BASIC INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Instructor
John C. Angell

Contact Information
Phone Number: (571) 255-0901
Email Address: johnangell@email.gwu.edu

Communication
By e-mail, students can expect a response within 6 hours. I am available before class by appointment.

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 http://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 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 at the northwest corner of the Senate Russell Office Building 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
Students are expected to attend all classes. If student cannot attend a class the instructor should be emailed.

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
sillet@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
The course will cover:
1. A brief history of committees in the U.S. Congress
2. Understanding House and Senate committee jurisdiction
3. Membership on committees and the selection of committee chairmen
4. Committee staff
5. Setting the Agenda: the influence of the White House, House and Senate Leadership, committee chairmen, individual members, political parties and outside groups
6. The basic legislative process followed by committees:
   - Hearings
   - Subcommittee action
   - Full committee action, including markup
   - House and Senate floor and conference procedure
7. Two case studies: a review of committee action on the “Bush tax cuts” of 2001 and Health Care Reform, 2009-2010
8. The congressional budget process: the Budget and Appropriations Committees
9. Oversight activities of committees
10. The nomination process
11. Monitoring and discussion of committee activity (Spring 2016) in Congress, including action during the semester on key legislation

Course Learning Objectives
The objective of the course will be to prepare the student to analyze basic elements of House and Senate committee procedure in order to determine the outcome of committee action, including:
- information gathering prior to committee action
- identifying and understanding the motivations of committee members, the chairman and the ranking member
- the influence of party leadership in the House and Senate on committee action
- the influence of the political parties on committee action
- involvement of the White House and the executive branch in committee action

Evaluation and Grading

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Learning Objective(s) Addressed</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mid term</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oral Presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Completion of Course Outline</td>
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<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance and Participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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Following is the grade scale for all GSPM classes:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade*</th>
<th>Grading Standard</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
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<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>73-76</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72 (lowest grade to pass)</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Below 70</td>
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Your work is outstanding and ready for submission in a professional environment. Your material, effort, research, and writing demonstrate superior work.

Represents solid work with minor errors. Overall, excellent work.

Very good. Represents well-written material, research, and presentation, but needs some minor work.

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.

You’ve completed the assignment, but you are not meeting all of the requirements.

Needs improvement in content and in effort. Shows some motivation and concern.

Needs reworking, improved effort, and additional research. Shows minimal motivation and concern.

Poor performance. Major errors, too many misspellings, problems with accuracy, etc.

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**

*Committees in Congress*, Christopher J. Deering and Steven S. Smith

*Competing Principals: Committees, Parties, and the Organization of Congress*, Forrest Maltzman

**Additional Reading**

*Congressional Procedures and the Policy Process*, Walter J. Oleszek

**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 Date**

Week 1

Topic and Content Covered: Introduction and discussion of topics to be covered during the semester

**Class Date**

Week 2

Topic and Content Covered: History of Committees and Committee Jurisdiction

Reading due: Chapter 2, Deering and Smith

**Class Date**

Week 3

Topic and Content Covered: How membership on committees is determined, how committee chairmen are selected, committee staff

**Class Date**

Week 4

Topic and Content Covered: Setting the Agenda - the influence of the White House, House and Senate leadership, committee chairmen, individual members, political parties and outside groups
**Class Date**  
Week 5

Topic and Content Covered: Hearings, Subcommittee and full Committee action, including markup

**Class Date**  
Week 6

Topic and Content Covered: Hearings, Subcommittee and full Committee action, including markup

**Class Date**  
Week 7

Topic and Content Covered: House and Senate floor consideration of legislation

**Class Date**  
Week 8

Topic and Content Covered: Conference between House and Senate Committees

**Class Date**  
Week 9

Topic and Content Covered: The Congressional Budget Process - the Budget and Appropriations Committees

**Class Date**  
Week 10

Topic and Content Covered: Two Case Studies - Bush 2001 Tax Cuts and Health Care Reform, 2009 - 2010

**Class Date**  
Week 11

Topic and Content Covered: Committee Oversight Activities and the Nomination Process

**Class Date**  
Week 12

Topic and Content Covered: Oversight Activities and the Nomination Process, Review of Course
Class Date
Week 13

Topic and Content Covered: Oral presentations

Class Date
Week 14

Topic and Content Covered: Oral presentations

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.