

PLSC 4353 Congressional Politics



Section: 783 Semester: Spring Year: 2020

Syllabus

Basic Information

Instructor Name: Dr. Craig Emmert

OFFICE: MB 3232

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This course is a Web Course and is conducted within Canvas at <http://utpb.instructure.com>

Course Description

Course Catalog Description: An examination of the U.S. Congress. Topics include congressional elections, constituency relations, institutional structures and processes, and policymaking roles.

Prerequisites: There are no course prerequisites although it is important to have completed basic American National Politics (PLSC 2305) or its equivalent.

Purpose: The purpose of this course is to provide the student with an understanding of the structure and functioning of the U.S. Congress. The course will focus on such topics as congressional elections, congressional-presidential interactions, congressional relations with the bureaucracy and the courts, and congressional roles in development of domestic, economic, and defense policy.

Course Objectives / Measurable Learning Outcomes

The Student will:

- Describe the development of Congress as an institution
- Examine the relationship between Congress and other government branches
- Analyze Congressional policymaking

Materials

Required Materials: The only text that is required is The Contemporary Congress (7th edition) by Burdett A. Loomis and Wendy J. Schiller Rowman & Littlefield, ISBN 978-1-5381-0156-8.

Optional Materials: For your own protection, please keep copies of all assignments. This is an optional back-up system.

Important Academic Dates

UTPB Academic Calendar: <https://www.utpb.edu/calendar/academic-calendar.pdf>

Course Overview

****Online Student authentication:** UTPB requires that each student who registers for an online course is the same student who participates in, completes, and receives credit for the course. Don't forget this requirement. **Although there are no points for fulfilling this requirement, you will not be allowed to begin Module 1 until you do this.** So, go to the **Online Student Authentication** section later in the syllabus for more detail.

Organization of the course: There are four Modules for this course. **Each** Module will have:

- a. Several chapters and/or lectures of readings
- b. One assignment (4 total for the class)
- c. One web-based discussion (4 total for the class)
- d. One multiple-choice test (4 total for the class)

Readings: Reading the assigned textbook chapters for each Module is essential for success. Also, you should read the lecture notes for each chapter carefully. Test questions may come from both the lectures and the textbook.

Assignments: There are four (4) in all. Each Module's assignment should be single-spaced with double-spaces between paragraphs. Each assignment has its grading rubric attached. All work must be submitted in Word. Word documents may either come in .doc or.docx format.

Discussions: Discussions are an essential part of this course. There will be four (4) discussions, one for each Module. To participate in the Discussions, go to the link for **Discussions** in each module. You must also read other students' posts and respond to at least **two other students'** responses. All discussion posts must be made by the date on the schedule to receive full credit. Each discussion has its own rubric attached. I will oversee the course discussions throughout the semester, but the discussions will be primarily student-led activities.

Tests: There are four (4) this semester. Each test is multiple-choice in format. Tests are non-cumulative, meaning that each exam covers only the material for that section. **There is no comprehensive mid-term or final test.**

Time Commitment: Students should log on a minimum of three times every seven days. Students should devote at least six hours per week to readings, discussions, assignments, and test preparation and completion.

Grading:

<i>Course Activity</i>	<i>Points</i>	<i>Percentage of Total Grade</i>
Assignment 1	100	10
Assignment 2	100	10
Assignment 3	100	10
Assignment 4	100	10
Test 1	100	10
Test 2	100	10
Test 3	100	10
Test 4	100	10
Discussion 1	100	5
Discussion 2	100	5
Discussion 3	100	5
Discussion 4	100	5
Total	1200	100

Grading Scale:

90 and above	A
80 to 89	B
70 to 79	C
60 to 69	D
Less than 59	F

**Unless otherwise stated, all materials, activities, and assessments are required and are not optional.*

Communication, Grading & Feedback

Students in this class must use the **Canvas Inbox** to send individual messages to the instructor or to other students. I will generally respond to message within 24 hours, excepting weekends and holidays.

All the course activities will be graded no longer than one week after the set due date. You can check your grades by going to **Grades**. If there is any discrepancy in the grade, you must contact me immediately. I will provide individual feedback or a general feedback in the performance of the course activity.

Policies

1. **Discussions:** Discussions are used for discussing course related topics and issues.

Best practices are:

- a. Read all message postings in online discussion.
- b. Respond to the question directly
- c. Reply to minimum of two other student posts.
- d. Use a person's name in the body of your message when you reply to their message.
- e. Avoid postings that are limited to 'I agree' or 'great idea', etc.
- f. Ensure responses to questions are meaningful, reflective.
- g. Support statements with concepts from course readings, refer to personal experience, examples.
- h. Follow **Rules of Behavior**.

