

TO: Students in GOVT 491-01, Seminar on Congress
FR: Larry Evans
DT: January 25, 2010
RE: Course description and assignments

Focus. The purpose of this seminar is to expose students to scholarly research about the U.S. Congress. Our focus will be on a number of leading academic treatments of important aspects of congressional politics. In contrast to other courses in the department, however, the emphasis will be on the different ways that professional scholars study the national legislature, rather than standard textbook treatments. This semester, the seminar will consider the kinds of questions scholars often ask about congressional representation, committees, party leaders, floor decision making, and interbranch relations. GOVT 370 is a prerequisite for the course.

Logistics. All students who signed up for the course already should be enrolled on the Blackboard course site for GOVT 491-01. I will regularly communicate with students through the email listserv on the course site. My office location is 137-B Morton Hall, and my office telephone extension is 1-3030. My offices hours for spring 2010 are Friday, 1:30-4:30. I am in my office most days, however, so you should feel free to drop by any time. You also can arrange an appointment with me via email (clevan@wm.edu). On most days, I follow email closely between 8 a.m. and 11 p.m., and typically respond to messages within an hour or two.

Requirements. Since this is a seminar, we will not be successful unless students have carefully read the assignments for a given meeting prior to that meeting. There are no books to purchase for the seminar. All of the readings are available on-line via the Blackboard course site. In addition to participation during regularly scheduled class periods, I will expect you to complete an in-class exam and write and present a research proposal (about twenty-five pages, double-spaced). The proposal and exam will each count for 35 percent of the final grade and class participation will count for 30 percent.

Schedule

January 26 Introduction

Jonathan Cohn, "Irrational Exuberance: When Did Political Science Forget about Politics," *The New Republic*, October 25, 1999.

C. Lawrence Evans. 2010. "The Transformation of Committee Scholarship," *Oxford Handbook of Congress*, Oxford University Press.

February 2 An Example of Research in Progress

Chris Den Hartog and Nathan W. Monroe. 2010. *Costly Consideration: Agenda Setting and Majority Party Advantage in the U.S. Senate*, book manuscript in preparation.

February 9 Elections and Representation

Morris P. Fiorina. 1999. "Whatever Happened to the Median Voter?" Prepared for the MIT Conference on Parties and Congress, Cambridge, MA.

David Mayhew. 1974. "The Case of the Vanishing Marginals." *Polity*.

Gary Jacobson. 1987. "The Marginals Never Vanished." *American Journal of Political Science*.

Brandice Canes-Wrone, David W. Brady, and John F. Cogan. 2002. "Out of Step, Out of Office: Electoral Accountability and House Members' Voting." *American Political Science Review*.

February 16 History: Elections and Representation

William Bernhard and Brian R. Sala. 2006. "The Remaking of an American Senate: The 17th Amendment and Ideological Responsiveness." *Journal of Politics*.

Jamie Carson, Erik Engstrom, and Jason Roberts 2007. "Candidate Quality, the Personal Vote, and the Incumbency Advantage in Congress." *American Political Science Review*.

Erik Engstrom and Samuel Kernell. 2005. "Manufactured Responsiveness: The Impact of State Electoral Laws on Unified Party Control of the President and House of Representatives, 1840-1940." *American Journal of Political Science*.

Erik Engstrom. 2006. "Stacking the states, stacking the house: the partisan consequences of congressional redistricting in the 19th century." *American Political Science Review*.

February 23 Committees

Barry Weingast and William Marshall. 1988. "The Industrial Organization of Congress." *Journal of Political Economy*.

Keith Krehbiel. 1990. "Are Congressional Committees Composed of Preference Outliers?" *American Political Science Review*.

Richard L. Hall and Bernard Grofman, 1990. "The Committee Assignment Process and the Conditional Nature of Committee Bias," *American Political Science Review*.

John Aldrich and David Rohde. 2000. "The Republican Revolution and the House Appropriations Committee." *Journal of Politics*.

