

The Graduate School
of Political Management
THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

M.P.S. in Legislative Affairs

Semester: Spring 2021

Feb 1 to Apr 12, 2021

Running and Serving in the U.S. Congress¹

LGAF 6244.LH

3 Credits

Syllabus version: 8.0.1

Syllabus date: 1/24/2021

Virtual Class Sessions

Monday evenings, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

<https://gwu.webex.com/meet/bcarr>

BASIC INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Instructor

M. Robert “Bob” Carr

+1-202-251-7755 (best to text first)

bcarr@gwu.edu

Communication

Reach me either by text or email. I prefer text messages and usually respond quickly. Emails are answered generally within 24-48 hours. **Important:** My email client sorts and alerts me based on your gwu.edu domain name. If you use another email domain name/account, I may not see it. For critical communication, such as the submission of assignments, please only use your gwu.edu domain. Also, I will answer **only** to the gwu.edu email address I have for you. I am available for meetings by appointment via Zoom, Webex, or FaceTime.

Blackboard Site

There is a Blackboard course site for this course at <https://blackboard.gwu.edu>. You will be expected to check the course site throughout the semester for posted materials, syllabus and scheduled updates, and announcements. Except for Webex class sessions, Blackboard will be the primary venue for outside classroom communications between myself and the class. 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 <http://studentconduct.gwu.edu/code-academic-integrity>.

University Policy on Observance of Religious Holidays

- Students should notify faculty during the first week of the semester of their intention to be absent from class on their day(s) of religious observance.

¹ Prior to 2021 the course title was Running & Representing. It will be changed back in 2022. Representing is the key word and will be used throughout this course.

- Faculty should extend to these students the courtesy of absence without penalty on such occasions, including permission to make up examinations.
- Faculty who intend to observe a religious holiday should arrange at the beginning of the semester to reschedule missed classes or to make other provisions for their course-related activities.

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>.

Title IX: Confidentiality and Responsible Employee Statement

The George Washington University and its faculty are committed to helping create a safe and open learning environment for all students. If you (or someone you know) have experienced any form of sexual misconduct, including sexual assault, dating or domestic violence, or stalking, know that help and support are available. GWU strongly encourages all members of the community to take action, seek support and report incidents of sexual misconduct to the Title IX Office. Please be aware that under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, faculty members are required to disclose information about such misconduct to the Title IX Office.

If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can contact Mental Health Services through Colonial Health (counselors are available 24/7 at 202-994-5300 or you can make an appointment to see a counselor in person.). For more information about reporting options and resources at GWU and the community, please visit <https://haven.gwu.edu/>.

Attendance Policy

Unless otherwise excused in advance, class attendance is mandatory. I expect to be notified via text (preferable) or email at least by the class session's day. Punctuality is essential as well. Similarly, I wish to be notified via text if you expect a delay in entering the session. Finally, I will excuse the occasional early departure if I am alerted in advance as to the cause and necessity.

Course Evaluation

At the end of the semester, you will have the opportunity to evaluate the course through GW's online course evaluation system. You must take the time to complete an evaluation. Additional feedback throughout the semester is encouraged by contacting the following.

<p>Mr. Casey Burgat, PhD Director, Legislative Affairs Program cburgat@gwu.edu 202-994-2272</p>		<p>Ms. Suzanne Farrand Assistant Dean of Students CPS, Manager, GSPM Student Services sfarrand@gwu.edu 202-994-9309</p>
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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 about what it means to be a representative in Congress. Representative is a term that is often used but seldom critically defined or examined. Instead, its meaning is assumed. This course will attempt to make that examination.

There are as many definitions of a member of Congress's responsibilities as actors in the political process. Most of these definitions tend to be self-serving or at least agenda-driven. They tend to affirm or deny that the subject member meets acceptable accountability standards for performance. Coming from a position or point of view, these definitions easily obscure, if not ignore, the real, practical job environment of a member of Congress. In short, helpful as these definitions try to be; frequently, they are not.