2. **Rules of Behavior:** Discussion areas are public to every student in this class (including your instructor) who will see what you write. Please pay attention to the language you use and adhere to the following guidelines:

- Do not post anything too personal.
- Do not use language that is inappropriate for a classroom setting or prejudicial in regard to gender, race, or ethnicity.
- Do not use all caps in the message box unless you are emphasizing (it is considered shouting).
- Be courteous and respectful to other people on the list
- Do not overuse acronyms like you would use in text messaging. Some of the list participants may not be familiar with acronyms.
- Use line breaks and paragraphs in long responses.
- Write your full name at the end of the posting.
- Be careful with sarcasm and subtle humor; one person's joke is another person's insult.

3. **Make-Up/Late Submission Policy:**

Students must submit all course activities before or on set due dates and times.

4. **Academic Dishonesty/Plagiarism/Cheating:** The academic community regards academic dishonesty as an extremely serious matter, with serious consequences. Any effort to gain an advantage not given to all students is dishonest whether or not the effort is successful. Any suspicion of academic dishonesty will be reported and investigated. A student who engages in scholastic dishonesty that includes, but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, and collusion will receive an "F" for the course.

All persons involved in academic dishonesty will be disciplined in accordance with University regulations and procedures. For complete information on UTPB student conduct and discipline procedures consult the university's handbook at: <http://ss.utpb.edu/dean-of-students/scholastic-dishonesty/>

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, falsifying academic records, misrepresenting facts, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student such as, but not limited to, submission of essentially the same written assignment for two courses without the prior permission of the instructor, or the attempt to commit such acts.

Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to the appropriation of, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means material that is attributable in whole or in part to another source, including words, ideas, illustrations, structure, computer code, other expression and media, and presenting that material as one's own academic work being offered for credit.

5. **Attendance and Class Participation:** Regular and active participation is an essential, unmistakably important aspect of this online course. Students should log on a minimum of three times every seven days. Students should devote at least six hours per week to reading, discussions, assignments, and test preparation and completion. All students are expected to do the work assigned, and to notify the instructor when emergencies arise.
6. **Tracking:** The learning management systems have a tracking features. Statistics are collected that quantifies how often and when students are active in the course and provides information if the student has accessed different pages of the course.
7. **Absenteeism:** All the course activities have set dates to be completed and submitted. After the due dates the activities will not be available for the students. Not logging into an online course is considered absenteeism. Contact instructor immediately in case of emergency medical situation.
8. **Course Incomplete/Withdrawal/Grade Appeal:**
All students are required to complete the course within the semester they are signed up. Incomplete grades for the course are rarely given, will only be granted if the student provides a valid, documented excuse for not being able to complete the course on time and has contacted the instructor prior to the scheduled last class to request an extension. The student signs a contract that includes the incomplete course activities and the new due dates.

Students can find information and dates regarding drops and withdrawals at <http://www.utpb.edu/services/academic-affairs/office-of-the-registrar/adds-drops>

For grade appeal process go to <http://www.utpb.edu/campus-life/dean-of-students/grievances>.

NOTE: The due dates and times for the activities will adhere to the Central Time Zone.

9. **Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:** Americans with Disabilities Act: Students with disabilities that are admitted to The University of Texas of the Permian Basin may request reasonable accommodations and classroom modifications as addressed under Section 504/ADA regulations. The definition of a disability for purposes of ADA is that she or he (1) has a physical or mental impairment that substantively limits a major life activity, (2) has a record of such an impairment or, (3) is regarded as having such an impairment.

Students who have provided all documentation and are eligible for services will be advised of their rights regarding academic accommodations and responsibilities. The University is not obligated to pay for diagnosis or evaluations nor is it obligated to pay for personal services or auxiliary aids. Students needing assistance because of a disability must contact Testing Services & Academic Accommodations Department, 432-552-2630, Leticia Madrid, madrid_l@utpb.edu, no later than 30 days prior to the start of the semester.

For the accessibility and privacy statements of external tools used within online and blended UTPB courses, go to https://www.utpb.edu/online/reach/ADA_Privacy.

Computer Skills, Technical & Software Requirements

Students must have a working computer, access to the internet, access to a camera for the secondary authentication, and be able to use Word and other Microsoft products. They should also be able to attach files to emails, etc.

Students can use cloud version of Word, PowerPoint and other Microsoft products through use of their UTPB Outlook 365 and UTPB email address. For more information refer to Student Services below or visit: <http://www.utpb.edu/services/ird/information-on-computer-accounts-e-mail/office-365>

To obtain software licensing and media for selected Microsoft titles at very low cost through a software agreement visit: <http://www.utpb.edu/services/ird/information-for-students/software-distribution/microsoft-select>.

Computer Technical Requirements: Information at <http://www.utpb.edu/online/reach/technical-requirements>

For accessibility information:

Canvas: <https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-2061>

Online Student Authentication

UTPB requires that each student who registers for an online course is the same student who participates in, completes, and receives credit for the course. Complete this requirement early. Although there are no points for fulfilling this requirement, you will not be allowed to begin Module 1 until you do this.

