

San José State University
Department of Political Science
Pols 105: Congress, Spring 2019

Course and Contact Information

Instructor:	Garrick L. Percival
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Office Hours:	Tues 1:30-3; Wed 11-12:30 (and by appointment)
Class Days/Time:	Tuesday and Thursday 10:30-11:45
Classroom:	Clark Hall 303

Faculty Web Page and MYSJSU Messaging

Course materials such as the syllabus, handouts, notes, assignment instructions, etc. can be found on the on Canvas Learning Management System course login website at <http://sjsu.instructure.com>. You are responsible for regularly checking with the messaging system through MySJSU at <http://my.sjsu.edu> to learn of any updates.

By enrolling in this course, you consent to all course requirements listed in this syllabus, published on our Canvas site, and announced in class. You accept responsibility for accessing the Canvas course website to download any required handouts, assignments, or readings. You also accept responsibility for checking the course website regularly for any announcements. You also accept responsibility for receiving any messages sent via the MySJSU email system. Make sure that MySJSU has your current email address. Please contact me within the first week if you cannot access the Canvas website, download and read .pdf files, link to other websites, or send or receive email.

Course Description

Examines politics and policymaking in the U.S. Congress. Topics include party leadership, interest groups in Congress, congressional committees, political representation, redistricting and congressional elections, party polarization, and the process of how a bill becomes law.

Political Science Program Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the Political Science major program, students should be able to demonstrate the following learning outcomes.

PSPLO1: Breadth

Students should possess a broad knowledge of the theory and methods of the various branches of the discipline.

PSPLO2: Application and Disciplinary Methods

Students should be able to formulate research questions, engage in systematic literature searches using primary and secondary sources, evaluate research studies, and critically analyze and interpret influential political texts. Students should be able to apply these techniques to identify, understand, and analyze domestic and international political issues and organizations.

PSPLO3: Communication Skills

Students should master basic competencies in oral and written communication skills and be able to apply these skills in the context of political science. This means communicating effectively about politics and/or public administration, public policy, and law.

PSPLO4: Citizenship

Students should acquire an understanding of the role of the citizen in local, state, national, and global contexts and appreciate the importance of lifelong participation in political processes.

Course Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the course, students should be able to:

CLO1 Learn political science theories and concepts and theories that relate to the U.S., Congress

CLO2 Demonstrate the ability to critically think about the organization of Congress (including political parties and committees) and how organizational structures shape legislative outcomes.

CLO3 Develop a deeper understanding of congressional campaigns and electoral systems and how they affect political representation in the Congress.

CLO4 Demonstrate knowledge of legislative processes and how a bill becomes law in the contemporary U.S. Congress.

Mapping POLS 105 Course Learning Outcomes to Political Science PLOs	Program Learning Outcomes	Assessment
CLO1: Learn political science theories and concepts and theories that relate to the U.S Congress	PLO1, 2	Quizzes, midterm and final exam, term paper
CLO2: Demonstrate the ability to critically think about the organization of Congress (including political parties and committees) and how organizational structures shape legislative outcomes	PLO2, 4,	Quizzes, midterm and final exams, congressional debates, “Congress in the news”

CLO3: Develop a deeper understanding of congressional campaigns and electoral systems and how they affect political representation in the Congress.	PLO2, 4	Midterm and final exams, term paper, congressional debates, “Congress in the news”
CLO4: Demonstrate knowledge of legislative processes and how a bill becomes law in the contemporary U.S. Congress.	PLO1,2	Quizzes, midterm and final exams

Required Texts

Davidson, Roger, Walter Oleszek, Frances Lee, and Eric Schickler (2018). *Congress and It’s Members*. 16th ed. Sage Publishing.

Dodd, Lawrence C., and Bruce Oppenheimer (2017). *Congress Reconsidered*. Sage Publishing.

