

**TO:** Students in GOVT 470, Congress and the Presidency  
**FR:** Larry Evans  
**DT:** January 2020  
**RE:** Course description and assignments

**Focus.** The purpose of this seminar is to expose students to scholarly research about the U.S. Congress and presidency. Our focus will be on a number of leading academic treatments of important aspects of congressional and presidential politics, especially legislative-executive relations. This semester, the seminar will consider the kinds of questions scholars often ask about congressional representation, committees, party leaders, the internal operations of the executive branch, impeachment, interbranch relations and the constitutional framework. Obviously, we will be especially interested in the implications of scholarly work for our understanding of the Trump administration and the ongoing 116<sup>th</sup> Congress. There are no prerequisites for the course.

**Logistics.** All students who signed up for the course already should be enrolled on the Blackboard course site for GOVT 470. I will regularly communicate with students through the email listserv on the course site. My office location is 236 Tyler Hall, and my office telephone extension is 1-3030. My offices hours for spring 2020 are Tuesdays, 2-5. 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. 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 or paper (about twenty-five pages, double-spaced) and associated draft blog post (no more than 1,200 words). The proposal/post and exam will each count for 35 percent of the final grade and class participation will count for 30 percent. Clarifying information about the assignments will be provided as the class proceeds. The following six books are available for purchase at the bookstore and also can be secured online.

Michael Gerhardt. 2019. *The Federal Impeachment Process*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. University of Chicago Press.

Howell, William G., Jackman, Saul P., and Jon C. Rogowski. 2013. *The Wartime President*. University of Chicago Press.

Kriner, Douglas, and Eric Schickler. 2016. *Investigating the President: Congressional Checks on Presidential Power*. Princeton University Press.

Lee, Frances. 2016. *Insecure Majorities: Congress and the Perpetual Campaign*. University of Chicago Press.

Lewis, David E. 2008. *The Politics of Presidential Appointments: Political Control and Bureaucratic Performance*. Princeton University Press.

Miler, Kristina C. 2019. *Poor Representation: Congress and the Politics of Poverty in the United States*. Cambridge University Press.

### **Preliminary Schedule**

January 28	Gerhardt (first half)
February 4	Gerhardt (second half)
February 11	Lee (first half)
February 18	Lee (second half)
February 21	Optional dinner and reception with visiting congressional staff
February 25	Kriner and Schickler (entire book)
March 3	Miler (entire book) Guest instructor/author: Professor Kristina Miler, University of Maryland
March 17	Lewis (first half)
March 24	Lewis (second half)
March 31	Howell, Jackman and Rogowski (first half)
April 7	Howell, Jackman and Rogowski (second half)
April 14	Exam
April 21	Individual consultations about research proposal
April 28	Research proposals/papers due, presentation of results to seminar participants