Instructor: Dr. Watts
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Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday: 1 - 4 p.m.
Wednesday: 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.; 2:30-3:30 p.m.
All other meetings by appointment only.

Course Description and Program for this Class: This course is the study and analysis of the politics and legislative processes of the U.S. Congress. Topics include policymaking, candidate recruitment, party leadership, and committee system. Time will also be spent examining the legislative branch’s relationship with the executive and judicial branches, the media, voters, and organized interest groups.

Learning Objectives for the Course:
- Promote students’ ability to think critically about the role, procedures, politics of the U.S. Congress.
- Develop students’ ability to gather, analyze, and synthesize relevant information.
- Develop students’ ability to interpret, and express ideas.
- Gain knowledge and understanding of the contexts that shape and influence American political systems.
- Promote the evaluation of government officials’ political choices, actions, and their outcomes.

Required Texts:

Please note that I reserve the right to modify or change reading assignments.

Assessment:
- Reading Responses, 15%
- Critical Analysis, 25%
- Midterm Exam, 30%
- Final Exam, 30%

Blackboard: The course has a Blackboard (Bb) page and you will need your user ID and password to access it. On Bb, you can find course announcements and a copy of the syllabus. Please note, I will not respond to email inquiries that could be answered simply by reading the syllabus or by checking Blackboard for announcements (due dates, my office hours, etc.). The syllabus is subject to change due to university cancellations, instructor illness, etc. You should regularly check Blackboard and your Angelo State University email for any changes to our class schedule (emergency, illness, etc.).

Technology: If you have computer-related issues or problems contact the IT or e-Learning Departments first, not your professors. This includes access-related issues involving Blackboard. In instances when your personal computer or internet service is down, remember, there are many computers available to students on campus in the library and computer labs.
Assignments and Exams

Exams (60%): Both exams will consist of essay questions which will posted on Blackboard in advance.

In the case of a documented medical or family emergency it is your responsibility to contact me as soon as possible to schedule a make-up.

Reading Responses (15%)
Questions over the assigned readings will be posted on Blackboard and the schedule is listed in the Course Schedule section of this syllabus. Responses to each question must be between 1-2 pages in length, no more or less, and demonstrate critical thinking and analysis must be objective.

- Your essay should be based solely on the assigned material, no outside sources.
- Please refrain from excessive spacing, font size, and use of quotations from the material.

Case Study (25%)
Congressional or White House memos and an outline of instructions will be provided on Blackboard. Using the assigned textbooks, students must develop an outline that includes, but is not limited to the following:

- The conflict between Congress and the Executive Branch.
- The political actors involved.
- The constitutional arguments being made to justify governing power.
- Intended political goal and potential consequences depending on outcome for those involved.

Points will be awarded based on the quality of your analysis and ability to relate the course material.

Plagiarism will not be tolerated on any assignment. Plagiarism is taking credit for another person's work such as omitting proper citations or omitting the use of quotation marks. Anyone caught plagiarizing on an assignment will be penalized.

- First offense, the student will receive a “F” for that assignment. Revised work will not be accepted to make up for lost points. No exceptions.
- Second offense, the student will receive a “F” for that assignment and will be required to meet with the department chair and me about the violation.
- Third offense, the student will receive an “F” for the course.

Course Schedule
It is your responsibility to read the course material. Some lectures may take longer so it is also important that you note where we are in the syllabus. Read the assigned material BEFORE class so you are prepared to discuss the material and ask questions.

Part I: The Dual Nature of Congress

Week 1: August 28th - September 1st
DOLS: Chapter 1, The Two Congresses
DOLS: Chapter 2, Evolution of the Modern Congress
Part II: Candidate Recruitment, Campaigning, and Elections

Week 2: September 5th - 8th
DOLS: Chapter 3. Going for It: Recruitment and Candidacy
DOLS: Chapter 4, Making It: The Electoral Game

-Monday, September 4th: Labor Day, university is closed

Week 3: September 11th - 15th
DOLS: Chapter 5, Being There: Hill Styles and Home Styles
Rivals: Chapter 1, An Introduction to Presidential-Congressional Rivalry
Rivals: Chapter 3, Party Brands, Elections, and Presidential-Congressional Relations

Week 4: September 18th - 22nd
Reading Response Questions posted
Completed responses are due on September 24th by 8p.m.