This course takes a different approach to examining the role of a member of Congress. Most political analysts and commentators, indeed most academics, start with the member after they are elected. We will begin with a much earlier stage where nascent ambition transitions to the decision to seek office. What conventional analysis often misses because it fails to ask, "how was the twig planted." We will start at the very beginning with ambition. In the second half of the course, we will dissect the many varied roles that the job requires and how that ambition transforms. We will put ourselves in the member's shoes, their mind-set. From that perspective, we will hopefully get closer to a better understanding of what the job requires in real, practical terms. Finally, we will seek to assess and even improve the standards for judging success for the individual, representative democracy, and the nation.

Course Learning Objectives

1. To gain the perspective and profession empathy with those seeking and serving in Congress.
2. To be able to independently assess the conduct of candidates for and members of Congress as reported by others.
3. To better assist members of Congress in pursuit of their goals.
4. To be in a position to help a member assess the risks and rewards of a course of action.
5. To offer advice and counsel to those who would undertake to become a member of Congress.

Course Requirements

- Students will be required to attend class discussions as well as occasional discussion board postings throughout the course. Students may be occasionally required to respond to postings of a peer.
- Student will be required to complete two major writing assignments. The first writing assignment is in the format of a journal describing the candidate experience. The second writing assignment will be in the format of a journal describing the officeholder experience. Both papers will require additional research and citations, including a short bibliography or reference page.
- In addition, each student must submit up to ten short, one or two page essays on discrete elements of running for and serving in Congress. The latter will be graded and will synchronize with the two main papers required for the course.

Evaluation and Grading

Assignment	Learning Objective(s) Addressed	Weight
Memo/Journal #1*	1 and 2	25%
Memo/Journal #2*	1, 2, 3, 4 and 5	25%
Attendance and Participation	all	25%
Asynchronous submissions*	all	25%
Total		100%

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

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.

Required Text and Learning Materials

Fenno, Richard F., *The Challenge of Congressional Representation* (Harvard University Press, 2013)
 Mayhew, David R., *Congress: The Electoral Connection, 2nd ed.* (Yale University Press, 2004)
Life in Congress: The Member Perspective (Congressional Management Foundation, March 2013). Note:
 Download PDF free of charge from <http://congressfoundation.org/projects/life-in-congress/the-member-perspective>

Optional Supplemental Texts and Learning Materials

Keeping It Local, A Guide for Managing Congressional District and State Offices, (Congressional Management Foundation, 2010)
Setting Course: A Congressional Management Guide. 14th ed. (Congressional Management Foundation, 2014).
 Fenno, Richard F., *Home Style, House Members in Their Districts*, (Longman, 2003)
 Frey, Lou, and Jewett, Aubrey, *Political Rules of the Road*, (University Press and USAFMC, 2009)
 Frey, Lou, and Hayes, Michael T., *Inside the House*, (University Press and USAFMC, 2001)
 Graber, Doris A., *Media Power in Politics. 6th ed.* (CQ Press, 2011)
 Ignatieff, Michael, *Fire and Ashes, Success and Failure in Politics*, (Harvard University Press, 2013)
 Lawless, Jennifer L., *Becoming a Candidate, Political Ambition and the Decision to Run for Office*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012)
 Stearns, Clifford B., *Life in the Marble Palace (In Praise of Folly)*, (FriesenPress, 2016)
 Strand, Mark, et al, *Surviving Inside Congress, 3rd ed.* (The Congressional Institute, 2011)

More optional, supplemental reading materials will be provided on a continuing basis.

THE COURSE CALENDAR

The schedule is tentative. Guest lecture visits will necessitate modifications of session topics. Additionally, I will opportunistically seek to use current events as teaching opportunities. These externalities cannot be scheduled and may move certain topical elements or assigned readings temporally.

Therefore, I will alter course content and adjust the pace to accommodate these externalities from time to time. Weekly Blackboard announcements will disclose the requirements for upcoming sessions. Students are responsible for keeping up with all adjustments to the course calendar posted to Blackboard and posted via revisions to the syllabus.

Phase One: Ambition (Running) - Weeks 1 to 4

Week 1 - February 1st

Topic and content Covered: Class organization, brief overview and introduction to concepts. Nascent ambition; are you a candidate to be a candidate?

