

# The Graduate School of Political Management

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

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## **M.P.S. in Legislative Affairs**

2<sup>nd</sup> Summer Session

July 2 thru August 8, 2018

## **Executive-Legislative Relationships**

LGAF 6203.LH

3 Credits

Mondays & Wednesdays, 6 p.m. – 8 p.m.

Hall of the States

## **BASIC INFORMATION AND RESOURCES**

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### **Instructor**

Gene Fisher

Most recently, Mr. Fisher served as Director of Legislative Affairs for the District of Columbia Department of Employment Services. Before that, he served as the Director of the Committee on Business, Consumer, and Regulatory Affairs for the Council for the District of Columbia. For more than 20 years, he worked in the House of Representatives for several members of Congress as a chief of staff or in senior legislative positions where he specialized in the appropriations and budget processes. He worked in a number of political campaigns, including the national campaign staff of Sen. Edward M. Kennedy's 1980 presidential campaign, political consultant to the American Federation of State, County, Municipal Employees (AFSCME), No. Nevada Political Director for Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid's 1998 re-election, and a number of congressional races. He also worked as a union organizer for AFSCME and as an international staff representative for the United Steelworkers of America Political Action and Older and Retired Workers departments.

### **Contact Information**

Phone Number: cell (202) 281-8725

Email Address: gene.fisher.dc@gmail.com

### **Communication**

The best way to reach me is by phone or email. If you don't receive an acknowledgement to your email communication within a few hours, please call. With respect to appointments, I am generally available to meet with students after class, on weekends or after work on most days.

### **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 posting non-text student readings and summaries of class presentations. Students can access the course site at <https://blackboard.gwu.edu>. Support for Blackboard is available at 202-994-4948 or [helpdesk.gwu.edu](http://helpdesk.gwu.edu). Blackboard utilization will be discussed in the first class.

### **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 <http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html>.

### **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 [www.gwu.edu/~dss](http://www.gwu.edu/~dss).

### **In the Event of an Emergency or Crisis during Class**

If we experience some 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 across the street on North Capitol Street, NE 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**

The class has no specific attendance policy, but 20% of a student's grade is based on his/her class participation. Students are expected to be present when they are scheduled to make in-class

presentations. Students are reminded that failure to engage in class discussion can result in a lower grade. It is up to individual students to approach the professor or fellow students to familiarize themselves with the material covered during their absences.

### **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. Additionally, the professor will distribute a separate class evaluation to be completed anonymously at the last class session. 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](mailto:sbillet@gwu.edu) | 202-994-1149

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

Suzanne Farrand  
Director of Academic Administration, GSPM  
[sfarrand@gwu.edu](mailto:sfarrand@gwu.edu) | 202-994-9309

## **THE COURSE**

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### **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**

Making the relationship between the executive and legislative branches work is critical to the functioning of the American political system. The aim of the course is to examine the shared-power arrangement of the two branches, the patterns and conditions that make for cooperation and conflict, means each branch employs to shape public policy outcomes, and the dynamics of the relationship that make the policymaking process increasingly complex. This course examines the relationship between the two branches from a practical standpoint. Course readings, class discussions, and presentations by guest lecturers will follow that focus.

### **Course Learning Objectives**

1. Analyze key factors that influence legislative-executive branch relationships in the legislative process
2. Understand each branch's authority in the policy making process
3. Make sense out of a complex law-making process and be able to assess the performance of key political participants
4. Learn strategic and tactical skills for successfully navigating a legislative program through the legislative process

### **Course Requirements**

The Executive-Legislative Relations course is designed as a graduate-level, instructor-facilitated seminar. The course combines lectures and discussions, using course readings, historical case studies and contemporary news developments as catalysts for covering seminar topics.

Final grades will be determined by the following four factors:

**Course Paper Assignment:** A course essay consisting of 10 pages (approximately 2,500 words). Papers will analyze a legislative, regulatory or program issue involving the legislative and executive branches. Prior to writing, students will be required to submit a topic for approval. The essay will count as **30 percent** of the course grade. **Topics and abstracts will be submitted for approval on Monday, July 9. Papers are due on Wednesday, July 25.**

**Short Summary Essays:** Each student will be assigned to prepare **two** one-page summary essays on selected course topics. Each one-pager will be accompanied by talking points for in-class presentations. These essays will be count **20 percent** toward the final grade.

**Class Discussion:** Class participation will account for **20 percent** of the final grade. The seminar concept is based on learning through mutual interaction. It is expected that each student will come to class prepared to discuss assigned readings and related subjects.

**Final Exam:** A final exam will count as **30 percent** of the final grade. The exam will be a take-home exercise and distributed on **Wednesday, August 1 and due on Monday, August 8 at 6 p.m.** All examination questions require short essay answers. Students will be given a choice of questions to answer, several of which will be based on material imparted by guest lecturers and course readings.

**Class Participation:** Class participation accounts for a considerable part of the final grade. Class is encouraged to follow stories in the following Hill news sources: *Roll Call*, *The Hill*, *Politico*, (daily or weekly). and other Hill news publications. Time will be set aside to discuss course-related stories in these publications. Students will be called on to speak to the most interesting stories that appeared during the week. You will also be asked to report on the latest political “gossip.” **15-20 minutes will be set-aside on assigned dates.** Presenters are expected to comment on the “angle” taken in the story and how it differs from competing news reportage from Hill and mainstream news sources.

