

The Graduate School of Political Management

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

M.P.S. in Legislative Affairs

Fall 2017 Semester

August 30 – December 6

Legislative Politics

Course Number LGAF 6202.LH

3 Credits

Wednesday 6:00-8:00 PM

Hall of States

444 North Capitol Street, NW (check with
front desk each week for room number)

BASIC INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Instructor

The Instructor for his course is former Congressman Martin Frost (D-TX, 1979-2005). Congressman Frost served for 26 years as a member of the House Rules Committee, six years as a member of the House Budget Committee (1983-1989), two terms as Chair of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (1996 and 1998 elections cycles) and two terms as Chair of the House Democratic Caucus 1999-2003). He is currently Vice Chairman of the Board of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED).

Contact Information

Telephone: 703-577-1897 (cell)

Email: martinfrost@comcast.net

Communication

Individual meetings with the instructor must be pre-arranged appointments usually before or after class unless other arrangements are made. After class is usually best. Email is almost always the best way to communicate.

Blackboard Site

A Blackboard course site has been set up for this course. Each student is expected to check the site throughout the semester, as Blackboard will be the primary venue for outside classroom communications between the instructors and the students. Students can access the course site at <https://blackboard.gwu.edu>. Support for Blackboard is available at 202-994-4948 or helpdesk.gwu.edu.

Academic Integrity

All members of the university community are expected to exhibit honesty and competence in their academic work. Students have a special responsibility to acquaint themselves with, and make use of, all proper procedures for doing research, writing papers, and taking exams. Members of the community will be presumed to be familiar with the proper academic procedures and will be held responsible for applying them. Deliberate failure to act in accordance with such procedures will be considered academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty is defined as “cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one’s own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information.” Acts of academic dishonesty are a legal, moral, and intellectual offense against the community and will be prosecuted through the proper university channels. The University Code of Academic Integrity can be found at <https://studentconduct.gwu.edu/code-academic-integrity>.

Support for Students with Disabilities

GW's Disability Support Services (DSS) provides and coordinates accommodations and other services for students with a wide variety of disabilities, as well as those temporarily disabled by injury or illness. Accommodations are available through DSS to facilitate academic access for students with disabilities. Please notify your instructor if you require accommodations. Additional information is available at <https://disabilitysupport.gwu.edu/>.

In the Event of an Emergency or Crisis during Class

If we experience an emergency during class time, we will try to stay at this location until we hear that we can move about safely. If we have to leave here, we will meet at **the lobby of the Hotel George** in order to account for everyone and to make certain that everyone is safe. Please refer to Campus Advisories for the latest information on the University's operating status: <http://www.campusadvisories.gwu.edu/>.

Attendance Policy

Many students have full-time jobs and these responsibilities will sometime cause students to arrive late or miss class. When this happens, you must email the instructor in advance. Absences from more than two classes during the term may result in a reduction in your final grade. Class attendance is very important because discussions in class often cover matters not specifically addressed in the written materials assigned in advance.

Course Evaluation

At the end of the semester, students will be given the opportunity to evaluate the course through GW's online course evaluation system. It is very important that you take the time to complete an evaluation. Students are also encouraged to provide feedback throughout the course of the semester by contacting any/all of the following:

Dr. Steven Billet
Director, Legislative Affairs Program
sbillet@gwu.edu | 202-994-1149

Dr. Jack Prostko
Associate Dean for Learning and Faculty Development
College of Professional Studies
jackp@gwu.edu | 202-994-3592

Suzanne Farrand
Director of Academic Administration, GSPM
sfarrand@gwu.edu | 202-994-9309

THE COURSE

Legislative Affairs Program Objectives

Upon completion of the Master's degree in Legislative Affairs, students will:

1. Gain both theoretical and practical knowledge related to the U.S. Congress, general issues in the legislative arena, and how to effectively advance legislation;
2. Hone their oral and written communication skills in both theoretical and technical aspects of legislative affairs;
3. Be able to conduct cutting-edge research and engage in effective problem solving by learning critical thinking skills;
4. Learn how to work effectively with others, the value of collaborative work, and will understand ethical issues involved in the legislative arena.

