

Instructor: Ann Jablon

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SYLLABUS for PO 406 – Spring 2007

Introduction to Congressional Policy Making 6:30 PM – 9:30 PM

Purpose of Course:

The purpose of this course is for you, the student, to gain a working knowledge of the U.S. Congress, from both a theoretical and a practical perspective, in an effort to further develop your own views into the legislative and political processes. This will be done by combining themes from assigned readings and lectures with insight gathered from guest speakers, current periodicals, and in-class discussions.

Required Readings:

The Washington Post.

CQ's Guide to Current American Government, Spring 2007 (Print Paperback)

How Congress Works, 3rd Edition, Congressional Quarterly, Inc., Washington, D.C., January 1999.

Grade Determination:

- 40% Final Examination
- 30% Take-Home Midterm
- 20% Various Assignments (paper, issue brief)
- 10% Class Participation, Attendance and Knowledge of Readings

Office Hours:

I will be available to meet with students immediately following class sessions on Monday night, or by appointment at other times.

Assignments:

You have been given several deadlines to meet throughout the semester and you are expected to meet them.

Class Schedule:

This schedule is subject to change throughout the semester. When guest speakers and events become available, the time and place of class sessions may change. *Special class sessions will be added to those listed on the syllabus and you are required to attend these additional sessions.* I realize the difficulty this adds to balancing your schedule and you will be given as much advanced warning as possible of these additions.

Monday, 1/22

Introduction

An overview of the syllabus, course expectations, discussion of books.
Discussion of current events before the Congress.
Contact information to be collected and distributed.

Monday, 1/29

Field Trip to the Library of Congress

Meet as a group at the door of the Library of Congress at 1:45 PM for a guided tour of the library. Meet at the carriage entrance of the Thomas Jefferson Building, off of First Street, SE. Capitol South METRO.

Monday, 2/5

The Role of the Party

The powers of the Speaker of the House; The Republican Conference and the Democratic Caucus, The “Whip” Organization...
Readings: How Congress Works, Chapter 1.

Monday, 2/12

The Legislative Process

How a bill becomes a law - the intricacies. U.S. House - protection of majority rights vs. U.S. Senate - and minority rights; The Rules Committee vs. Unanimous Consent
Readings: How Congress Works, Chapter 2.

Monday, 2/19

The Committee Process –

Hearings; Markups; An overview of how legislation is created. Committee staff, legislative procedure.

Readings: How Congress Works, Chapter 3.

Assignment Due: Three to four page (typed and double spaced) paper on your observations at a Congressional hearing of your choice.

Take Home Midterm handed out at end of class

Monday, 2/26

The Congressional Budgeting Process

A discussion and clarification of the authorization and appropriations process in the Congress, the role of the President’s budget and the House and Senate Budget Committees. **Readings to be assigned. Midterm Due!**

- Monday, 3/5** **The impact of lobbyists on the legislative process. Panel presentation.**
Readings to be assigned.
- Monday, 3/12** **No class – Spring Break**
- Monday, 3/19** **Campaigns and Elections**
A discussion of issues including the role of PACs, soft money vs. hard money, issue advocacy and campaign finance reform.
Readings to be assigned.
- Monday, 3/26** **“Congressional Questions and Answers”**
Assignment: Bring in an article from a current newspaper or periodical relating to the Congress. Make sufficient copies for the entire class. Article should address an issue or question you have relating to the Congress. Be prepared to present article to the class.
Readings to be assigned.
- Monday, 4/2** **No class**
- Monday, 4/9** **Field Trip - details to be announced.**
This session will take place during the day, probably in the late afternoon.
More details to come.
- Monday, 4/16** **Semester Wrap Up session**
- Monday, 4/23** **In-class final examination**