

**Professor:** Dr. Catherine Wineinger  
**Course Number:** PLSC 397E (5 credits)  
**Class Time:** M/W/F 10:00-11:20am  
**Room:** FI 238

**Office Location:** Arntzen Hall 416  
**Office Hours:** M/W/F 11:30am-12:30pm or by appt.  
**Email:** cathy.wineinger@wwu.edu  
**Department Phone:** (360) 650-3469

## Course Description

This course focuses on the United States Congress and encourages students to explore the complexities of congressional politics. Students will be introduced to political science scholarship on Congress to better understand the historical development of the institution, congressional elections and representation, the legislative process, and decision-making in Congress. **A major aspect of this course is a congressional simulation.** In the first half of the quarter, students will “work for” a specific member of Congress. Assignments will be reflective of the type of work congressional staffers do every day. In the second half of the quarter, students will participate in a legislative simulation as a member of Congress. The simulation will include party caucus meetings, committee hearings and markups, and House/Senate floor simulations. This course is intended to teach students about the intricacies of congressional politics in an interactive (and hopefully fun!) way. Students will learn and develop skills necessary to understand the legislative process and work in a congressional office.

## Course Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Read and understand academic literature on congressional politics
- Critically analyze the evolution of Congress as an institution
- Articulate the legislative process in Congress
- Understand the complexity of congressional policymaking
- See improvement in their written and oral communication skills

## Departmental Learning Outcomes

- Possess substantive knowledge in their area of concentration (1)
- Exhibit analytical skills in interpreting data (2)
- Demonstrate critical, independent thinking about politics and public life (5)
- Recognize the rights, responsibilities, and privileges of participating in, and contributing as a citizen in a diverse society (6)
- Understand and evaluate assumptions, values, and beliefs in context of diverse local, national and global communities (7)
- Convey substantive knowledge using reading and written and oral communication (8)

## Required Readings & Assignments

All required and recommended readings – including articles, book chapters, podcasts, videos, etc. – will be posted on Canvas within the corresponding module.

Assignment guidelines will also be posted on Canvas under the “Assignments” tab. All assignments should be submitted via Canvas by the date/time listed on the syllabus.

## Earning Your Grade

Member Introduction Essay.....	10%
Staff Assignments (x4).....	40%
• Press Clips Memo (10%)	
• Policy Memo (10%)	
• Dear Colleague Letter (10%)	
• Constituent Letter (10%)	
Legislative Simulation Participation*.....	40%
• Participation in the legislative simulation includes: 1) understanding your role and submitting each of your assignments, 2) preparing for each class, and 3) actively participating during your simulation days.	
Final Reflection.....	10%

*Extra credit:* You may earn **up to 1% extra credit** on your final grade if you attend a political event on campus or in the community and write a 1-2 page reflection about how the event is related to this class. You can also earn extra credit for holding a leadership role, being selected as a bill sponsor, and/or serving on the Rules Committee in the legislative simulation.

## Class Conduct and Expectations

In order for our class discussions to be meaningful and productive, it is essential that we treat one another with respect. This includes: recognizing that each person in this class is bringing with them unique life experiences and academic training; demonstrating self-awareness and a willingness to listen; and engaging in constructive critiques. In order for our simulations to run smoothly, it is also expected that you submit assignments on time and come prepared to participate in each class.

## Attendance/Absences

A significant aspect of this class (and your grade!) is the legislative simulation. **You are expected to be in class each day in order to prepare for and participate in the simulation.** Of course, I recognize that we are still in a pandemic. **Please stay home if you are sick, and please let me know if you absolutely need to miss a simulation day.** I will find a way to work with you, whether it be implementing a virtual option or developing an alternative assignment.

## Extensions and Late Work

All assignments are due by the beginning of class unless otherwise stated. Our legislative simulation only runs well if everyone submits their work on time and comes prepared for each class. Therefore, **there are no extensions for legislative simulation assignments and you will be docked participation points if they are submitted late.** If you need an extension for another assignment, please email me **before** the assignment is due. *Note: I cannot guarantee you feedback on late work.*

## Scale

93-100	A
90-92	A-
87-89	B+
83-86	B
80-82	B-
77-79	C+
73-76	C
70-72	C-
67-69	D+
63-66	D
60-62	D-
<60	F

## Pass/No Pass Grades

Students opting for P/NP grading will receive a **P for grades of D- and above.** A grade of D, D-, or F will be recorded as an NP, which will not earn credits or be reflected in the GPA. In order to earn credits toward the **Political Science major or minor, a grade of C- or higher is required.**

### Office Hours/Contact Information

Office hours are for **you!** I want you to succeed (both in and beyond this class). If you have questions, would like to further discuss readings/assignments, or just want to talk about politics, career goals, etc., please feel free to stop by.

