

Congress

(POLS 317)

Spring 2021 – Online

Professor: Jonathan Day
Office: 415B Morgan Hall
***Office Hours:** MW: 1:50pm – 2:20pm,
F: 11:20pm – 2:20pm,

*Office hours will be virtual. I will not be in my office at these times, but I will respond more quickly to email during these times. If you would like to meet in person to discuss anything, please feel free to set up an appointment.

Email: jp-day@wiu.edu
Website: <http://www.westernonline.wiu.edu>

Textbook: The American Congress, 7th Edition. By Steven S. Smith, Jason M. Roberts, and Ryan J. Vander Wielen.

Course Description and Objective

We will examine the legislature of the United States. In this course we will examine the foundation, powers, and effectiveness of the U.S. Congress.

Expectations

We should read the assigned material, so that we have the same information available for our discussions in class. We should answer all the discussion questions and complete the reading journal.

Contacting Me

Please feel free to contact me at any time. My email and office hours are listed at the top of this syllabus.

Grading		Final Grade Determination	
Reading Journal	20 pts	92 – 100	A
		90 – 92	A-
Discussions	30 pts	88 – 90	B+
		82 – 88	B
Paper	20 pts	80 – 82	B-
		78 – 80	C+
Final Exam	30 pts	72 – 78	C
		70 – 72	C-
Total	100 points	68 – 70	D+
		62 – 68	D
		60 – 62	D-
		0 – 60	F

Reading Journals

You will be expected to keep a reading journal, which will consist of selected quotes you will copy into a Word Document.

Discussions

We will have approximately two discussion questions for each module. You will be required to answer each discussion question and reply to someone else's post. It is extremely important that you remain respectful of each other during these discussions.

Paper

The paper assignment will be about 15 – 20 pages long (double spaced; Times New Roman; 1 inch margins; name, course title, semester, and professor at the top). The assignment will be to write on a topic related to Congress. The paper idea must be approved by the professor. Points will be allocated to the completion of the proposal, rough draft, and final draft.

Exam

Your final exam will be three essay questions.

Checklist for each module

Task	Mod #1	Mod #2	Mod #3	Mod #4	Mod #5	Mod #6	Mod #7	Mod #8
Read the Notes								
Watch/Listen to any Visual/Audio								
Read the Article/Essay								
Journal Entry for each Reading								
Post Your Discussion Response								
Reply to someone else's post								

Classroom Procedures / Student Rights and Responsibilities

Please submit all excused absences to me in writing as soon as possible. Let me know before class starts if you need to leave class early for an excused absence. Each class session may be recorded via audio and/or video and made public so that anyone can access them. The purpose of this is to provide a universal accommodation to enhance the learning experience. The following website provides information on a student's rights and responsibilities at WIU: <http://www.wiu.edu/provost/students.php>. We also need to maintain our academic integrity: <http://www.wiu.edu/policies/acintegrity.php>

Accommodations

If you have a physical and/or financial difficulty, please feel welcome to come and talk to me during office hours or set up an appointment through email or phone so that we can discuss the best accommodation to ensure that you can do your best in the classroom.

“In accordance with University policy and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), academic accommodations may be made for any student who notifies the instructor of the need for an accommodation. It is imperative that you take the initiative to bring such needs to the instructor's attention, as he/she is not legally permitted to inquire about such particular needs of students. Students who may require special assistance in emergency evacuations (i.e. fire, tornado, etc.) should contact the instructor as to the most appropriate procedures to follow in such an emergency. Contact Disability Support Services at 298-2512 for additional services” (WIU)

- Module #1 Foundations of Congress**
(Declaration of Independence, Constitution, Amendments, Legislative Power)
- Module #2 Elections**
(Presidential and Midterm, Monetary Influence, Gerrymandering, Polarization, Governing)
- Module #3 Governing and Power**
(Members, Goals, Resources, Strategies, Congressional Leadership, House Speaker, Agenda Setting, Party Influence, Congressional Committees, Standing Committees, Committee Chairs)
- Module #4 House vs. Senate**
(Rules, Filibuster, Voting)
- Module #5 Congress and the President**
(Vetoes, Signing Statements, Impeachments)
- Module #6 Congress and the Courts**
(Senate Voting on Nominations, Standing in the Courts)
- Module #7 Congress, Lobbyists, Interest Groups**
(Buying Time, Resources, Influence)
- Module #8 Policy**
(Economic, Social, and Foreign Policy)