

Government 2010  
Fall 2017  
Professor Janet M. Martin  
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**Drop by Office Hours** (no appointments; first-come first-served): **Monday 2:45 - 3:45 p.m.**  
Appointments for other times can be scheduled via email. To facilitate scheduling, suggest a range of times over 1 or 2 days. Some appointments may be able to be arranged in the evening before 8:30 p.m., or on Sundays, between 1 and 4 p.m.

## U. S. CONGRESS

This course is an introduction to the United States Congress. The focus is on Congress as an institution, with an emphasis on aspects of representation.

Just as the other two constitutional branches of American government have their own cycles of activity, Congress, as an institution, has its own timetable for action. Throughout the semester we will pay attention to the “schedule” of Congress, while noting differences between the House and Senate, and why and how that schedule changes since Congress is a representative body and a responsive body. Congress shares with the President some overlap in election and budgeting cycles and shares an ongoing role in the making of domestic and foreign policy. Overlap with the Supreme Court is less obvious but will become evident as the semester progresses.

We will follow the 115th Congress for examples to better understand Congress. Throughout the semester attention will be given to Members and Leaders; the role of Party; elections; presidential-congressional relations; the policy process; and House and Senate differences.

### **Required Readings:**

Roger H. Davidson, Walter J. Oleszek, Frances E. Lee, and Eric Schickler  
*Congress and Its Members* (16<sup>th</sup> edition)

Michele L. Swers *Women in the Club: Gender and Policy Making in the Senate*

*U.S. Constitution* (available at the College Store; on line)

CQ Magazine Online – Each week a new issue of CQ Magazine Online should be available electronically. Read the cover story, and articles on the Appropriations process, the legislative process (e.g., Rules in the House, filibusters in the Senate, committee hearings and votes), leadership, House and Senate relations with President Trump, and overall stories on the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress. Website accessibility

will be discussed in class. Projects and class participation will often be tied to readings in *CQ Magazine*. Chapters 15 and 16 in Davidson *et al* will provide a context for reading articles in *CQ Magazine*. Skim through Chapters 15 and 16 as you begin reading about Congress.

*The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal*, C-SPAN, other print and broadcast news material, the Internet, and social media. (Read and view as much as you can to gain familiarity with Congress, a complex institution.)

### **Optional Text:**

Walter J. Oleszek, *et al*, *Congressional Procedures and the Policy Process* (10<sup>th</sup> ed.) [on reserve]

### **Course Requirements: \*\***

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| 1 <sup>st</sup> Exam   | 30% |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> Exam   | 25% |
| Research Paper   | 30% |
| Class Participation, especially presentations on and discussion of CQ articles. Current illustrations from C-SPAN coverage of the House and Senate (floor or committee action) can supplement your reading in CQ Magazine. | 15% |

[At a minimum, class attendance is expected. Class participation, including presentations, must be meaningful, substantive, and analytical. For example, does your presentation of material from CQ both inform and help in explaining Congress? Does it link to material we have, or will be covering in class? Can you make a specific link to assigned readings? (You can look ahead at upcoming reading assignments, and make references to those assignments in your presentation.) Do you contribute a particularly challenging article or idea to the discussion? In class, do you ask the question that at least four other students also should be asking? Are your contributions helpful to class discussion?]

**Extra credit points can be earned for current C-SPAN segments of floor action or committee action in the House and/or Senate, downloaded or recorded for use in class, illustrating material covered in class. These segments can be helpful to other students in learning about Congress and may be shown in class, or shared with the class (*separate from presentations*).**

## **COURSE OUTLINE**

Approximate dates for topics and readings are listed for each section; you are expected to follow news coverage of the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress, and the relationships between members of Congress and the Trump administration. Be prepared for discussion.

We will also follow the actions of the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress, especially its agenda in the fall of 2017, and so by necessity you will notice brief digressions from the scheduled topics in order to introduce you to, for example, the appropriations process. Feel free to read ahead, especially as the readings relate to your CQ presentation, and to ask questions about the material covered.

Congress is a complex institution and so your immersion in the readings and the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress via CQ and C-SPAN will let you more fully understand Congress by the end of the semester.

**August 30** Prepare for the semester, especially subsequent reading in *CQ Magazine*, by reading Davidson et al, Chapters 10, 15 and 16, and the *U.S. Constitution*, especially noting provisions in Article I. Have this reading completed by class on Monday, September 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Sept 4 - 6** Function and Form: Building a Nation and Establishing a Presence on the Hill; An introduction to Congress

Davidson *et al*, pp. 3-28; pp. 422-429; 438-451;  
Appendix A; chapters 15, 16 (especially read before a CQ presentation)

**Sept 11 - 13** Congress as an Institution; the Concept of Representation

Davidson *et al*, pp. 28-40; Ch. 3, 5  
Swers, Ch. 1

**Sept 18 - 20** Congress and the Organization of Government: Getting a handle on the specialized language and actions of Congress

Davidson and Oleszek, Ch. 11

**Sept 20 - 27** Adapting to Life as a Member of the House or Senate

Davidson *et al*, Ch. 1, 5, 16  
Swers, Ch. 2

**Saturday, September 23, 4 p.m., Kresge:** Guest Speaker: **Jane Mayer**, staff writer at *The New Yorker*; author of:

- *Dark Money: The Hidden History of the Billionaires Behind the Rise of the Radical Right*;
- *The Dark Side: The Inside Story of How the War on Terror Turned into a War on American Ideals*;
- *Strange Justice: The Selling of Clarence Thomas*;
- *Landslide: The Unmaking of the President, 1984-1988*

**Tickets required. A limited number of tickets are available at the Smith Union Info Desk, beginning September 5.**

**Sept 27 - Oct 4** Congress and the External Environment: Constituents and Organized Interests

Davidson *et al*, Ch. 13  
Swers, Ch. 3

**Oct 4 - 16** Congressional Elections: running for office; recruitment and candidacy; the power of incumbency in historical perspective; the role of political parties

Davidson *et al*, Ch. 3, 4  
Swers, Ch. 4

***EXAM #1: OCTOBER 18th***

**Oct 16 - 25** The Legislative Process: Overview, Rules and Procedures of the House and Senate

Davidson *et al*, Ch. 8

***LIBRARY WORKSHOP: OCTOBER 30th***

**Oct 30 - Nov 1** Committees and Subcommittees

Davidson *et al*, Ch. 7  
Swers, Ch. 5

**Nov 6 - 13** The Legislative Process: party and party leadership; leadership activities, style, and strategies; voting cues

Davidson *et al*, Ch. 6, 9

**Nov 13 - 20** Appropriations and the Budget Process; Agendas

Davidson *et al*, Ch. 14, 15

**Nov 27 - Dec 6** Congress and the other Branches of Government: The Presidency, The Courts

Davidson *et al*, Ch. 10, 11, 12, 15, 16  
Swers, Ch. 6

***RESEARCH PAPERS DUE: No later than Nov. 29th at 10 a.m. [Information on the paper assignment will be distributed in class.]***

***OPTIONAL FINAL EXAM: December 15th, 9 a.m. [as scheduled]***

The final exam will cover material since the midterm. The focus of your research paper, and topics and themes in the second half of the course will overlap.

**\*\* If you choose not to take the final exam, the weighting of assignments will be as follows:**

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| 1 <sup>st</sup> Exam   | 40% |
| Research Paper   | 40% |
| Class Participation, especially presentations on and discussion of CQ articles. Current illustrations from C-SPAN coverage of the House and Senate (floor or committee action) can supplement your reading in CQ Magazine. | 20% |