M.P.S. in Legislative Affairs

Executive-Legislative Relationships
LGAF 6203.LH
3 Credits

2nd Summer Session
July 6 thru August 19, 2015
Mondays & Wednesdays, 6 p.m. – 8 p.m.
Hall of the States

BASIC INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Instructor
Gene Fisher

Currently serves as 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 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. 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.

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. However, 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 | 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
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 to 12 pages (approximately 2,500 – 3,000 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 will be submitted for approval on Wednesday, July 8. Students will present abstracts of their topics on Monday, July 15 and a complete outline of their paper topic on Wednesday, July 17. Papers are due on Monday, August 3.
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 Monday, August 17 and due COB Wednesday, August 19. 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 members will be assigned to “media-watch” groups who will be responsible for monitoring selected major news sources devoted to covering the legislative, policy-making process on the Hill. Media-watch groups will be responsible for covering commonly read Hill news sources, as well as reports in Roll Call, The Hill, Politico, and other Hill news publications. Each group will be expected to come to class prepared at the opening of class to make a 3-minute presentation on the two most significant/interesting stories of the week on a legislative, regulatory or programmatic issue involving the Congress and the president or executive branch agency. 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. Students are also encouraged to look for the “back story” of news reportage.

Also, each group will also be expected to report on one political “gossip” item. For example, the Roll Call group will probably report on an item found in the “Heard on the Hill” column, Politico—“Mike Allen’s Playbook.”

Media Watch Groups will be assigned to cover stories in the following trade publications:

The first 15-20 minutes of class time on Mondays will be devoted to this activity. Media Watch Group activity will be suspended for classes when guest lecturers are scheduled.
Evaluation and Grading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Learning Objective(s) Addressed</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st One-Pager</td>
<td>Discuss significance of a complex issue succinctly and prepare talking points</td>
<td>Assigned</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd One Pager</td>
<td>Discuss significance of a complex issue succinctly and prepare talking points</td>
<td>Assigned</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Paper</td>
<td>Analyze a legislative, regulatory or program issue involving the legislative and executive branches, and examine the key factors that influenced the legislative outcome</td>
<td>08/04/14</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>Demonstrate knowledge of the course</td>
<td></td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>Learning through the exchange of views</td>
<td></td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Following is the grade scale for all GSPM classes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade*</th>
<th>Grading Standard</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
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</table>

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.
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


**Selected Readings**


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

Bill Bishop, *The Big Sort, Why the Clustering of Like-Minded America is Tearing Us Apart*, 2009, ISBN# 9780618689354


**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**
**Session 1, Monday, July 6**

**Introduction and Course Orientation:**

Learning Objective(s) Addressed:
- Review syllabus, course requirements, course overview and course
- Review main themes that will covered throughout the course
- Examine why executive branch agencies consider it important to establish cooperative working relationships with Congress

**Readings Due Today:**

Collier, *Between the Branches*, Chap. 1, “Introduction”
Crowe, “Congress and Defense”
Gates, “Mending Fences”

**Assignment(s) Due Today:**

Come prepared to discuss reading assignments
Compare and contrast the views presented by Adm. Crowe and Secretary Gates. How do you account for their differences in viewpoints?
What is pluralism and the difference between institutional and individual pluralism?

**Assignment for Next Class:**

Choose topic for Research Paper
Select One Page Memo Assignments

**Readings for Next Class:**

Articles 1 & 2 of the United States Constitution (Google It, It’s not hard to find. But if you must have a link, try this: [http://constitutionus.com/](http://constitutionus.com/))

Rivals, Chapter 12, “Obama’s Constitutional Conflicts with Congress”

Assignment(s) Due Today:

Come Prepared to Discuss Readings

Class Date
Session 2, Wednesday, July 8

Topic and Content Covered: The structural environment that affects and shapes the relationship between the President and Congress

Learning Objective(s) Addressed:

Identify and survey the key political, constitutional, and institutional factors that affect the relationship between the executive and legislative branches

Readings Due Today:

Articles 1 & 2 of the United States Constitution (Google It, It’s not hard to find. But if you must have a link, try this: http://constitutionus.com/)


Rivals, Chapter 12, “Obama’s Constitutional Conflicts with Congress”

Assignment(s) Due Today:

Come Prepared to Discuss Readings
Hand in Course Paper Topic
Announce One Pager Topic Selections

