

POLS 319: Legislative Politics  
Spring 2015

Professor Bianco  
307 Woodburn Hall  
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Office Hours: MW 1:00 - 2:30 and by appointment

This course is a survey of what scholars know about legislative elections and legislative organization, with particular attention to the contemporary Congress. The focus is primarily descriptive and theoretic; the expectation is that legislative outcomes are the product of systematic calculation by goal-directed political actors.

Course requirements include three midterms and a final exam -- midterm 1 counts for 1/9th of your grade, midterm 2 2/9ths, and midterms 3 and the final 3/9th each. Assigned readings for the course will be taken from *Analyzing Congress* (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition), available from the bookstore and the usual online sites.

I expect that you will attend each class, and come prepared to discuss the material assigned for each session. Excused absences require a compelling reason – serious illness, a personal crisis that requires your immediate attention, or official university business (e.g., an athletic event off-campus). If you want an excused absence, you need to provide documentation. I reserve the final decision on whether an absence is excused or unexcused.

Finally, you are responsible for acquainting yourself with IU's policy on academic dishonesty. I take these policies extremely seriously. Do not assume, expect, or hope that I will be lenient in such matters.

## Course Outline

### Part 1: Spatial Modeling

Reading: Stewart, chapter 1

- 1/12 Introduction
- 1/14 Spatial Modeling MVT
- 1/19 No Class (ML King Day)
- 1/21 Predicting outcomes in spatial models Party Influence
- 1/26 Multidimensional spatial models Positive and Negative Agenda Control
- 1/28 Exam 1 - counts 1x

### Part 2: History and Evolution of Congress

Reading: Stewart chapters 2, 3

- 2/2 Designing Congress: The Founding Big/little, slavery, state leg
- 2/4 Consequences of the Constitution: Deadlock uncovered sets
- 2/9 From the Beginning to Now: Congressional Eras
- 2/11 Open
- 2/16 Exam 2 - counts 2x

### Part 3: Congressional Elections

Reading: Stewart chapters 4, 5, and 6

- 2/18 No Class
- 2/23 Districts and Districting
- 2/25 Candidates and Ambition
- 3/2 How Voters Decide
- 3/4 How Candidates Campaign
- 3/9 Predicting Elections
- 3/11 Open

(Spring Break)

- 3/23 Money in Elections
- 3/25 Regulating Elections
- 3/30 Exam 3 - counts 3x

## Part 4: Inside Congress

Read Stewart chapter 7, 8, and 9

- 4/1 Parties in Congress
- 4/6 Congressional Leaders
- 4/8 Congressional Committees
- 4/13 Congressional Staff
- 4/15 No Class
- 4/20 Special Rules in the House
- 4/22 Filibusters and Cloture in the Senate
- 4/26 Congressional Norms
- 4/28 Sum-up, evaluation

Exam 4 during exam week - counts 3x