Additional Readings

- Ezra Klein, “This is Not How the Senate is Supposed to Work” (on Canvas)
- Jeffrey Toobin, “Our Broken Constitution,” (on Canvas)
- Adam Nagourney and Robert Gebeloff, “In Orange County, a Republican Fortress Turns Democratic” (on Canvas)
- Ryan Lizza, “Getting to Maybe” (on Canvas)
- James Fallows, “A Broken Check and Balance” (on Canvas)
- Ezra Klein, “The Unpersuaded” (on Canvas)

**I also urge you to read a national newspaper several times a week (the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, and the *Wall Street Journal* are excellent sources for in depth political and policy news. This is something you should do anyway, but since we will be discussing a variety of policy topics during the semester, keeping up with the news of the day will most certainly add to the quality of our discussions in class. There are a variety of other great news-related websites out there as well. In short, keep yourself informed.

Library Liaison

The library liaison for Political Science is available to answer questions and provide one-on-one help using the library for research. His name and contact info is: Paul Kauppila, Librarian (Political Science Liaison). He can be reached by telephone (408) 808-2042 or by email Paul.Kauppila@sjsu.edu.

Course Requirements and Assignments

1. Course Readings: All assigned readings are required. It is expected students complete the assigned readings before attending class each week. Students may find it necessary to reading all or portions of the assigned readings more than once to comprehend complex material. Students who feel they need additional help with effective reading comprehension strategies should consult with the professor during office hours.

2. Exams: Two in class exams—a midterm and final—are required. Exams will consist of multiple choice, true false, and essay questions covering the assigned readings and lecture/discussion material. A short study guide will be issued on Canvas one week before each exam date.

3. Quizzes: A total of six online quizzes will be required. Quizzes will be taken on Canvas covering material in the assigned readings. Quiz questions will consist of multiple choice, true false, matching, and fill in the blank questions. Please refer to the course schedule for appropriate due dates and times. **Students who fail to submit a quiz on time will be afforded 1 make-up quiz during the semester for half credit. Beyond that, missed or late quizzes will not earn credit unless covered under the university make-up policy.**

4. Term Paper: A final term paper (9-10 pages) is required which asks students to analyze a topic related to the U.S. Congress. I will distribute a separate memo with more details about this assignment at the beginning of the fourth week of class. Grading on the assignment will be based on the clarity and strength of your thesis statement, the quality of your research (you will be required to incorporate a mix of academic books and peer reviewed journal articles as well as online news articles), and the overall strength of your analysis. **The term paper is due May 7th.**

5. Congressional Debates: In week 15 of the semester, students will be participating in a debate assignment that will (collectively) cover a variety of topics related to Congress. Topics might include the role of presidential impeachment, ending the filibuster in the U.S. senate, introducing congressional term limits and more. A separate memo detailing the requirements of this assignment will be distributed during week 6 of the semester. Debate teams will be assigned just before the midterm exam.

6. “Congress in the News” Assignment: The beginning of class each day will begin with what we’ll call a “Congress in the news lightning round.” The goal of these quick 6 minutes sessions will be designed to educate ourselves about news related items dealing with Congress and the broader national government, including the presidency, the courts, and bureaucratic agencies. Topics will include the federal government shutdown, congressional investigations into the Trump administration, the early stages of the 2020 presidential campaign (which already includes several sitting members of Congress who have announced they’re running for president), legislative debates over policy, and party politics. This assignment asks you to carry on this journey outside the classroom. Specifically, you will be asked to read and summarize 3 news articles related to Congress published in the *New York Times* or *Washington Post* as well as summarize at least 1 hour of legislative debate or congressional hearing testimony streamed over C-span. The first of these assignments will be due **February 26th**, followed by **March 29rd**, **April 25th**, and **May 9th**. I’ll distribute a separate memo with more instructions by the end of the second week of the semester.

6. Class Participation: Participation is an important part of the course. Without participation from a broad cross section of students we all (yes, including the professor) don’t learn as much. Participation can be earned in a variety of ways: Asking questions or making regular comments in class, actively participating in “pop” in-class group critical thinking exercises, and/or contributing to online discussions on the course Canvas page.