Assignment for Next Class:

Hand in Course Paper Abstract and Outline
Select One Page Memo Assignments

Readings for Next Class:

Collier: Between the Branches, Chaps. 2 – 6, Eisenhower through Ford
Assignment(s) Due Today

Class Date
Session 3, Monday, July 13  Bridging the Constitutional Divide
**Topic and Content Covered:** The President’s Congressional Connection Part I
Examine the complicated relationship between the two branches through lens of the White House Office of Legislative Affairs from the Eisenhower through the Ford administrations

**Learning Objective(s) Addressed:**

Examine how the White House Office of Legislative Affairs became the principal tool for the White House when exercising its influence over Congress

Review the different strategies and tactics employed by the different administrations to win approval of the presidential policy priorities

What the organization of the White House Office of Legislative Affairs reveals about the personal and leadership styles of the different presidents it has served

**Reading Due Today:**

Collier: Between the Branches, Chaps. 2 – 6, Eisenhower through Ford
Assignment(s) Due Today

**Assignment for Next Week:**

Collier: Between the Branches, Chaps. 7 – 11, Carter through Conclusion

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**Class Date**

**Session 4, Wednesday, July 15 Unchecking the Checks and Balancing the Balances**

**Topic and Content Covered:** The President’s Congressional Connection Part II.
Examine the complicated relationship between the two branches through lens of the White House Office of Legislative Affairs from the Carter through the Clinton administrations

**Learning Objective(s) Addressed:**

Review the different strategies and tactics employed by the different administrations to win approval of the presidential policy priorities

What the organization of the White House Office of Legislative Affairs reveals about the personal and leadership styles of the different presidents it has served

Discuss the one common mission shared by all the presidents’ agents in the White House of Office of Legislative Affairs

Why the president’s leadership of Congress has grown harder

**Readings Due Today:**

Collier: *Between the Branches*, Chaps. 7 – 11, Carter through Conclusion
Rivals, Chap. 3, White House - Congressional Relations in a Polarized Age

Assignment(s) Due Today:

Reading Assignments for Next Class:

Cohen, Chap. 3, “A Theory of Presidential Agenda Building and the Congressional Response; and Chap. 4, “The Size of the President’s Agenda, 1789 – 2002”;


Class Date
Session 5, Monday, July 20

Topic and Content Covered: The Legislative Presidency

Learning Objective(s) Addressed:

How the role of the president has evolved to setting the legislative agenda for Congress and the nation

A look at the political factors that must exist for the president and the Congress to have a constructive relationship

Reading Due Today:

Cohen, Chap. 3, “A Theory of Presidential Agenda Building and the Congressional Response; and Chap. 4, “The Size of the President’s Agenda, 1789 – 2002”;


Assignment(s) Due Today:

Reading Assignments for Next Class:

Rivals, Chap. 6, “The President and the Congressional Party Leadership in a Hyperpartisan Era” and Chap. 13, “Congress and President Obama: A Perspective”
Cooper, “From Congressional to Presidential Preeminence: Power and Politics in Late Nineteenth Century America and Today”

**Class Date**
**Session 6, Wednesday, July 22**

**Topic and Content Covered:** The President and An Evolving Congress

**Guest Lecturer:** Rob Nabors, Chief of Staff, Veterans Affairs Department
Former White House Deputy Chief of Staff

**Learning Objective(s) Addressed:**
- The importance of understanding “context” when evaluating White House –congressional relations
- Understanding the limitations on presidential-congressional cooperation under unified control of government
- Why Congress is challenged in maintaining control over the legislative function of government.

**Reading Due Today:**

*Rivals*, Chap. 6, “The President and the Congressional Party Leadership in a Hyperpartisan Era” and Chap. 13, “Congress and President Obama: A Perspective”

Davidson, “The Presidency and Congressional Time”

Cooper, “From Congressional to Presidential Preeminence: Power and Politics in Late Nineteenth Century America and Today”

**Assignment(s):**

**Readings for Next Week:**

Fisher, Chaps. 2 “The Appointment Powers”
Scroggs, Chap. 3, “Patterns of Army-Congressional Relations”

**Class Date**
**Session 7, Monday, July 27**

**Topic and Content Covered:** Controlling the Bureaucracy?
A look at the factors that make it difficult for the president to control the executive branch of government and how departments, agencies and bureaus pursue their own agendas with Congress.