Part III: Party Leadership and Committee System

Week 5: September 25th - 29th
DOLS: Chapter 6, Leaders and Parties in Congress
DOLS: Chapter 7, Committees: Workshops of Congress

Week 6: October 2nd - 6th
DOLS: Chapter 8, Congressional Rules and Procedures
DOLS: Chapter 9, Decision Making in Congress
Rivals: Chapter 2, Congress and the President: Legislating in Polarized Times

Week 7: October 9th - 13th
Monday, October 9th: Reading Response Questions posted on Blackboard
Completed responses are due on Sunday, October 15th by 8p.m.

Week 8: October 16th - 20th
Midterm Exam (Covers DOLS Chapters 1-9; Rivals, Chapters 1-3)

Part IV: The Three Branches, Checks and Balances

Week 9: October 23rd - 27th
DOLS: Chapter 10, Congress and the President
Rivals: Chapter 6, Congressional Investigations

Week 10: October 30th - November 3rd
Rivals: Chapter 7, White House-Congressional Relations in a Polarized Age
Rivals: Chapter 8, Presidential and Congressional Cooperation
-Friday, November 3rd - Last day to drop classes

Week 11: November 6th - 10th
DOLS: Chapter 11, Congress and the Bureaucracy
Rivals: Chapter 4, Unilateral Presidential Authority: Uses and Abuses
Case Study assignment materials and instructions posted on Blackboard

Week 12: November 13th - 17th
DOLS: Chapter 12, Congress and the Courts
Rivals: Chapter 9, Rivalry for Power in the Judicial Appointment Process
Week 13: November 20th - 21st
Monday, November 20th: Reading Response Questions posted
Completed responses are due on Wednesday, November 29th by 5 p.m.
-Wednesday, November 22nd - Friday, November 24th: Thanksgiving Break, university is closed.

Week 14: November 27th - December 1st
DOLS: Chapter 13, Congress and Organized Interests
DOLS: Chapter 14, Congress, Budgets, and Domestic Policymaking
Rivals: Chapter 10, The President, Congress, and Domestic Policy-Making

Week 15: December 4th - 8th
DOLS: Chapter 15, Congress and National Security Policies
Rivals: Chapter 11, Presidential-Congressional Relations on Foreign Policy
Case Study is due, Wednesday, December 6th by 8 p.m.
Final Exam questions will be posted on Blackboard, Wednesday, December 6th

Final Exam:
Due on Wednesday, December 13th by 5 p.m.
The final exam covers DOLS Chapters 10-14 and Rivals Chapters 4-11.

Final Grades will be assigned on the university’s A - F system:
A: 100-90; B: 89-80; C: 79-70; 69-60; F: 59 or lower

I DO NOT CURVE GRADES. All work must be completed accordingly.

Accommodations: Any student who feels that s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability or difficult life event should contact the Office of Student Affairs, Room 112 in the Houston Harte University Center to request accommodations. Please contact them early in the semester so that arrangements can be made. For more information, please visit their Angelo State webpage. Please speak with me privately about any arrangements that have been made.

The Office of Student Affairs, located in Room 112 in the Houston Harte University Center, can assist you with notifying your professors and advisors of any illnesses or family matters.

Every effort will be made to accommodate for religious observances or university-related activities. Students who require these accommodations should inform the Office of Student Affairs or me as soon as possible.

Excuses: The professor is the sole judge of all excuses. No excuse will be accepted after the fact or for matters of personal convenience. For emergencies, an authoritative written excuse or notification from the Office of Student Affairs may be required.

Academic Honor Code: ASU’s Student Handbook discusses the details and parameters of academic integrity and student responsibility.

Incompletes: Decisions will be made after consulting with the Office of Student Affairs.

Policy on Makeup Exams: With the exception of the final exam, no make-up exams will be offered in the class unless approved by the instructor at least one week before the exam date or proper documentation verifying illness or unforeseen event. You are expected to take the final exam on the day it is scheduled. Angelo State University sets the final exam date and time and if a student cannot take the final exam on the scheduled date an “Incomplete” will be their assigned grade and a make-up exam will be scheduled at the beginning of the next semester.
**Instructor Absences:** There could be a time when I am unable to access the course site due to an unforeseen event. If such an event occurs, you will be notified on Blackboard.