

PSC 250.LH1 Congress and Foreign Policy

Spring 2009, TH 6:00 – 8:00

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Course Objective. The course is designed to give students a firm understanding of the extent to which Congress plays a role in U.S. foreign policy making and implementation, and the ways in which it does so. More importantly for graduate studies, the class will search for explanations of Congressional behavior by identifying the factors that influence the level of Congressional engagement in foreign affairs. We will ask: why and when does Congress matter? Under what conditions can we expect Congress to assert itself or acquiesce to Executive initiatives?

Expectations. The course will be run like a graduate research seminar. Therefore, the full participation of everyone in class discussions and case study research is necessary to make the course a success. Students are expected to handle a heavy reading load and a significant writing assignment. It is expected that students will comply with all university policies especially with regard to plagiarism and ethics.

Grades. Grades are awarded on a point-earning system. You will have numerous earning opportunities in order to achieve your preferred grade. These opportunities are:

- Attendance and class discussion – 15
- Bio – 5
- Paper – 30
- Essays – 30
- Midterm – 20

Grades: 90 to 100 points = A (90-93 = A-)

80 to 89 points = B (80-83 = B-)

70 to 79 points = C (70-73 = C-)

Assignments:

Bio. By the third class meeting (January 29), please email me and the rest of the class a short 2-part bio. *First part:* this is not a resume, but a narrative on your personal and career background, academic interests and achievements, non-academic interests, etc., written in the third person. This can be accomplished in one paragraph or no more than ½ page.

Second part: Your bio in 2030. Imagine your life in 2030 and provide a bio, still in third person, present tense. Ex: Jane Doe is serving her first term as U.S. Senator from the state of Puerto Rico, etc. Why are we doing this? Because imagining your future is a huge step to getting there. It lets us all get to know one another. It gives me some indication of your writing ability. And, it's an easy 5 points – don't pass it up.

Essays. We meet 14 times during the semester. One night will be the midterm; the last two classes will discuss research projects. Setting aside our first class, that leaves us with 10 substantive meetings. At our first meeting, students will sign up for two nights in which they will write a 2-page essay based on the assigned readings. The essay should end with a few questions to be used in class discussions. Essays are to be emailed to the entire class and to me no later than COB Wednesday. The content of the essays should be an analytical discussion of the readings' relevant points. What does the author say causes a passive or active Congressional role in foreign policy? Do you agree, disagree, or believe that the author left out something important? Was the author not clear on something we should discuss in class?

Paper. Due during finals week (May 7) – no exceptions. Early submissions will be gladly accepted. The length should be approximately 15-20 pages, double-spaced, reasonable margins.

Topic. Your paper is a case study of a foreign policy issue of your choice in which you analyze the role of Congress and the Executive branch. The analysis should use causal variables that we have identified during the course. Which ones were important and why? **By our 6th meeting (February 19), email your choice of case study to me.** I would like to approve your case study in advance in order to advise you on feasibility or other possible problems.

The last two classes will be devoted to presentations and discussion of your case study. This will give you time to incorporate suggestions before the paper is due.

Midterm. The midterm exam is scheduled for March 5. The format will be short answers.

Readings. There are not many textbooks on the subject of Congress and foreign policy, and many works are not theoretically informed. Consequently, we will be pulling from many varied sources. Some articles will be available from Aladin; others will be made available on Blackboard. We will be reading almost the entire following books, and they will be available at the GW bookstore.

1. *Congress and the Politics of Foreign Policy* by Colton C. Campbell, Nicol C. Rae, and John F. Stack Jr., Prentice Hall Press, 2002.

2. *Congress and the Foreign Policy Process: Modes of Legislative Behavior*, Cecil V. Crabb Jr., Glenn J. Autizzo, and Leila E. Saredine, 2000.

Information Resources. I will post a bibliography on Blackboard with books and articles. This should be a valuable resource for your case studies, but it does not absolve you from doing your own data mining. Sources, such as archived newspaper and magazine articles, the Congressional Record, and Congressional Quarterly, are all available at most public libraries or on-line.

