

The Graduate School
of Political Management

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

M.P.S. in Legislative Affairs

Semester: Spring 2017
Jan 17 to Apr 25, 2017

Running and Ruling: A Member's Perspective

LGAF 6240.LH2
3 Credits

Syllabus version: 4.0.1
Syllabus date: 1/2/2017

Tuesday evenings, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.
Hall of the States

BASIC INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Instructor

M. Robert Carr

Contact Information

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

Email Address: bcarr@gwu.edu

Communication

I may be reached either by text or email. Text messages are usually answered quickly. Emails will be answered usually within 24-48 hours. Important: My email client sorts emails based on rules. Your gwu.edu domain name is already programmed into my system. If you use another email domain name/account, I may not see it. For critical communication please only use the gwu.edu domain.

I am available for meetings by appointment, preferably one hour before class.

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>.

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 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 in **the parking lot whose entrance is SE of the intersection of North Capital and E St 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

Unless otherwise excused in advance, class attendance is mandatory. I expect to be notified via text (preferable) or email at least by the day of the class session. Punctuality is important as well. Similarly I expect to be notified via text if your arrival will be delayed. Finally, I will excuse the occasional early departure, if I am alerted in advance as to the cause.

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

Ms. 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

There are as many definitions of the job of a member of Congress as there are 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 is meeting acceptable, accountability standards for job performance. In coming from a position or point of view these definitions easily obscure, if not totally ignore the real, practical job environment of a member of Congress. In short, helpful as these definitions try to be, they frequently are not.

This course takes a different approach to examining the job of a member of Congress. Most political analysts and commentators, indeed most academics, start with the member as elected. We will start at a much earlier stage with the decision to seek office. What conventional analysis often misses because they fail to ask, "how was the twig planted." We will start at the very beginning. Then in the second half of the course we will dissect the many, varied roles that the job requires. We will try to put ourselves in the member's shoes. From that perspective we will hopefully get closer to a better understanding of what the job requires in real, practical terms. And finally we will seek to assess and even improve on the standards for judging success both for the individual, representative democracy and the nation.

Course Learning Objectives

1. To gain the perspective and professionally empathize with of the job of seeking and becoming a member of 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 the member's 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 will 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.
- In addition, each student must submit up to six short, one page essays on discrete elements of running for and serving in Congress. The latter will not be graded and will synchronize with the two main papers required for the course.
- There will be a final, take-home exam.

Evaluation and Grading

Assignment	Learning Objective(s) Addressed	Due Date	Weight
Memo/Journal #1	1 and 2		25%
Memo/Journal #2	1, 2, 3, 4 and 5		25%
Attendance and Participation	all		25%
Final Exam	all		25%
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

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 are in the process of being booked. Additionally, I will opportunistically seek to use current events as teaching opportunities. Obviously, these externalities cannot be scheduled and may move certain topical elements or assigned readings temporally.

Therefore, I reserve the right to alter course content and/or adjust the pace to accommodate class. Students are responsible for keeping up with all adjustments to the course calendar posted to Blackboard and/or posted via revisions to the syllabus, also posted on Blackboard.

Week 1 - January 17th

Topic and content Covered: Class organization, brief overview and introduction to concepts.

Reading: None.

Assignment(s) Due Today: Please email a short bio or résumé of yourself. Be prepared to advise me of special needs that you now have or expect to have. For example, if you have a disability, a known scheduling conflict or any other matter that is appropriate at the beginning of the course, now is the time.

Phase One: Getting There - Weeks 2 to 6

Week 2 - January 24th

Topic and Content: Nascent ambition; are you a candidate to be a candidate?

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 Blackboard) Fenno, Chapters 1 & 7.

Assignment due today: Write a short paragraph telling me which congressional district you've chosen to run in and why. Be prepared to discuss this in class.

Week 3 – January 31st

Topic and content: Expressive ambition; executing on a decision to run

Reading: Fenno, Chapter 2 (Conable).

Assignment due today: Write a short paragraph telling me why you sometimes think about running for congress and what things would weigh on your decision to do so. Be specific. Be prepared to discuss this in class.

Week 4 – February 7th

Topic and content: Learning the district.

Reading: Fenno, Chapter 4 (Thurman).

Assignment due today: Write a short paragraph telling me how you express your ambition to run for congress. Be specific. Be prepared to discuss this in class.

Week 5 – February 14th

Topic and content: Running for Congress: campaigning.

Guest Lecturer: (tentative) Hon. Cliff Stearns (R-FL)

Reading Due Today: Fenno, Chapter 3 (Poshard).

Week 6 – February 21st

Topic and content: The election.

Reading Due Today: TBA

Phase Two: Staying There - Weeks 7 to 13

Week 7 – February 28th

Topic and content: Setting up your office, getting committee assignments.

Guest Lecturer: (tentative) Hon. Karen Thurman (D-FL)

Reading Due Today: Fenno, Chapter 6 (Lofgren).

Paper due: Journal #1 (as a candidate).

Week 8 – March 7th

Topic and content: What's my style?

Guest Lecturer: (tentative) Hon. James Greenwood (R-PA)

Reading Due Today: Review Fenno Chapter 5 (Greenwood)

Paper due: First Journal (as a candidate).

Week 9 – March 21st

Topic and content: What are the time pressures? What are the temptations?

Reading Due Today: Mayhew, Chapter 1.

Week 10 – March 28th

Topic and content: Dilemma: serving and campaigning (fundraising); how will I be evaluated.

Guest Lecturer: (Tentative) Hon. Steve Israel (D-NY)

Reading Due Today: TBA

Week 11 – April 4th

Topic and content: The mature legislator.

Reading Due Today: Mayhew, Chapter 2.

Week 12 – April 11th

Topic and content: Serving different constituencies

Reading Due Today: TBA

Week 13 – April 18th

Topic and content: Winding down and heading for retirement..

Week 14 – April 25th

Topic and content: Wrap-up and review.

Paper due: Journal #2 (as a member).

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.