Course Description and Overview

This course is a requirement for the Masters of Legislative Affairs program. The goal is for the student to develop a working understanding of how the Congress functions and what motivates its Members. The course will focus on the origins, history and development of Congress as an institution. We will examine what drives legislative decision-making, and the role of committees and party leadership in the process. The course will look at procedural issues essential to understanding how Congress works such as the Rules Committee in the House, cloture in the Senate, and the Budget Act of 1974. It is impossible to look at legislative politics without discussing the issue of polarization. The President plays a key role in the legislative process whether the country has united or divided government. Finally we will look at some of the internal issues Members deal with, from staff, budgets, constituent communications and ethics rules, to external issues such as campaigns, fundraising and interest group pressure.

Discussion will be an important part of this class. Contemporary issues facing the Congress will be used to illustrate what we learn.

There will be two essays assigned by the instructor and a final exam.

Course Learning Objectives

1. The goal is for the student to develop a working understanding of how the Congress functions and what motivates its Members. Additionally, the course will introduce the student to, and increase their enthusiasm for studying other topics in the Legislative Affairs program.
2. Understand the origins, history and development of Congress as an institution.
3. Obtain an understanding of what drives legislative decision-making and the role of committees and party leadership in the process.
4. Understand why the Speaker has so much power in the House of Representatives.
5. Learn why the Senate rules are designed to protect the political minority and recent changes.
6. Gain an appreciation for the role of the President as Legislator-in-Chief and how Congress has surrendered and delegated power to the executive branch.
7. Look at the budget and appropriation process – the one thing Congress must complete every year – and how the modern Congress makes (or doesn't make) decisions.
8. Throughout the course we will focus on political polarization, how the modern form has developed, why it is so persistent and how it affects the legislative process. We will explore some ideas for reducing its negative effects.
9. Finally we will look at some of the internal issues Members deal with, from staff, budgets, constituent communications and ethics rules, to external issues such as campaigns, fundraising and interest group pressure

Document Submission and Citations

There will be two essays and a take home final examination. Please print out and bring a hard copy of assignments to give to me at the beginning of class on the day they are due. I will keep these for my records. If you would like comments, please hand in two copies of the assignments paper clipped together.

We will use the Chicago Style for essays, citations and bibliographies. A sample of the style can be found on the GW website at: <http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/>. As an additional guide for a legislative course, this link is an indispensable guide for citing government documents is the "Uncle Sam: Brief Guide to Citing Government Publications, from the University of Memphis: <http://www.memphis.edu/govpub/citweb.php>.

PLEASE NOTE: You can lose points for failure to footnote accurately or for grammatical and spelling errors. This is a graduate course, and graduate level work requires that your work is proofread and presented in an acceptable manner. Spellcheck is not necessarily your friend – it will approve a word that is an actual word but which may be the wrong one for the context under discussion. The best policy is to have a friend or fellow classmate read through your paper for mistakes before submitting it.

Evaluation and Grading

Assignment	Learning Objective(s) Addressed	Due Date	Weight
First Essay	TBD		25%
Second Essay	TBD		25%
Final Exam	Putting it all together		40%
Attendance and Participation	Any graduate seminar discussion is enlivened by the thoughtful contributions of all of the students in class. You shortchange yourself and your colleagues by not being prepared or not participating in our class discussions. Organization, clarity and precision in the spoken and written word are expected of graduate level work but thorough documentation, keen observations and critical insight demonstrate superior effort.		10%
Total			100%

Following is the grade scale for all GSPM classes:

Grade*	Grading Standard
A 94-100	Your work is outstanding and ready for submission in a professional environment. Your material, effort, research, and writing demonstrate superior work.
A- 90-93	Represents solid work with minor errors. Overall, excellent work.
B+ 87-89	Very good. Represents well-written material, research, and presentation, but needs some minor work.
B 83-86	Satisfactory work, but needs reworking and more effort. Note that although not a failing grade, at the graduate level, anything below a "B" is viewed as unacceptable.
B- 80-82	You've completed the assignment, but you are not meeting all of the requirements.
C+ 77-79	Needs improvement in content and in effort. Shows some motivation and concern.