Class Schedule

- January 15 (1)** I. Overview of course, expectations and syllabus.
II. Introduction of the subject.
III. Theories of Legislative Politics
IV. The Research Question: When and under what conditions does Congress assert itself in foreign policy?

What is the nature of legislative-executive relations in the realm of foreign affairs? Would you describe it as an “invitation to struggle,” “an imbalance of power,” or “creative tension?”

- Reading:
1. Lindsay, *Congress and the Politics of US Foreign Policy*, 1994. Read the Introduction called “3 Fallacies,” and Chapter 1: Foreign Policy on Capitol Hill. Blackboard.
 2. Lee Hamilton, *A Creative Tension*, 2002, Chapter 1: Introduction: New International Challenges and Opportunities, pp 1-7. Blackboard.
 3. Polsby and Schickler, “Landmarks in the Study of Congress Since 1945, in *Annual Review of Political Science*, Volume 5, 2002, especially pages 340-353. Blackboard.

January 22 (2) Congress and Foreign Policy: Overview of Approaches

Within the context of theories of legislative politics in general, what motivates the behavior of Members of Congress and Congress in general on foreign issues? Do Members use alternative criteria to evaluate foreign policy questions? How important is access to reliable information? Is Congress organized well to be a reliable partner with the Executive branch on foreign policy issues?

- Readings:
1. Crabb et al, 2000. Introduction, pp 1-14.
 2. Crabb and Holt, *Invitation to Struggle: Congress, the President, and Foreign Policy*, 4th edition, 1991. Chapters 1 and 2, pp 1-61. Blackboard.
 3. Lindsay, James M. *Congress and the Politics of Foreign Policy*, 1994, Chapter 2: Legislative Motivations and Foreign Policy. Blackboard.
 4. Lee Hamilton, *A Creative Tension*, chapters 2 and 3, pp. 8-71. Blackboard.

January 29 (3)

I. Constitutional Underpinnings

What does the Constitution say about the respective roles of Congress and the Executive with regard to foreign policy? Does one branch have greater authority? What role does precedent play? What were the intentions of the founding fathers? What were the early experiences of the nation?

Readings: 1. Louis Fisher, *The Politics of Shared Power*, Chapter 1: Constitutional Underpinnings, pp 3-22. Blackboard.

2. Crabb 2000. Chapter 1: (partial) pp 15-30, and Chapter 2: (partial) pp 51-63.

II. Select Theories on Executive-Legislative Relations/ What is the Value of Congressional Involvement?

What is the nature of executive-legislative relations? What is the effect of: different constituencies; different worldviews; access to information; bureaucratic considerations?

Readings: 1. Lisa Martin, *Democratic Commitments: Legislatures and International Cooperation*, Chapter 1: Introduction, and Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework: Legislatures, Executives, and Commitment. Blackboard.

2. Clapp, Halperin, and Kantor, *Bureaucratic Politics of U.S. Foreign Policy*, Chapter 16: Congress and Bureaucratic Politics, --. 313-345. Blackboard.

3. James Lindsay, *Congress and the Politics of Foreign Policy*, Chapter 6: Diplomacy, Consultation, and Framing. Blackboard.

February 5 (4)
Bios Due

When Does Congress Matter? Identifying Causal Variables

Some observers argue that Congress is an important partner in foreign policy making; others argue that Congress too often acquiesces to Presidential leadership. Does Congress always exercise its Constitutional authorities? Is it possible to see patterns with regard to when it asserts itself?

Readings: 1. Crabb and Holt, *Invitation to Struggle*, 1991, Chapter 9: Congressional Assertiveness and Foreign Affairs: A Balance Sheet, pp. 261-303. Blackboard.

2. James M. Lindsay, "Congress and Foreign Policy: Why the Hill Matters," in *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 107, No. 4, Winter 1992/93. Aladin.

3. James Lindsay, "Deference and Defiance: The Shifting Rhythms of Executive-Legislative Relations in Foreign Policy," in *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 33, No 3. September 2003, pp. 530-546. Aladin.

4. Jeffrey S. Peake, "Coalition Building and Overcoming Legislative Gridlock in Foreign Policy, 1947-98, in *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 32, No. 1, March 2002, pp. 67-83. Aladin.

