

PSC 286.LH2: Party Leadership in the Congress
The George Washington University
Summer 2005, TTh 6:00-8:00

Professor Larry Butler
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Although not mentioned in the U.S. Constitution, political parties have come to play an important role in all aspects of American politics and governance. This course will provide a thorough examination of the structure and impact of political parties and party leaders in the Congress. The course begins with an historical review of the institutional development of the key congressional leadership positions: House Speaker and Senate Majority Leader. It then examines the relationship between the multiple power centers within the congressional party structure. How do those power centers interact with each other? What impact do they have on the legislative process? What impact do they have on the behavior of Senators and Representatives? Who is really in control? The course concludes with an examination of how the majority party uses and adapts chamber rules to defeat the minority party.

BOOKS

- Peters, Ronald M., Jr. 1997. *The American Speakership: The Office in Historical Perspective*, 2nd ed. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Caro, Robert A. 2002. *The Years of Lyndon Johnson: Master of the Senate*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Rohde, David W. 1991. *Parties and Leaders in the Postreform House*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Cox, Gary W. and Mathew D. McCubbins. 1993. *Legislative Leviathan: Party Government in the House*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Binder, Sarah A. 1997. *Minority Rights, Majority Rule: Partisanship and the Development of Congress*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

You will also be assigned scholarly articles and book chapters to read throughout the semester.

ASSIGNMENTS

The written assignments for this course consist of two six to ten page papers. The purpose of these papers is to provide a critical analysis of the course readings and class discussions. These are not book reviews. Instead, you are to provide your own independent analysis of the arguments presented. You may cover the overarching themes presented in the readings for the week or focus more narrowly on specific arguments made by the authors. Your analysis can critique the material in detail or apply the readings' theoretical constructs to the real world of Congress. The goal is for you to tell me what you think about the course materials and why.

These papers will determine 40% of your course grade apiece. The remaining 20% is based on your attendance at and participation in class discussions.

CLASS TOPICS AND READINGS

May 24: **Course Introduction; Institutional Development of the Speakership**

Peters Chapters 1-4

May 26: **Institutional Development of the Senate Majority Leader; Selection of Party Leaders**

Caro Chapters 1 and 15

Cooper, Joseph and David W. Brady. 1981. "Institutional Context and Leadership Style: The House from Cannon to Rayburn." *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 75, No. 2, pp. 411-425.

May 31: **Party Leadership Structure in the Postreform House**

Rohde

June 2: **Party Leadership Structure in the Contemporary Republican House**

Peters Chapter 6

Other readings TBA

June 7: **The Majority Party and the Legislative Process**

Cox and McCubbins

June 9: **The Impact of Party Leadership on Member Behavior**

Schickler, Eric and Andrew Rich. 1997. "Controlling the Floor: Parties as Procedural Coalitions in the House." *American Journal of Political Science* 41:1340-1375.

Krehbiel, Keith. 1999. "Paradoxes of Parties in Congress." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 24:31-64.

June 14: **Class Cancelled**

Work on papers. Start reading for June 21.

June 16: **Other Party Organizations**

Readings TBA.

June 21 and June 23: **Party Leadership in the Senate**

Caro Chapters 21-26, 29, 33-41

June 28: **Majority/Minority Relations**

Binder

June 30: **The House Rules Committee; Changing Senate Rules**

Readings TBA.