

TO: GOVT 370 Students

FR: Larry Evans

DT: January 21, 2004

RE: Course outline

GOVT 370, *Legislative Processes*, is a comprehensive introduction to the politics of the U.S. Congress. The course is primarily designed for Government concentrators. However, there are no prerequisites, and any student with a strong interest in American national political institutions is more than welcome in the class.

The U.S. Congress is a microcosm of American politics in general. Consequently, we will consider the entire range of political actors and processes, from campaigns and elections to the policy consequences of procedure and strategic interactions across different branches of government. Students also will explore the full range of academic theories about congressional behavior and institutions. In addition to introducing students to what scholars write about Congress, I hope to expose you as much as possible to the practical exigencies of legislative politics. As a result, this class will include an elaborate simulation exercise in which students will be assigned roles as current Members of Congress.

Logistics. All students who signed up for the course should already be enrolled on the Blackboard course site for GOVT 370. Please check your Blackboard homepage and make sure that you indeed are registered as a user on the site. If you are not registered, you should do so immediately via the enroll feature. I will regularly communicate with students through the email listserv on the course site and you are responsible for ensuring that you will receive these messages. My office location is 137-B Morton Hall, and my office telephone extension is 1-3030. My offices hours for spring 2004 are Wednesday from 10-12. I am in my office most days, however, so you should feel free to drop by any time. You also can arrange an appointment with me via email (clevan@wm.edu). On most days, I follow email closely between 8 a.m. and 11 p.m., and typically respond to messages within an hour or two.

Assignments and Grading. There are four required books for GOVT 370, all of which are available for purchase at the William and Mary bookstore. The four volumes are:

Congress Reconsidered, 7th ed., by L. Dodd and B. Oppenheimer

Congress: The Electoral Connection, by D. Mayhew

Home Style: House Members in Their Districts, by R. Fenno

Congressional Procedures and the Policy Process, 6th ed., by W. Oleszek.

A schedule for the readings is attached to this memo. Although course lectures and discussions will sometimes parallel, sometimes diverge from the reading schedule, you will be expected to have read the assignment for a particular day prior to the class meeting on that day. Grading for the class will be based on four factors: a midterm exam (25%), a final exam (40%), a simulation exercise (25%), and class participation (10%). Specific information about the simulation exercise will be provided later in the semester: This exercise will include considerable web-based research and the writing of two brief memos.

Reading and Assignment Schedule

January 21 – No assignment
January 23 – Dodd and Oppenheimer (Ch. 1)
January 26 – Dodd and Oppenheimer (Ch. 2)
January 28 – Mayhew (Part 1)
January 30 – Mayhew (Part 2)

February 2 – Fenno (Intro – Ch. 2)
February 4 – Fenno (Ch. 3)
February 6 – Fenno (Ch. 4)
February 9 – Fenno (Ch. 5-7)
February 11 – Dodd and Oppenheimer (Ch. 3)
February 13 – Dodd and Oppenheimer (Ch. 4)
February 16 – Dodd and Oppenheimer (Ch. 5)
February 18 – Dodd and Oppenheimer (Ch. 6)
February 20 – Dodd and Oppenheimer (Ch. 7)
February 23 – Oleszek (Ch. 1)
February 25 – Oleszek (Ch. 2)
February 27 – Oleszek (Ch. 3)

March 1 – Oleszek (Ch. 4)
March 3 – No assignment
March 5 – **Midterm exam**
March 15 – Dodd and Oppenheimer (Ch. 8)
March 17 – Dodd and Oppenheimer (Ch. 9)
March 19 – Dodd and Oppenheimer (Ch. 10)
March 22 – Dodd and Oppenheimer (Ch. 11)
March 24 – Dodd and Oppenheimer (Ch. 12)
March 26 – Oleszek (Ch. 5)
March 29 – Oleszek (Ch. 6)
March 31 – Oleszek (Ch. 7)

April 2 – Oleszek (Ch. 8)
April 5 – Oleszek (Ch. 9-10)
April 7 – Dodd and Oppenheimer (Ch. 13)
April 9 – Dodd and Oppenheimer (Ch. 14)
April 12 – Dodd and Oppenheimer (Ch. 15)
April 14-23 – **Simulation**
April 26 – Dodd and Oppenheimer (Ch. 16)
April 28 – Dodd and Oppenheimer (Ch. 17)
April 30 – No assignment

TBA – **Final exam**