Final Examination

Faculty members are required to have a culminating activity for their courses, which can include a final examination, a final research paper or project, a final creative work or performance, a final portfolio of work, or other appropriate assignment. Our final examination is scheduled for **May 16th from 9:45am-12pm**. The exam will consist of multiple choice and short answer/essay questions covering the in-class material and assigned readings from week 9 (see course schedule below) through the last week of class.

Succeeding in a Four-Unit Course

At SJSU, students are expected to spend two hours outside of class for every one hour of class time. Because this is a four-unit class, you can expect to spend a minimum of eight hours per week in addition to time spent in class and on scheduled tutorials or activities. Careful time management will help you keep up with readings and assignments and enable you to be successful in all of your courses. In this class, one of the four units is an engagement unit, which consists of online quizzes and community-based assignments. You are expected to spend 45 hours this semester (both to prepare for and to complete the work) to successfully complete this unit. More details about student workload can be found in <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf>

Grading Information:

Students' grades will be calculated using the following assignments (with corresponding points and percentages)

Assignment	Points	Percentage of total
Online Quizzes (5 @ 20 points each)	120	15.0%
Midterm Exam	160	20.0%
Final Exam	160	20.0%
Term Paper	160	20.0%
Class Participation	40	5.0%
Congressional Debate Assignment	80	10.0%
Congress in the News Assignment	80	10.0%
Total	800	100%

Your final grade will be calculated by dividing your total points by 800. For example, consider the following: Total points = 720; so $720/800 = .90 = 90\%$. Using the scale below, this individual would be assigned an A-. Final letter grades for the course will be assigned based on the following scale:

Course Letter Grades will be assigned using the following scale:

Grade	Percentage
A plus	98 to 100%
A	93 to 97%
A minus	90% to 92%
B plus	87% to 89%
B	83% to 86%
B minus	80% to 82%
C plus	77% to 79%
C	73% to 76%
C minus	70% to 72%
D plus	67% to 69%
D	63% to 66%
D minus	60% to 62%
F	59% or less

Make-Up/Late Policy

Make-up exams and assignments are only given in cases of excused absences in accordance with the university's policy on excused absences. Circumstances that may lead to an excused student absence are subpoenas, jury duty, military duty, religious observances, illness, illness of a dependent, and bereavement for immediate family. If you are seriously ill, you must notify me as soon as possible by email or on my office phone that you will be unable to complete an assignment on time. Except in cases of documented medical emergency, you **MUST** notify me **before** the scheduled assignment. Be certain you schedule all of our assignments right away. If you have a vacation or social obligation, considering taking this course during another session, as these types of events do not fall under the make-up policy. **Also, please do not schedule job interviews or other events on assignment days.** If you are a member of a SJSU varsity intercollegiate athletic team, please provide me with your team schedule during the first week of the class.

Term papers that are turned in late will be penalized a full letter grade for every 24 hours past the original due date. For example, a paper turned in 10 minutes past the scheduled time it was due will be marked down 1 full letter grade. This same penalty will apply to a paper turned in up to 24 hours past the original due date. For every 24 hours after that, a paper will be penalized an additional letter grade and so on until the start value is an 'F'. Please be aware of this policy and be sure to get your term paper turned in on time.

Classroom Protocol

Proper Use of Technology

At times, we will be using our tablets, smartphones, and laptops to work on assignments and group projects in class. *Aside from those times, your phones and computers need to be turned off and put away.* In the classroom environment, texting, social networking, web searching—or any of the myriad things we all can do with our phones—hurts our ability to listen and communicate as effectively as possible. If you absolutely must use your phone, please leave the classroom. Students who violate this policy more than once will be asked to leave.

Email Communication

The easiest way to contact me is via email. Please be aware though that I will not (unless in unusual circumstances) respond to email after normal working hours (Monday through Friday 8am-5pm). During busy times of the semester I receive a high volume of emails so please give me at least 24 hours to respond (not counting weekends for reasons just described) before sending me a follow up.