- **When:** M/W/F 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
- **Where:** 1) In-person meetings: Arntzen Hall 416  
2) Zoom meetings: Click the “Virtual Office Hours” link located at the top of the Modules page on Canvas

**If you cannot meet during these hours, please email me at [cathy.wineinger@wwu.edu](mailto:cathy.wineinger@wwu.edu) to schedule an appointment.** I only read and reply to emails during regular business hours. Give me one full business day to respond to your email, but don't be afraid to follow up after that!

### WWU Policies and Student Resources

Please visit [syllabi.wwu.edu](http://syllabi.wwu.edu) for a list of university policies and resources, including: plagiarism and academic integrity policies, disability resources, religious accommodation policies, etc.

### A Note on Self-Care

Nothing is more important than taking good care of yourself! I expect you to give your best effort in class, but remember that **your physical and mental health is always a priority.** Please stay in communication with me so that we can work together to find solutions to any issues that may arise this quarter.

*Note: Thank you to Drs. Jill Greenlee, Lauren Bell, Matt Green, Jeffrey Lazarus, and Noelle Norton for inspiring the structure of this course and for sharing their resources with me!*

## Congressional Politics: Spring 2022 Course Agenda

Below is the tentative schedule for this quarter. Please note that this course agenda is subject to change. If a change is made, I will send you an email and update the syllabus on Canvas.

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### WEEK 1 – INTRODUCTION & FOUNDATION

#### W/ March 30 – Class Introduction

- Explore LegSim videos: [Insider Perspectives](#)
- Explore website: [congress.gov](http://congress.gov)
- Explore website: [C-SPAN](#)

#### F/ April 1 – Constitutional Context & Evolution

- United States Constitution, Article I
- Federalist 51

**\*\*DUE: Class Survey**

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### WEEK 2 – CONGRESSIONAL REPRESENTATION

#### M/ April 4 – “Hill Style”

- Carson, Jamie L. and Jeffery A. Jenkins. 2011. “Examining the Electoral Connection Across Time.” *The Annual Review of Political Science*, 14: 25-46.

#### W/ April 6 – “Home Style”

- Parker, David C.W. and Craig Goodman. 2009. “Making a Good Impression: Resource Allocation, Home Styles, and Washington Work.” *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 4: 493-524.

#### F/ April 8 – Complicating Representation – **NO CLASS (see Canvas for online activity)**

- Russell, Annelise. 2021. *Tweeting is Leading: How Senators Communicate and Represent in the Age of Twitter*. New York: Oxford University Press, Ch. 9: “Prioritization and Representation.”
- Schaefer, Katherine. March 10, 2021. “[The changing face of Congress in 7 charts.](#)” *Pew Research Center*.

**\*\*DUE: Member Introduction Essay**

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### WEEK 3 – CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS

#### M/ April 11 – Apportionment & Redistricting

- Barabas, Jason and Jennifer Jerit. 2004. “Redistricting Principles and Racial Representation.” *State Politics & Policy Quarterly*, 4 (4): 415-435.

#### W/ April 13 – Nominations & Candidates

- Hassell, Hans J. G. 2015. “Party Control of Party Primaries: Party Influence in Nominations for the US Senate.” *The Journal of Politics*, 78 (1): 75-87.

## **F/ April 15 – Campaign Strategy**

- Nyhan, Brendan and Jacob M. Montgomery. 2014. “Connecting the Candidates: Consultant Networks and the Diffusion of Campaign Strategy in American Congressional Elections.” *American Journal of Political Science*, 59 (2): 292-308.

**\*\*DUE: Staff Assignment #1 - Press Clips Memo**

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## **WEEK 4 – THE STRUCTURE OF CONGRESS**

### **M/ April 18 – Congressional Staff**

- Crosson, Jesse M., Alexander C. Furnas, Timothy LaPira, and Casey Burgat. 2021. “Partisan Competition and the Decline in Legislative Capacity among Congressional Offices.” *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 46 (3): 745-789.
- Mineiro, Megan. January 25, 2022. “[Living paycheck to paycheck a reality for some Hill staffers, survey finds.](#)” *Roll Call*.

### **W/ April 20 – Congressional Committees**

- Peay, Periloux C. 2021. “Incorporation is Not Enough: The Agenda Influence of Black Lawmakers in Congressional Committees.” *The Journal of Race, Ethnicity, and Politics*, 6: 402-438.
- Watch (don’t need to watch the entire videos! Just take note of procedure and politics):
  - [House Judiciary Committee Hearing on Police Reform](#)
  - [House Judiciary Committee Justice in Police Act Markup](#)

### **F/ April 22 – Parties & Polarization**

- Lee, Frances E. 2017. “Legislative Parties in an Era of Alternating Majorities.” In *Governing in a Polarized Age: Elections, Parties, and Political Representation in America* (eds. Alan A. Gerber and Eric Schickler). New York: Cambridge University Press, 115-142.