C	73-76	Needs reworking, improved effort, and additional research. Shows minimal motivation and concern.
C-	70-72 (lowest grade to pass)	Poor performance. Major errors, too many misspellings, problems with accuracy, etc.
F	Below 70	Unacceptable performance, or inability to submit the assignment.

*Please note that you may be penalized for late submission of assignment(s).

Required Text and Learning Materials

Congress and Its Members, by Roger Davidson, Walter Oleszek, Frances Lee and Eric Schickler (16th Ed. 2017)
The House, by Robert Remini
Congressional Procedures and the Policy Process, by Walter Oleszek, Mark Oleszek, Elizabeth Rybicki and Bill Heniff Jr (10th Ed. 2016)
The Partisan Divide: Congress in Crisis, Tom Davis, Martin Frost and Richard Cohen
Surviving Inside Congress, by Mark Strand, Michael Johnson and Jerome Climer (4th Ed. 2015)
By Order of the President, Use and Abuse of Executive Direct Action, by Phillip J. Cooper (2nd Ed. 2014)

Optional Supplemental Text and Learning Materials

Other readings available online at the GWU Library or on the class website

Tentative Course Calendar*

*The instructor reserves the right to alter course content and/or adjust the pace to accommodate class progress. Students are responsible for keeping up with all adjustments to the course calendar.

Class 1. August 30

Topic and Content Covered: Congress – past and present and syllabus review

Learning Objective(s) Addressed: Why did the Constitutional Convention design our system as they did? What was the Great Compromise? What are the enumerated powers of Congress? How has Congress evolved and what has caused the current partisan divide in Congress?

Guest Speaker: Former Congressman Tom Davis (R-VA), co-author of the Partisan Divide – Congress in Crisis

Reading Due Today: Remini: Introduction through Chapter 5
 Davis and Frost, Chapter 7
 The Partisan Divide PowerPoint (on Blackboard)

Class 2. September 6 (continued on next page)

Topic and Content Covered: The Institutionalization of Congress and the View from outside

Learning Objective(s) Addressed: Development of committees and party leadership. Czar Reed and Joe Cannon, Growth of committees. Two theories of the role of Members of Congress. How does the national press view Congress today?

Guest Speaker: Jonathan Martin, *New York Times*

Reading due today: Remini: Chapters 11-12, 15, 17-18

Davidson: Chapters 1 and 2

Strand: Chapter 2

"Democrats Pounce, Seeing Path to Retake House," *New York Times*, May 7, 2017 by Jonathan Martin; https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/06/us/politics/health-care-vote.html?_r=0 (article retitled for online version).

Class 3. September 13

Topic and Content Covered: The current Congress – who are these men and women, how did they get here and what has contributed to the partisan divide in Congress today.

Guest Speaker: Gerry Hebert, Campaign Legal Center

Learning Objective(s) Addressed: We will examine the effect of gerrymandering in the House and the evolution of parliamentary voting in a separation of powers system.

Reading Due Today: Davis and Frost, Chapters 4, and 5.
"Drawing the Line," by Elizabeth Kolbert, the New Yorker, June 27, 2016; <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/06/27/ratfcked-the-influence-of-redistricting>.
"The Great Election Grab: When does gerrymandering become a threat to democracy?" by Jeffrey Toobin, the New Yorker, Dec. 8, 2003; <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2003/12/08/the-great-election-grab>
CRS: Membership of the 115th Congress: <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R43869.pdf>
"When Does Gerrymandering Cross a Line," by Adam Liptak, *New York Times*, May 16, 2017; <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/15/us/politics/when-does-political-gerrymandering-cross-a-constitutional-line.html>
Cooper, Governor of North Carolina, Et Al. v. Harris, Et Al., https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/16pdf/15-1262_db8e.pdf

FIRST ESSAY ASSIGNED – Due October 4 at start of class

Class 4. September 20

Topic and Content Covered: Party Leadership and Committees today

Learning Objective(s) Addressed: Who are the party leaders in the House and Senate? How do they control the process and direction of their chambers? What are committees and what function do they serve? Why do Members select different committees?