Consent for Recording of Class and Public Sharing of Instructor Material

[University Policy S12-7](#), requires students to obtain instructor's permission to record the course and the following items to be included in the syllabus:

- “Common courtesy and professional behavior dictate that you notify someone when you are recording him/her. **You must obtain the instructor's permission to make audio or video recordings in this class.** Such permission allows the recordings to be used for your private, study purposes only. The recordings are the intellectual property of the instructor; you have not been given any rights to reproduce or distribute the material.”
- It is suggested that the greensheet include the instructor's process for granting permission, whether in writing or orally and whether for the whole semester or on a class by class basis.
- In classes where active participation of students or guests may be on the recording, permission of those students or guests should be obtained as well.
- “Course material developed by the instructor is the intellectual property of the instructor and cannot be shared publicly without his/her approval. **You may not publicly share or upload instructor generated material for this course such as exam questions, lecture notes, or homework solutions without instructor consent.**”

University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9 (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>), relevant information to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. is available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>"

Academic integrity

Your commitment, as a student, to learning is evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University. The [University Academic Integrity Policy F15-7](#) requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. **Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development.** Visit the [Student Conduct and Ethical Development](#) website for more information.

SJSU Counseling and Psychological Services

The SJSU Counseling and Psychological Services is located on the corner of 7th Street and San Carlos in the new Student Wellness Center, Room 300B. Professional psychologists, social workers, and counselors are available to provide confidential consultations on issues of student mental health, campus climate or psychological and academic issues on an individual, couple, or group basis. To schedule an appointment or learn more information, visit [Counseling and Psychological Services website](#) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/counseling>

Political Science Department Writing Policy

Students of political science should develop the ability to write in clear, grammatical English. Spelling and grammar count! Students must take care that appropriate citations are used. Direct quotations must be so indicated with quotation marks. Ideas from others must also be referenced. Failure to cite your sources constitutes academic misconduct, which carries with it serious sanctions. A tutorial on citations is available at <http://libguides.sjsu.edu/writeandcite>. The SJSU Writing Center is located in Clark Hall, Suite 126. All Writing Specialists have gone through a rigorous hiring process, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. In addition to one-on-one tutoring services, the Writing Center also offers workshops every semester on a variety of writing topics. To make an appointment or to refer to the numerous online resources offered through the Writing Center visit <http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/>

Additional Class Notes

This is a course that covers a lot of material in a short period of time. I expect every student in class to participate by asking questions and actively participating in group and class discussions. Although attendance in the class is not mandatory it is obviously difficult to participate if you do not attend class. You each have a lot to bring into the class and the course becomes much more rewarding if you frequently participate.

For most class days, I will post on Canvas a PDF copy of Power Point slides that provide brief headings, charts/graphs, and/or outlines of the day's material. I'll do my best to post these the evening before each class. Canvas will also be used to take quizzes, read the assigned online

articles and academic papers, and when the time comes, check your performance on the graded assignments.

Finally, I am more than happy to help answer any questions you have about the course at any time during the semester. If my office hours don't work with your schedule please don't hesitate to make an appointment with me outside of normal office hours. The best way to contact me to set up an appointment is via email. Of course, you can talk with me right before or right after class as well. This should be a fun and rewarding semester. Work hard and good luck!

Political Science 105: Congress (spring 2019) Schedule*

**Schedule is subject to change with fair notice and will be announced via email and/or in-class announcement.*

Week	Date	Topic, Readings, Assignments, and Deadlines
1	1/24	Course Introduction and Overview <u>Readings</u> No Assigned Readings
2	1/29	Congress: The Institution <u>Readings</u> Davidson et al, chapter 1
	1/31	<u>Readings</u> Dodd and Oppenheimer "Congress in the Age of Trump," chapter 18
3	2/5	Is Congress Broken? <u>Readings</u> Ezra Klein, "This is Not How the Senate is Supposed to Work" (on Canvas)
	2/7	<u>Readings</u> Jeffrey Toobin, "Our Broken Constitution," (on Canvas) Assignment: Quiz #1 posted on Canvas: due 2/12 12pm
4	2/12	Origins and Development of Congress <u>Readings</u> Davidson et al, chapter 2
	2/14	<u>Readings</u> Dodd and Oppenheimer, "The New World of U.S. Senators," chapter 1
5	2/19	Congressional Elections <u>Readings</u> Davidson et al, chapter 3
	2/21	<u>Readings</u> Dodd and Oppenheimer, "Voters candidates and issues in congressional elections" chapter 3