Reading Assignment: Reading: (From Gelman Library) Lawless, Jennifer L., *Becoming a Candidate, Political Ambition and the Decision to Run for Office*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012) chapter 2 (posted to the Files section on Blackboard)

Asynchronous, written assignment due Sunday, January 31st:

- Contemplate your nascent ambition towards public service in all forms, public and private, non-profit as well as elective and non-elective. As you think about this, take notes about the pros and cons. Try to analyze your thinking and feelings. Be specific.
- Then, write several short paragraphs discussing why you sometimes think about running for congress and what pros and cons weigh on your mind in that regard.

Submit the document with the title as follows: "your last name" - Nascent.docx. For example the file I would submit would look as follows: Carr - Nascent.docx. The document should be single spaced and no more than one page in length.

Week 2 - February 8th

Topic and Content: Expressing ambition; executing on a decision to run.

Reading assignment: TBD

Asynchronous, written assignment due Sunday, February 7th.

- A (fictionalized) biography of you as a candidate.
- A semi-detailed description the congressional district you will be seeking to represent.
- A few short paragraphs on how you plan to reveal and expressing this ambition to others. Be specific. Be prepared to discuss these elements in class.

Submit the document with the title as follows: “your last name” - Bio-ST-#-Expression.docx. For example the file for me would look as follows: Carr - Bio-MI08-Expression.docx. The document should be single spaced and no more than two pages in length.

Week 3 – February 15th

Topic and content: Active Ambition, executing the campaign; learning the district and the represented.

Reading Assignment: TBD

Asynchronous, written assignment due Sunday, February 14th: Send an email to me with the following two (2) items attached.

- A couple of short paragraphs telling me how you expect to learn or enhance your knowledge of your district. Be specific.
- A couple of short paragraphs explaining how - in your mind - you plan to win your campaign for congress. Be specific. Be prepared to discuss this in class.

Title the documents as follows: “your last name” - Learning District.docx and your “last name” - My Win Theory.docx. For example the files for me would look as follows: Carr - Learning District.docx and Carr - Win-Theory.docx.

Week 4 – February 22nd

Topic and content: The election.

Reading Assignment: How Every Member Got to Congress: <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/01/26/opinion/sunday/paths-to-congress.html>

Asynchronous, written assignment due Sunday, February 21st. TBD

Phase Two: Representation - Weeks 5 to 10

Week 5 – March 1st

Topic and content: Becoming a representative, establishing an office and a style, and picking committee assignments.

Reading Assignment: Fenno Chapters 1, 2 (Conable).

Asynchronous, written assignment due Sunday, February 28th TBD

March 6th – Paper due by COB: 1st Journal (as a candidate). Title the document as follows: “your last name” - Journal1.docx. For example the file for me would look as follows: Carr - Journal1.docx.

Week 6 – March 8th

Topic and content: What is your focus? What is your MC nascent ambition? What is your committee role?

Reading assignment: Fenno, Chapter 3, (Glenn Poshard) and Mayhew Chapter 1

Asynchronous, written assignment due Sunday, March 7th. TBD

Week 7 – March 22th

Topic and content: What is your inward facing style? Are you expressing inward facing ambition? Jockeying for position.

Reading assignment: Reading Assignment: Fenno, Chapter 4 (Thurman).

Asynchronous, written assignment due Sunday, March 21st. TBD

Week 8 – March 29th

Topic and content: Dilemma: service and campaigning (fundraising): how will I be evaluated? What is my style?

Reading Assignment: Fenno, Chapter 5 (Greenwood).
Stearns, Chapters 2 & 8 (posted to Blackboard Files).

Asynchronous, written assignment due Sunday, March 28th. TBD

Week 9 – April 5th

Topic and content: What are the time pressures? What are the impacts of rising seniority and internal responsibilities? What are the temptations? Fundraising?

Reading Assignment: Fenno, Chapter 6 (Lofgren) and Mayhew, Chapter 2.

Asynchronous, written assignment due Sunday, April 4th. TBD

Week 10 – April 12th

Topic and content: When is it a time to quit or run for another office?

Reading assignment: TBD

Asynchronous, written assignment due Sunday, April 11th. TBD

April 16th – Paper due by COB: 2nd Journal (as a representative). Title the document as follows: “your last name” - Journal2.docx. For example the file for me would look as follows: Carr - Journal2.docx.

Copyright Statement

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.