Guest Speaker: Barry Jackson, former Chief of Staff to House Speaker John Boehner (R-OH)

Reading Due Today: Davidson: Chapters 6 & 7
Davis & Frost: Chapter 14
Oleszek: Chapter 3
Strand: Chapters 4 & 6

Class 5. September 27 (continued on next page)

Topic and Content Covered: The President, Congress and Populism

Learning Objective(s) Addressed: The President as legislator-in-Chief, including his use of Executive Orders. Power Congress cedes to the President. How populism has affected the role of Congress and the President in modern-day America.

Guest Speaker: Bill Galston, Senior Fellow in Governance Studies at the Brookings Institution

Reading Due Today: “The Populism Movement,” William A. Galston, *Journal of Democracy*, April 2017; http://www.journalofdemocracy.org/sites/default/files/03_28.2_Galston%20%28web%29%20%28002%29.pdf
Davidson: Chapter 10
Davis and Frost: Chapter 15
Cooper: Chapters 1, 2, and 3
“Law Professor Outlines Historical Use of Presidential Executive Orders,” NPR, January 24, 2017; <http://www.npr.org/2017/01/24/511468471/law-professor-outlines-historical-use-of-presidential-executive-orders>
“How Republicans Will Try to Roll Back Obama Regulations,” *New York Times*, January 3, 2017; <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/30/us/politics/congressional-review-act-obama-regulations.html>
“How Trump is rolling back Obama’s legacy,” *Washington Post*, May 12, 2017; https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/politics/trump-rolling-back-obama-rules/?utm_term=.4c602510a4a5

Class 6. October 4 – FIRST PAPER DUE AT START OF CLASS

Topic and Content Covered: All you need to know about the Senate Procedures

Learning Objective(s) Addressed: The Majority Leader and control of the Floor. Unanimous consent and exhaustion. Not your father’s filibuster: cloture – why the Senate requires 60 votes to do anything important. What is meant by “The Majority determines what comes to the Floor and the Minority determines what leaves it? Why are Committees weaker in the Senate than in the House? What is the difference between the Minority in the House and the Senate?

Guest Speaker: Jim Davidson and Steve Eichenauer, former Senate staffers

Reading Due Today: Oleszek: Chapters 6 & 7
Strand: Chapter 5

Class 7. October 11

Topic and Content Covered: Critical Legislative Procedures in the House

Learning Objective(s) Addressed: House Rules Committee and Control of the Floor. The House as a majoritarian institution. Conflict between committees and party leaders. How does the Majority accomplish its agenda? What is the role of the Minority in the House?

Guest Speaker: Charlie Johnson, former Parliamentarian of the U.S. House of Representatives

Reading Due Today: Davidson: Chapter 8
Oleszek: Chapters 4 & 5

SECOND ESSAY ASSIGNED – Due November 1 at start of class

Class 8. October 18 (continued on next page)

Topic and Content Covered: The Budget Act of 1974

Learning Objective(s) Addressed: The origins of the budget law. How it works. The use and abuse of the act. What is the role of the Budget Committee, authorizers and appropriators?

Reconciliation: Does the budget act still work? Are there better ideas? Is the current process adequate to control the budget deficits we face in 2014?

Guest Speaker: Tom Kahn, former Minority Staff Director, House Budget Committee, and Stan Collender, former Senate and House Budget Committee staffer

Reading Due Today: Strand: Chapter 7
Oleszek: Chapter 2
Davidson: Chapter 14

Class 9. October 25

Topic and Content Covered: Campaign Finance – The Rise of Super PACs and 501(c)(4)s

Learning Objective(s) Addressed: The objective of his class is to understand how changes in the campaign finance system during the past 40 years have come to dominate American politics and how the money chase impacts incumbent office holders and challengers.

