

**Master of Arts in Legislative Affairs  
GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY  
PSC 218 LH-LEGISLATIVE POLITICS  
SUMMER 2006**

Tuesday and Thursday evenings, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.  
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**OVERVIEW**

This course will examine the theory, structure, and process of the U. S. Congress, with emphasis on member-constituency relations, individual and collective decision-making, party and committee activities, executive-legislative relations, and media/interest group activities.

**Method of Instruction:**

The main focus of the class will be an in depth analysis of the actions of the various actors in the legislative process. Each class participant will adopt a vulnerable Member of Congress and his/her committee assignments. We will review various issues in the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress and select five of these issues to further track as they developed into a bill in the legislative process. We will work in groups of five to analyze these bills. This class is organized to improve your ability or potential to interact with the legislative process whether that is as a legislative staffer, a bureaucrat, a lobbyist or an interested party. Assignments are directed towards that end.

**Method of Evaluation**

There will be two tests. A midterm (30% of grade) covering the first half of the course will be given on July 25. The comprehensive final will be given on August 15 and will account for 40% of the grade. Twenty percent of the grade will be based on position papers requirements and reporting on your assigned role. The final 10 percent will be based on your overall class participation.

*Class Participation and Attendance.* This is graduate school. Class preparation and participation are mandatory and will count for 10 percent of the final grade. Failure to attend class without prior approval of the instructor is prohibited. Missing two such classes will result in a non-passing grade.

**REQUIRED TEXTS:** Congressional Procedures and the Policy Process. (2004) Walter J. Oleszek. CQ Press: Washington, D.C. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition.  
The American Legislative Process: Congress and the States. (2001). William J. Keefe & Morris S. Qgul. Prentice Hall: Upper Saddle River, NJ. 10<sup>th</sup> Edition.

**Course Outline**  
**Master of Arts in Legislative Affairs**  
**Legislative Politics**  
**PSC 218**

*Summer 2006*

Note: This is a suggested outline. The dates and subjects covered may vary depending on availability of speakers. Classes will generally involve both participative and instructional time.

**July 6** – *Introductions and Overview of the Course, Assignments*

**July 11** – *Introduction to the Legislative Process*

What is the general structure of Congress?  
Reading: Olesek, Ch. 1; Keefe & Ogul, Ch. 1-2, 5.

**July 13** – *Process: Bill Writing*

What is Jurisdiction?  
What are Legislative Counsels?  
What role do the Parliamentarians play?  
What is a referral?

**July 18** – *Process: Committees*

What is jurisdiction?  
What is a hearing?  
What is a markup?  
What is the special role of the Rules Committee?  
Reading: Olesek, Ch. 3; Keefe & Ogul, Ch. 6 & 7

**July 20** – *Process: Budget. Appropriations v. Authorizations*

What is the role of the budget in the legislative process? OMB?  
What is the difference?  
Why is it important?  
Reading: Olesek, Ch. 2

**July 25** – MID TERM

**July 27** – *Floor and Post floor conferences*

What do conference committees do? How are they assigned?  
What is meant by the term pre-conferencing?  
Reading: Olesek, Chs. 4-9; Keefe & Ogul, Ch. 8

**August 1** – *Role of Parties/Leadership, President/Bureaucracy and the Courts*

What is the role of the party & leadership in the House and Senate?  
How much influence do they have over the process?  
How does Congress interact with the President and the bureaucracy?  
How much influence do these players have over the legislative process?  
Reading: Keefe & Ogul, Ch. 9, 11-13

**August 3** – *Role of the Press*

How does Congress interact with the press?  
How much influence does the press have over the legislative process?

**August 8** – *Role of Interest Groups*

How do interest groups influence the process?  
How much influence do these groups have?  
Keefe & Ogul, Chap. 10

**August 10-** *Role of Elections/Fundraising/Polling/Reapportionment*

How big a role is campaigning in the life of a Member of Congress?  
What is the role of fundraising?  
Review  
Keefe & Ogul, Ch. 3-4 & 14  
Olesek, Ch. 10

**August 15** - FINAL