		Assignment: Quiz #2 posted on Canvas: due 2/26 12pm
6	2/26	Congressional Elections continued <u>Readings</u> Davidson et al, chapter 4 Assignment: "Congress in the News" #1: due 2/26 11:59pm (Canvas)
	2/28	<u>Readings</u> Adam Nagourney and Robert Gebeloff, "In Orange County, a Republican Fortress Turns Democratic" (on Canvas) Assignment: Quiz #3 posted on Canvas: due 3/5 12pm
7	3/5	Congressional Representation and the Electoral Connection <u>Readings</u> Dodd and Oppenheimer, "Constituency Representation in Congress," chapter 5
	3/7	<u>Readings</u> Dodd and Oppenheimer, "Black-Latino Relations in Congress," chapter 6
8	3/12	Catch-Up and Review <u>Readings</u> No assigned readings: review for midterm exam
	3/14	Midterm Exam
9	3/19	The Workhorses of Congress: Congressional Committees <u>Readings</u> Davidson et al, chapter 7
	3/21	<u>Readings</u> Dodd and Oppenheimer, "Legislative Effectiveness and Problem Solving"
10	3/26	Leaders and Parties in Congress <u>Readings</u> Davidson et al, chapter 6 Assignment Quiz #4 posted on Canvas due: 3/28 12pm
	3/28	<u>Reading</u> Dodd and Oppenheimer, "Filibusters and Majority Rule in the Modern U.S. Senate," chapter 10 Assignment: "Congress in the News" #2: due 3/29 11:59pm (Canvas)

11	4/2 4/4	<u>No Class: Spring Break!</u>
12	4/9 4/11	<p>“Textbook Lawmaking:” Rules and Procedures in Congress <u>Reading</u> Davidson et al, chapter 10 (pgs. 219-244)</p> <p><u>Reading</u> Davidson et al, chapter 10 (pgs. 245-250) Assignment: Quiz #5 posted on Canvas due: 4/16 12pm</p>
13	4/16 4/18	<p>Government Deadlock: Legislating in Polarized Times <u>Reading</u> Dodd and Oppenheimer, “Legislating in Polarized Times,” chapter 5</p> <p><u>Reading</u> Ryan Lizza “Getting to Maybe” (on Canvas) Assignment: Quiz #6 posted on Canvas due: 4/23 12pm</p>
14	4/23 4/25	<p>Congress and the Executive Branch <u>Reading</u> Davidson et al, chapter 10</p> <p><u>Reading</u> James Fallows, “A Broken Check and Balance” (on Canvas) Assignment: “Congress in the News” #3 (watch and review Frontline’s “Trump’s Takeover”) due 4/25 11:59pm (Canvas)</p>
15	4/30 5/2	<p>In-Class Congressional Debates <u>Reading</u> No Assigned Reading</p> <p><u>Reading</u> No Assigned Reading</p>
16	5/7	<p>Public Policy Making: Congress, the presidency, and the courts <u>Reading</u> Dodd and Oppenheimer, “The Balance of Power Between the Congress and President,” Chapter 15 Ezra Klein, “The Unpersuaded” Assignment: Congress Term Paper Due 5/7 11:59pm (on Canvas)</p>

	5/9	<u>Reading</u> Dodd and Oppenheimer, "Is Advice and Consent Broken?" chapter 11 Assignment: "Congress in the News" #4: due 5/9 11:59pm
16		Final Exam Monday May 16th 9:45-12pm