Guest Speaker: Ken Gross, Partner, Skadden Arps law firm, former Associate General Counsel, Federal Election Commission and Jennifer Frost, fundraising consultant.

Reading Due Today: Davis and Frost: Chapter 6
“The Long-Suffering Super PAC,” by Calvin Trillin, New York Times Sunday Review, Feb. 25, 2012;
<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/26/opinion/sunday/the-long-suffering-super-pac.html>
“It’s bold, but legal: How campaigns and their super PAC backers work together,” The Washington Post, July 6, 2015.
http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/here-are-the-secret-ways-super-pacs-and-campaigns-can-work-together/2015/07/06/bda78210-1539-11e5-89f3-61410da94eb1_story.html

Class 10. November 1 – SECOND PAPER DUE AT START OF CLASS

Topic and Content Covered: Elections and Outside Pressures

Learning Objective(s) Addressed: The perpetual campaign. How does a Member get elected to office? What does it take? Fundraising. Interest groups. Grassroots pressure: Moveon.org in 2006 and 2008 and the Tea Party in 2010.

Guest Speakers: Jim Duffy, Democratic campaign consultant and Whit Ayres, a Republican campaign consultant.

Reading Due Today: Davidson: Chapter 4
Davis and Frost: Chapters 7, 8, 11 & 12

Class 11. November 8 (continued on next page)

Topic and Content Covered: Congress Oversight of the Military

Learning Objective(s) Addressed: What is the proper role of Congressional oversight of the U.S. military and how does Congress obtain reliable information before deciding to commit American troops to battle? What are the lessons learned from the Congressional decision to authorize President George W. Bush to commit troops against Saddam Hussein.

Guest Speaker: Air Force General (ret.) Michael Hayden, Director of the National Security Agency, 1999 to 2005 and Director, CIA, 2006-2009.

Reading Due Today: "Trump proves he's Russia's 'useful fool,'" by Michael Hayden, *Washington Post*, May 18, 2017; https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/trump-proves-hes-russias-useful-fool/2017/05/16/e1c6b6cc-3a7e-11e7-a058-ddbb23c75d82_story.html?utm_term=.78ac9795e9ba
"We need – and deserve – an American version of the British Chilcot Report," *Foreign Policy*, September 28, 2016; <http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/09/28/we-need-and-deserve-an-american-version-of-the-brits-chilcot-report/>

Class 12. November 15

Topic and Content Covered: The role of Lobbyists

Learning Objective(s) Addressed: The relationship between lobbyists and Congressional offices and how lobbyists represent citizens groups and major economic interests in the United States.

Guest Speaker: Former Congressman Alan Wheat (D-MO) and current Chair of Polsinelli's Public Policy Group

Reading Due Today: Davidson: Chapter 13
Strand: Chapter 15

Class 13. November 29

Topic and Content Covered: New Media

Learning Objective(s) Addressed: Social media has transformed how Congressional offices communicate with constituents. This class describes the various forms of social media which have become a major factor in the relationship between a Congressman and the people he represents.

Guest Speaker: Staff for three-term Congressman Marc Veasey (D-TX)

Reading Due Today: Davis and Frost: Chapter 10
"Scholar asks, 'Can democracy survive the Internet,'" Dan Balz, *The Washington Post*, April 23, 2017; https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/a-scholar-asks-can-democracy-survive-the-internet/2017/04/22/1915c0e8-2696-11e7-b503-9d616bd5a305_story.html?utm_term=.8963f14180d6

FINAL EXAM ASSIGNED – Due December 6 at start of class

Class 14. December 6 – FINAL EXAM DUE AT START OF CLASS

Wrap up.

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Unless explicitly allowed by the instructor, course materials, class discussions, and examinations are created for and expected to be used by class participants only. The recording and rebroadcasting Of such material, by any means, is forbidden