- Student Authentication

–Students must satisfy a secondary authentication method as required by University of Texas of the Permian Basin policy:

- * The University of Texas of the Permian Basin (UTPB) maintains policies and procedures to ensure that each student who registers for a distance or correspondence course is the same student who participates in, completes, and receives credit for the course. UTPB's Distance Education Policy requires faculty members to authenticate student identity by employing at

least two methods of verification. To access online courses students must login to the Canvas learning management system to establish their identity by using their unique personal identifying username login and a secure password. And UTPB's Distance Education Policy allows faculty multiple options for satisfying the second method of validating student identity. This course requires the second method of student verification by requiring the following (non-graded but mandatory):

– Submitting a clear image of yourself

- In color
 - Well lit, and no shadows on your face or your ID that can obscure your image
 - Must be taken on the day you submit the photo to reflect your current appearance
 - Taken in full-face view directly facing the camera
 - With a neutral facial expression and both eyes open
 - – Then a picture of your ID (can be a UTPB ID or government issued ID) with only your name and picture showing (Picture ID card in which the ID number has been covered (tape over any numbers)).
- Make sure to attach both image files in either JPEG or PNG format to the assignment BEFORE you submit it.

*Approved up to date photo identifications are: passports, government issued identification, driver's licenses, military ID from DoD. Dual credit and early college high school students use school district identifications.

Preparation for Emergencies (Computer)

Computer Crash: Not having a working computer or a crashed computer during the semester will NOT be considered as an acceptable reason for not completing course activities at a scheduled time. NOTE: Identify a second computer before the semester begins, that you can use when/if your personal computer crashes.

Complete Loss of Contact: If you lose contact with course connectivity completely (i.e. you cannot contact me via Canvas or email), you need to call instructor, and leave message regarding connectivity loss and contact information.

Lost/Corrupt/Missing Files: You must keep/save a copy of every project/assignment on an external drive, UTPB Outlook 365 OneDrive, or personal computer. In the event of any kind of failure (e.g. virus infection, student's own computer crashes, loss of files in cyberspace, etc.) or any contradictions/problems, you may be required to resubmit the files.

End-of-Course Evaluation & Instructor Evaluation

Every student is encouraged to complete an end-of-course evaluation/survey provided by UTPB. During the last few weeks of class, you will receive an announcement through email notifying you that the Course/Instructor Survey is available. You may follow the link in the email to complete the survey using the same credentials to access your courses here. When entering the emailed Survey link you will see a list of surveys for you to complete. Another way to find End-of-Course Evaluations is through your my.utpb.edu account > My Surveys & Evaluations are on the first page after you login.

The survey is anonymous and your responses are confidential. Your feedback is critical to us and to your instructor as we strive to improve our offerings, and our support of you, the students.

Student Support Services

SERVICE	CONTACT
ADA Accommodation/Support	Testing Services & Academic Accommodations Department (432) 552-2630 http://www.utpb.edu/academics/undergraduate-success/TSAAD
Advising	UTPB E-Advisor at http://cas.utpb.edu/academic-advising-center/e-advisor/
Bookstore	(432) 552-0220 http://www.bkstr.com/texas-permianbasinstore/home
Email, Outlook 365, my.utpb.edu	Information Resources Service http://www.utpb.edu/services/ird/how-to-submit-a-service-request
Financial Aid and Scholarship	(432) 552-2620 http://www.utpb.edu/campus-life/financial-aid
Library	(432) 552-2370 The J. Conrad Dunagan Library Online at http://library.utpb.edu/
Registrar	(432) 552-2635 http://www.utpb.edu/services/academic-affairs/office-of-the-registrar
Student Services	https://www.utpb.edu/campus-life/dean-of-students/
Technical Support	Canvas 1-866-437-0867 https://guides.instructure.com/
Tutoring & Learning Resources	If you are taking courses through UTPB the following links provide services: Smarthinking Online Tutoring (provides tutoring services), SmarterMeasure (measures learner readiness for online course). Student Success Center: http://www.utpb.edu/academics/undergraduate-success/success-center

Disclaimer & Rights

Information contained in this syllabus was to the best knowledge of the instructor considered correct and complete when distributed for use in the beginning of the semester. However, the instructor reserves the right, acting within the policies and procedures of UTPB to make

changes in the course content or instructional techniques without notice or obligation. The students will be informed about the changes, if any.

Copyright Statement

Many of the materials that are posted within UTPB courses are protected by copyright law. These materials are only for the use of students enrolled in the course and only for the purpose of the course. They may not be further retained or disseminated.

Schedule

TOPICS	ASSIGNMENTS	READINGS
Module 1 Congressional Basics Representation Congressional Decentralization	Online Student Authentication Introduce yourself Assignment 1 Discussion 1 Test 1	Chapters 1-2 Lectures
Module 2 The Congressional Environment Parties, Leaders, Ideology Presidents & Congress Congress & the Judiciary	Assignment 2 Discussion 2 Test 2	Chapters 3-5 Lectures
Module 3 Congressional Elections Policymaking The Individual Enterprise The Competitive Congress	Assignment 3 Discussion 3 Test 3	Chapters 6-9 Lectures

Module 4	Assignment 4	Lectures
Budget Policy	Discussion 4	
Tax Policy	Test 4	
Healthcare Policy		

Sample Syllabus