**Media Watch Group activity will be suspended for classes when guest lecturers are scheduled.**

**Evaluation and Grading**

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Learning Objective(s) Addressed</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Weight</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> One-Pager	Discuss significance of a complex issue succinctly and prepare talking points	Assigned	10%
2nd One Pager	Discuss significance of a complex issue succinctly and prepare talking points	Assigned	10%
Research Paper	Analyze a legislative, regulatory or program issue involving the legislative and executive branches, and examine the key factors that influenced the legislative outcome	07/25/18	30%
Final Exam	Demonstrate knowledge of the course	08/08/18	30%
Participation	Learning through the exchange of views		20%
Total			100%

**Following is the grade scale for all GSPM classes:**

<b>Grade*</b>	<b>Grading Standard</b>
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**

**Kenneth Collier**, *Between the Branches*, 1997, ISBN# 9780822956297

**James A. Thurber**, 6<sup>th</sup> ed., *Rivals for Power: Presidential-Congressional Relations*, 2018, ISBN# 9781538100981

**Louis Fisher**, *Constitutional Conflicts Between Congress and the President*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed., 2007, ISBN # 9780700615346

**Allen Schick**, *The Federal Budget: Politics, Policy, Process*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 2007, ISBN# 0815777256

**Selected Readings**

William J. Crowe, *The Line of Fire*, From Washington to the Gulf, the Politics and Battles of the New Military,

Jeffrey E. Cohen, *The President’s Legislative Policy Agenda 1789-2002*, 2012, ISBN# 978107634978

Richard Conley, “The Legislative Presidency in Political Time: Unified Government, Divided Government, and Presidential Leverage in Congress”

Other readings may be assigned.

**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 Schedule**

### **Session 1: Monday, July 2**

#### **Introduction/Orientation/Course Themes**

- Sign-up for 1-pagers

Assignments for next class:

- Read Collier, *Between the Branches*, Introduction; Thurber, *Rivals for Power*, Chap. 1, “Introduction” and Chap. 2., “Congress and the President: Legislating in Polarized Times”; Crowe, “Congress and Defense” (BB); Select Course Paper topic and abstract next class
- Choose topic for research paper and hand in abstract

### **Wednesday, July 4 (NO CLASS)**

### **Session 2, Monday, July 9**

#### **Congress and the President: The Political Environment.**

Assignments for next class:

- Read U.S. Constitution, Articles 1, 2 and 3; Fisher, *Constitutional Conflicts*, Chaps. 1, 4, and 5

Assignments Due: Course paper topics and abstract

### **Session 3, Wednesday, July 11**

#### **Congress and the President: Overview of the Structural Environment**

Assignments for next class:

- Read *Between the Branches* Eisenhower – Ford, Chaps. 2 – 6

Assignments Due: 1-pagers

### **Session 4, Monday, July 16**

#### **Possibly Reserved for Guest Lecturer**

#### **The President’s Legislative Relationship I**

Assignments for next class:

- Read *Between the Branches* Reagan – Clinton, Chaps. 7 – 11

Assignments Due: 1-pagers

### **Session 5, Wednesday, July 18**

#### **Possibly Reserved for Guest Lecturer**

#### **The President’s Legislative Relationship II**

Assignments for next class:

- Read: *Legislative Policy Agenda* (Cohen), Chaps. 3&4, Conley “The Legislative Presidency” (BB); *Rivals*, Chap. 4. “Unilateral Presidential Authority: Uses and Abuses” and Chap. 7, “White House Congressional Relations in a Polarized Age”

Assignments Due: 1-pagers

### **Session 6, Monday, July 23**

#### **Legislative Presidency**

Assignments for next class:

- Read: *Rivals*, Chap. 6, “Congressional Investigations: An Important Check on Presidential Power”; Chap. 8, “Presidential and Congressional Cooperation: A Provisional Partnership”; Chap. 10, “The President, Congress, and Domestic Policy Making”.
- Course Papers due.

Assignments Due: 1-pagers

### **Session 7, Wednesday, July 25**

#### **Congressional Perspective**

Assignments for next class:

Read Schick, *The Federal Budget*, Chaps. 2, 5, 6, 8 & 9; *Rivals*,

Assignments Due: **Course papers due,**

### **Session 8, Monday, July 30**

#### **Budget**

**Guest Lecturer: Bret Coulson (see bio)**

Assignments for next class:

Read *Constitutional Conflicts*, Chaps, 8 & 9; *Rivals*, Chap. 11, “Presidential-Congressional Relations in Foreign Policy”

Assignments Due: 1-pagers

### **Session 9, Wednesday, August 1**

#### **War Powers and Foreign Affairs**

War Powers Act simulation

Distribute Exam

**Session 10, Monday, August 6**

**Course Review**

**Session 11, Wednesday, August 8**

**Hard Copy of Final Exams Due 6 p.m. in class.**

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