**Guest Lecturers:**
Learning Objective(s) Addressed:

Examine the struggle between the president and the Congress over who controls the bureaucracy and why presidential nominations are so important.

How departments, agencies, bureaus work (or don’t work) to advance their own agendas with Congress.

Discuss the difference between lobbying and liaising.

Reading Due Today:

Fisher, Chap. 2 “The Appointment Powers”
Scroggs, Chap. 3, “Patterns of Army-Congressional Relations”
Rivals, Chap. 10, “The Politics of Federal Regulation

Assignment(s) Due Today:

Questions for guest speakers due Friday, July 28

Readings for Next Class:

Rivals, Chap. 9, “Presidents, Congress, and Budget Decisions”

Schick, Chap. 2 (pp. 18-34), “The Evolution of Federal Budgeting from Surplus to Deficit to Surplus (to Deficit)”; Chap. 5, “The President’s Budget”; and Chap. 6, “The Congressional Budget Process”

Class Date
Session 8, Wednesday, July 29

Note: Guest Lecturer: Mr. Brett Coulson

Topic and Content Covered: Presidential and Congressional Budget Making

Learning Objective(s) Addressed:

A look at the basic steps in the budget process.

Why the annual budget process is important and how it relates to the president’s agenda?

Examine how the budget process has been shaped by institutional, partisan, and ideological factors.

Reading Due Today:

Rivals, Chap. 9, “Presidents, Congress, and Budget Decisions”

Schick, Chap. 2 (pp. 18-34), “The Evolution of Federal Budgeting from Surplus to Deficit to Surplus (to Deficit)” ; Chap. 5, “The President’s Budget”; and Chap. 6, “The Congressional Budget Process”
Assignment(s) Due Today:

Readings for Next Week:

Fisher, Chap. 7, “The Power of the Purse”
Schick, Chap. 9, “The Appropriations Process”

Class Date
Session 9, Monday, August 3

Topic and Content Covered: It’s Only About Money

Learning Objective(s) Addressed:

Reading Due Today:

Fisher, Chap. 7, “The Power of the Purse”
Schick, Chap. 9, “The Appropriations Process”

Assignment(s) Due Today:
Hand in Research Papers

Readings for Next Week:

Fisher, Chap. 8, “Treaties and Executive Agreements” and Chap. 9 “The War Power”
Rivals, Chap. 11, “The President, Congress, and Foreign Policy”

Class Date
Session 10, Wednesday, August 5

Topic and Content Covered: The President in Foreign Affairs and War

Learning Objective(s) Addressed:

Simulation on the implementation of the War Powers Act

Examine the historical character of American war power and the interplay between the executive and legislative branches of government and the fourth estate

Understand the essential elements of the War Powers Act

Reading Due Today:

Fisher, Chap. 8, “Treaties and Executive Agreements” and Chap. 9 “The War Power”
Rivals, Chap. 11, "The President, Congress, and Foreign Policy"

**Assignment(s) Due Today:**

**Readings for Next Week:**

Blumenthal, "Introduction"
Ornstein and Mann, Chap., 1 “Campaigning and Governing: A Conspectus”
Bishop, Chap. 1, “The Age of Political Segregation” and Chap. 10 “Choosing a Side”

**Class Date**
**Session 11, Monday, August 10**

**Topic and Content Covered:** Era of Political, Partisan and Ideological Polarization

**Learning Objective(s) Addressed:**

A look at the policy-making process in the modern era.

Study the impact of partisanship and ideology on governing and the factors that have produced a government in gridlock.

**Readings Due Today:**

Blumenthal, “Introduction”
Ornstein and Mann, Chap., 1 “Campaigning and Governing: A Conspectus”
Bishop, Chap. 1, “The Age of Political Segregation” and Chap. 10 “Choosing a Side”

**Assignment(s) Due Today:**

**Class Date**
**Session 12, Wednesday, August 12**

**Topic and Content Covered:** Wrap Up

**Learning Objective(s) Addressed:**

**Reading Due Today:** None. **Final Exams Distributed**

**Assignment(s) Due Today:**

**Class Date**
**Session 13, Monday, August 17**
Topic and Content Covered:

Learning Objective(s) Addressed:

Reading Due Today: Exams

Assignment(s) Due Today: Final Exams Due

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