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Office Hours: MWF 12:00 – 1:00, T 10:30 – 1:00

Course Objectives:  
The United States Congress is the oldest popularly elected legislature in the world. Congress has the dual responsibility to represent the interests of the country’s citizens and to make law and policy for the nation (to govern), both of those roles will be studied closely. The course will also look at Congress’ organization as a factor in its development, as well as Congress’ relationship with the other branches of government. Special attention will be paid to current issues in Congress, such as party polarization, the deficit, and influence of the Tea Party.

Required Books:  

Thomas E. Mann and Norman J. Ornstein, The Broken Branch: How Congress is Failing America and how to get it back on Track, Oxford University Press, 2008.

Other readings as indicated in the syllabus

Selected online resources for reading and research:  
www.house.gov/  
www.senate.gov/  
Congress.org  
THOMAS at Library of Congress Thomas.loc.gov  
Emailyoursenator.com/  
Opencrs.com (reports of Congressional Research Service)  
Fpc.state.gov/e18185.htm (more reports of Congressional Research Service)  
CQ Researcher  
CQ Congress Collection

Course Requirements:  
Mid-term exam 25%  
Final exam 20  
Simulation (essays/partic.) 45  
Participation 10
Examinations
There will be two exams: a mid-term and a final. Final exam will not be cumulative. Students who have an A at the end of the semester are exempt from the final exam. You cannot be borderline – it has to be a clear 93% or above.

Simulation
The will class will be conducting a simulation of a congressional hearing. Details will be distributed in class. Preparing for the simulation involves writing three essays. For each essay, in addition to the hard copy handed in to the instructor, students are required to submit an electronic copy to turnitin.com. To access the site, go to turnitin.com. If you haven’t used it before you will need to create an account. The class ID is 4144618; the password is congress. Essays will be marked down one letter grade for every day they are late.

Participation
Since this is a lecture class, it is difficult to demand consistent course participation by the entire class; however, the size is small enough that active participation is appropriate and feasible.

Attendance
Attendance is expected at each class, and a sign-in sheet will be provided at each class meeting. Do NOT sign in for classmates if they are absent. Signing someone else’s name in their absence will be treated as academic dishonesty. Attendance is not part of the grade calculation, but it becomes a factor if a student misses more than 6 classes, at which time a grade of WA (withdrawal – excessive absences) will be assigned.

The Marquette University Undergraduate Attendance Policy (revised in June 2011) states the following:

“Students are responsible for attending all class meetings for courses in which they are registered. Any absence, regardless of the reason, prevents students from getting the full benefit of the course and as such, no distinction is made between excused and unexcused absences, with the following exceptions:

1. Absences resulting from legal obligations (such as jury duty).
2. Absences resulting from university sanctioned activities and related travel.”

The Policy also states “the Marquette University Student Health Service does not provide documentation of illness, or of a visit to the Student Health Service. Likewise, college and other university offices (e.g., Office of the Dean, Counseling Center and Student Affairs) do not provide documentation of an absence on behalf of the student.”

In cases of excessive absences, the Marquette Undergraduate Attendance Policy will be followed. “For courses in which attendance is regularly taken, an instructor or college office may withdraw a student from a course due to excessive absences and assign a grade of WA (Withdrawn-Excessive Absences)...Students who miss more than 6 classes in a 3 credit course that meets 50 minutes, 3 times per week, will be considered to have excessive absences and may be assigned a WA.”

Those who are involved in university sanctioned activities should submit a schedule of anticipated absences within the first 2 weeks of class, and also come talk to the instructor well in advance of any other university sanctioned activity that will result in a missed assignment or quiz. To reiterate, up to 6 absences do not impact a student’s grade at all, but for 7 or more absences the consequence is significant – a WA.
Academic Dishonesty

Any incidents of academic dishonesty, such as cheating, dishonest conduct, or plagiarism will be punished to the fullest extent allowed by Marquette University policy.

Grading Scale:

93-100 A
88-92  A/B
83-87  B
78-82  B/C
73-77  C
69-72  C/D
61-68  D
60 and below F

Course Schedule

Mon., Aug. 29 - Introduction

Wed., Aug. 31 – Is Congress Broken?
“The Empty Chamber,” The New Yorker (D2L)
“Only One Senator Stays to Question U.S. Envoy to Syria…” Fox News, 8/3/11 (D2L)
The Broken Branch, Ch. 1

Fri., Sept. 2 – Simulation Discussion
Read requirements for Senator Biographical Assessment, Legislative Analysis, and Interest Group Paper (D2L under Content, Assignments)

Mon., Sept. 5 – NO CLASS, LABOR DAY

Wed., Sept. 7 – Presentation by Les Aspin Center

Fri., Sept. 9 – Background and History
Congress and its Members, Chs. 1-2
Article I of the U.S. Constitution

