14 <i>The Contemporary Congress</i> , chs. 6-7		

June 1	TBA	Running a Congressional Office • Ryan Hedgepeth (Chief of Staff, Rep. Brad Miller's office)	Longworth 1722 Capitol South [O,B]
<i>Readings</i>	<u>The Individual Enterprise</u> (H)		
June 2	10:00	Government Relations • Mark Harkins, Senior Government Relations Advisor, Womble Carlyle	1401 I St., NW McPherson Square [O]
	3:00	Sen. Kay Hagan (D-NC)	
<i>Readings</i>	<u>The Lobbying Boom</u> (Bb) <u>Sen. Kay Hagan</u> (Bb)		
June 3	10:00	Meet with Rep. Howard Coble (R, NC-6)	2468 Rayburn Capitol South [O,B]
	2:00	Congressional Support Agencies • Government Accountability Office (GAO)	441 G St., NW Judiciary Square [R]
<i>Readings</i>	<u>Rep. Coble</u> (H & Bb) <u>GAO Strategic Plan</u> (Bb) (Read enough to get a sense for what the GAO does.)		
June 4	2:30	Meet with Rep. Mel Watt (D, NC-12)	2237 Rayburn Capitol South [O,B]
<i>Readings</i>	<u>Rep. Watt</u> (H & Bb)		
June 8	10:00	Discussion: <i>Broken Branch</i>	Opus Hall
<i>Readings</i>	<i>Broken Branch</i> <u>Is the Broken Branch on the Mend?</u> (Bb)		
June 9	11:30	Meet with Sen. Richard Burr (R-NC)	217 Russell Union Station [R]
	1:00	Congressional Committees • Dominique McCoy, Counsel, Committee on Financial Services	
<i>Readings</i>	<u>Sen. Burr</u> (H & Bb) <u>Committees and Policy Polarization</u> (H)		

Required (H) Handout (Bb) Blackboard