**\*\*DUE: Staff Assignment #2 - Policy Memo**

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## **WEEK 5 – THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS**

### **M/ April 25 – Visualizing the Legislative Process**

- CRS Report: “Introduction to the Legislative Process in the U.S. Congress”
- **[Legislative Simulation #1: First Party Caucus Meeting - Select Bill Sponsors]**

### **W/ April 27 – House & Senate Procedures**

- CRS Reports:
  - **Representatives** read: “The Legislative Process on the House Floor”
  - **Senators** read: “The Legislative Process on the Senate Floor”

### **F/ April 29 – Unorthodox Lawmaking**

- Curry, James M. and Frances E. Lee. 2020. “What is Regular Order Worth? Partisan Lawmaking and Congressional Processes.” *The Journal of Politics*, 82 (2): 627-641.

**\*\*DUE: Staff Assignment #3 – Dear Colleague Letter**

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## WEEK 6 – EFFECTIVE LAWMAKING

### M/ May 2 – Effective Lawmaking in Congress

- Binder, Sarah A. and Frances E. Lee. 2013. “Making Deals in Congress.” In *Negotiating Agreement in Politics* (eds. Jane Mansbridge and Cathie Jo Martin). APSA Task Force Report.
- **Optional Video:** [Discussing Legislative Effectiveness with Representative Joe Neguse](#), *Center for Effective Lawmaking*

**\*\*DUE (BILL SPONSORS ONLY):** *Legislative Simulation #1 Assignments*

### W/ May 4 – Influencing Policy: Lobbyists & Interest Groups

- Lorenz, Geoffrey Miles. 2020. “Prioritized Interests: Diverse Lobbying Coalitions and Congressional Committee Agenda Setting.” *The Journal of Politics*, 82 (1): 225-240.
- **Bill Sponsors introduce bill to class; Committee Chairs schedule hearing**

### F/ May 6 – The Appropriations Process

- CRS Report: “A Brief Overview of the Congressional Budget Process”

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## WEEK 7 – SIMULATION: HOUSE & SENATE COMMITTEES

### M/ May 9 – Simulation: Committee Hearing

- **[Legislative Simulation #2: House & Senate Committee Hearings]**
  - **House meets in Arntzen Hall 421**
  - **Senate meets in Arntzen Hall 414**

**\*\*DUE:** *Legislative Simulation #2 Assignments*

### W/ May 11 – Congressional Caucuses and Party Factions

- Clarke, Andrew J., Craig Volden, and Alan E. Wiseman. “The Legislative Effectiveness of Party Faction Member in Congress.” *Center for Effective Lawmaking* (working paper)
- **[Simulation #3: Party Caucus Meeting / Logrolling – Amendment Strategy]**

**\*\*DUE:** *Legislative Simulation #3 Assignments*

### F/ May 13 – Simulation: Committee Markup

- **[Simulation #4: House & Senate Committee Markups]**
  - **House meets in Arntzen Hall 421**
  - **Senate meets in Arntzen Hall 414**

**\*\*DUE:** *Legislative Simulation #4 Assignments*

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## WEEK 8 – SIMULATION: RULES COMMITTEE & PARTY CAUCUS MEETINGS

### M/ May 16 – What’s the Deal with the Filibuster?

- Barnes, Mel, Norman Eisen, Jeff Mandell, and Norman Ornstein. 2021. “Filibuster Reform is Coming—Here’s How.” *Brookings*.

**\*\*DUE:** *Legislative Simulation #5 Optional Assignment*

**W/ May 18 – Simulation: Rules Committee**

➤ [Simulation #5: House Rules Committee Meeting & Party Caucus Meetings]

\*\*DUE: Legislative Simulation #5 Assignments

**F/ May 20 – Guest Speaker**

- TBA

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**WEEK 9 – SIMULATION: HOUSE & SENATE FLOOR**

**M/ May 23 – Simulation**

➤ [Simulation #6: House Floor Debate & Votes]

\*\*DUE: Legislative Simulation #6 Assignments

**W/ May 25 – Simulation**

➤ [Simulation #7: Senate Floor Debate & Votes]

\*\*DUE: Legislative Simulation #7 Assignments

**F/ May 27 – Getting Through Both Chambers**

- Ryan, Josh M. 2011. “The Disappearing Conference Committee: The Use of Procedures by Minority Coalitions to Prevent Conferencing.” *Congress & the Presidency*, 38 (1): 101-125.

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**WEEK 10 – WRAPPING UP**

**M/ May 30 – NO CLASS – MEMORIAL DAY**

**W/ June 1 – Interbranch Relations**

- Ritchie, Melinda N. and Hye Young You. 2019. “Legislators as Lobbyists.” *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 44 (1): 65-95.

**F/ June 3 – Class Wrap-Up & Reflections**

- Bell, Lauren. 2022. “Appendix III: Getting a Job or Internship in the Congress.” *The US Congress: A Simulation for Students*. Cengage.

\*\*DUE: Staff Assignment #4: Constituent Letter

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**FINALS WEEK**

\*\*DUE by Thursday, June 9<sup>th</sup> at 12:30pm: Final Reflection

Have a great summer break 😊