March 2 **Floor Decision Making**

John Kingdon. 1977. "Models of Legislative Voting," *Journal of Politics*.

Jason M Roberts and Steven S. Smith. 2003. "Procedural Contexts, Party Strategy, and Conditional Party Voting in the U.S. House of Representatives, 1971–2000." *American Journal of Political Science Review*.

John J. Coleman. 1997. "The Decline and Resurgence of Congressional Party Conflict." *Journal of Politics*.

Vincent L. Hutchings. 1998. "Issue Salience and Support for Civil Rights Legislation Among Southern Democrats." *Legislative Studies Quarterly*.

March 16 **Institutional Development**

Sarah Binder. 1996. "The Partisan Basis of Procedural Choice: Allocating Parliamentary Rights in the House 1789-1990, *American Political Science Review*.

Eric Schickler. 2000. "Institutional Change in the House of Representatives, 1867-1998: A Test of Partisan and Ideological Power Balance Models." *The American Political Science Review*.

Sarah Binder. 2006. "Parties and Institutional Choice Revisited." *Legislative Studies Quarterly*. (Skim)

Eric Schickler and Andrew Rich. 1997. "Controlling the Floor: Parties as Procedural Coalitions in the House." *American Journal of Political Science*.

Gary Cox and Mathew McCubbins, 1997. "Toward a Theory of Legislative Rules Changes: Assessing Schickler and Rich's Evidence." *American Journal of Political Science*.

Eric Schickler and Andrew Rich. 1997. "Party Government in the House Reconsidered: A Response to Cox and McCubbins." *American Journal of Political Science*.

March 23 **History: Structure and Procedure**

Eric Lawrence, Forrest Maltzman, and Paul Wahlbeck. 2001. "The Politics of Speaker Cannon's Committee Assignments. *American Journal of Political Science*.

Jeffery Jenkins and Michael Munger. 2003. "Investigating the Incidence of Killer Amendments in Congress. *Journal of Politics*.

Katz, Jonathan N., and Brian R. Sala. 1996. "Careerism, Committee Assignments, and the Electoral Connection." *American Political Science Review*.

Randal Ripley. 1964. "The Party Whip Organizations in the United States House of Representatives." *American Political Science Review*.

March 30 **Gender and Race**

Mary Hawkesworth. 2003. "Congressional Enactments of Race-Gender: Toward a Theory of Raced-Gendered Institutions." *American Political Science Review*.

Charles Cameron, David Epstein, and Sharyn O'Halloran. 1996. "Do Majority-Minority Districts Maximize Substantive Representation in Congress?" *American Political Science Review*.

David Lublin. 1999. "Racial Redistricting and African-American Representation: A Critique of 'Do Majority-Minority Districts Maximize Substantive Representation in Congress?'" *American Political Science Review*.

David Epstein and Sharyn O'Halloran, 1999. "A Social Science Approach to Race, Redistricting, and Representation," *American Political Science Review*.

Vincent L. Hutchings, Harwood K. McClerking and Guy-Uriel Charles. 2004. "Congressional Representation of Black Interests: Recognizing the Importance of Stability." *Journal of Politics*.

April 6 **Congress and the Bureaucracy**

Mathew McCubbins and Thomas Schwartz, 1984. "Congressional Oversight Overlooked: Police Patrols vs. Fire Alarms." *American Journal of Political Science*.

Mathew McCubbins, Roger Noll, and Barry Weingast. 1987. "Administrative Procedures as Instruments of Political Control" *Journal of Law, Economics and Organization*.

John Huber, Charles Shipan, and Madeline Pfahler. 2001. "Legislatures and Statutory Control of Bureaucracy." *American Journal of Political Science*.

Huber, John, and Charles Shipan. 2000. "The Costs of Control: Legislators, Agencies, and Transaction Costs." *Legislative Studies Quarterly*.

April 13 **Exam**

April 20 **Individual consultations about research proposal**

April 27 **Research Proposals Due**