Mon., Sept. 12 – Theory and Practice
The Broken Branch, Ch. 2

HOW CONGRESS WORKS

Congress and its Members, Ch 8

Fri., Sept. 16 – Leaders and Parties
Congress and its Members, Ch. 6
“Presiding Loses its Prestige in Senate,” Rollcall.com, 8/2/11 (D2L)
Mon., Sept. 19 – Focus on Individual Leaders – Joseph Cannon and John Boehner
   “Getting Rid of Uncle Joe,” Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, David Shribman, 3/14/2010 (D2L)
   “Tea Party Scalds John Boehner in Crucial Test of Leadership,” International Business Times,
   7/29/2011 (D2L)

   The Broken Branch, Ch. 4
   **BIOGRAPHY OF SENATOR DUE**

Fri., Sept. 23 – Committees
   Congress and its Members, Ch. 7

Mon., Sept. 26 – Decision Making in Congress
   Congress and its Members, Ch. 9
   The Broken Branch, Ch. 3

Wed., Sept. 28 – Hill Styles and Home Styles
   Congress and its Members, Ch. 5
   “The Speech to the Electors of Bristol,” Edmund Burke (D2L)

Fri., Sept. 30 – Congress and the President
   Congress and its Members, Ch. 10
   Articles I (again) and II of the U.S. Constitution

Mon, Oct. 3 – Congress and National Security Policies
   Congress and its Members, Ch. 15
   “The Return to Isolationism,” The Economist, 8/2/11 (D2L)

Wed., Oct. 5 – Congress and Organized Interests
   Congress and its Members, Ch. 13
   “A Recess Destination With Bipartisan Support: Israel and the West Bank,” The New York Times,
   8/15/11 (D2L)
   “Paying the Bill: Don’t Link Lawmakers’ Trips to Israel Lobbyists,” Syracuse.com, 8/24/11 (D2L)

Fri., Oct. 7 – Congress and Domestic Policymaking
   Congress and its Members, pp. 401-416 (in Ch. 14)
   “U.S. House Votes to Kill GE Engine for F-35 Fighter,” Bloomberg.com, 2/16/11 (D2L)

Mon, Oct. 10 – Congress and the Bureaucracy
   pp. 315-335 (in Ch. 11)

   Congress and its Members, pp. 58-67 (in Ch. 3)
   “How Proportional Representation Elections Work,” from Behind the Ballot Box: A Citizen’s Guide to
   Voting Systems, Douglas J. Amy, 2005 (D2L)

Fri., Oct. 14 – **MIDTERM EXAM**
CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS

Mon., Oct. 17 – Drawing Congressional Districts
Congress and its Members, pp. 43-58 (in Ch. 3)
“Between the Lines: Redistricting Halftime Show,” Rollcall.com, 8/4/11 (D2L)

Congress and its Members, Ch. 4

OCTOBER 20 – 23 – NO CLASS FALL BREAK

Mon., Oct. 24 – State Legislative Politics
Guest Speakers – Jeff Stone and Jeff Plale

Guest speaker, Rob Irvine, Marquette graduate student

LEGISLATIVE ANALYSIS DUE

Fri., Oct. 28 – It’s All about Winning
“The Electoral Connection,” David Mayhew (D2L)

Mon., Oct. 31 – It Takes a Candidate - documentary

Wed., Nov. 2 – It Takes a Candidate - documentary

Fri., Nov. 4 – It Takes a Candidate – discussion
“What is the Tea Party? A Growing State of Mind,” (D2L)

POLICYMAKING

Mon., Nov. 7 – The Budget
Congress and its Members, pp. 416-434 (in Ch. 14)
INTEREST GROUP PAPER DUE

Wed., Nov. 9 – Oversight
Congress and its Members, pp. 335-342 (in Ch. 11)
“Congress as Administrator,” The Politics of Shared Power, Louis Fisher, 1998 (D2L)

Fri., Nov. 11 - Committee Hearing

Mon., Nov. 14 – Committee Hearing

Wed., Nov. 16 – Committee Hearing

Fri., Nov. 18 – Committee Hearing
Mon., Nov. 21 – Institutional Decline
   *The Broken Branch*, Ch. 5

NOVEMBER 23 – 27 – NO CLASS THANKSGIVING BREAK

Mon., Nov. 28 – A Broken Congress Revisited
   *The Broken Branch*, Ch. 7

Wed., Nov. 30 – Simulation – Party Caucuses

Fri., Dec. 2 – Constitutional Convention Caucus
   “The Founding Fathers: A Reform Caucus in Action,” John P. Roche, 1961 (D2L)

Mon., Dec. 5 – Simulation – Committee Markup

Wed., Dec. 7 – Simulation – Committee Markup

Fri., Dec. 9 – What now?
   *The Broken Branch*, Ch 8