February 12 (5) The Mechanics of Congressional Engagement

Congress has a number of ways to influence foreign policy, both formally and informally. Oftentimes, individual members can push the White House toward or against certain policy options. What are the range of ways Congress can assert itself? Are some more effective than others? What are the factors that influence Congress?

Readings: 1. Crabb 2000. Chapter 5: Interest Groups and the Legislative Process, -- 137-155, and Conclusion, pp. 157-191.

2. Lindsay, 1994. Chapter 3: Decision Making in Congress. Blackboard.

3. Hamilton, Chapter 4: Consultation between the President and Congress, pp. 72-91. Blackboard.

February 19 (6) Advice and Consent/Treaties and Executive Agreements

What is the extent of Congress' advice and consent authority? How effective is Congress in shaping treaties? What informal mechanisms have developed over time? What role does Congress play in executive agreements?

Readings: 1. Lisa Martin, *Democratic Commitments*, Chapter 3: Institutions and Influence: Executive Agreements and Treaties, pp. 53-80. Blackboard. (Or Lindsay 1994, Chapter 4)

2. Campbell et al, (*Congress and the Politics of Foreign Policy*) Chapter 3: Advice and Consent: The Forgotten Power by David Auerswald, pp. 44-69.

3. Campbell et al, Chapter 4: Presidential and Congressional Relations in Foreign Affairs: The Treaty-Making Power and the Rise of Executive Agreements, by David M. O'Brien, pp. 70-89.

4. Campbell et al, Chapter 5: A Tale of Two Treaties: The Practical Politics of Treaty Ratification in the US Senate, by C. Lawrence Evans and Walter Oleszek, pp.90-111.

Recommended. Louis Fisher, *Constitutional Conflicts between Congress and the President*, Chapter 8: Treaties and Executive Agreements. Blackboard.

February 26 (7)
Case Study to Prof.

Oversight and War Powers

Oversight. One of the most important functions of Congress is to conduct oversight of programs managed by the Executive branch, and to ensure that Congressional intent is being implemented. How does Congress exercise this authority in the field of foreign affairs?

Readings: 1. Norman Ornstein, "When Congress Checks Outs," in *Foreign Affairs*, Vol 85, Issue 6, pp. 67-82, November/December 2006. Aladin.

2. Campbell et al, Chapter 6: Alarms and Fire Patrols: Legislative Oversight in Foreign and Defense Policy, by Christopher Deering.

Recommended: Matthew McCubbins and Thomas Schwartz, "Congressional Oversight Overlooked: Police Patrols versus Fire Alarms," in *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol 2, no 1, (Feb 1984). Aladin.

War Powers. What does the Constitution say about the authority to declare war? What has been the precedent? How has the authority evolved and why? What are some of the unintended consequences of the War Powers Resolution? Does it represent Congressional abdication or compromise?

Readings: 1. Louis Fisher, *Politics of Shared Power*, Chapter 6: War Powers and Foreign Affairs, pp. 177-217. Blackboard.

2. Campbell et al, Chapter 1: The War Powers: No Checks and No Balances, by Louis Fisher.

3. Louis Fisher, *Constitutional Conflicts*, Chapter 9: The War Power. Blackboard.

Recommended: Fisher, *Presidential War Power*
Stevenson, *Congress at War*, 2007.

March 5 (8) **Midterm Exam.**

March 12 (9)

The International Affairs Budget

The power of the purse is considered one of the strongest authorities Congress has to influence public policy. How is it used in foreign policy? How does it affect foreign policy making and the conduct of foreign relations?

Readings: 1. Fisher, *The Politics of Shared Power*, Chapter 7: Budgetary Control. Blackboard.

2. Lisa Martin, *Democratic Commitments*, Chapter 5: US Food Aid Policy: The Politics of Delegation and Linkage, pp. 112-146. Blackboard.

3. Carol Lancaster, *Transforming Foreign Aid: US Assistance in the 21st Century*, Chapter 3: The Politics of Foreign Aid. Blackboard.

4. Louis Fisher, *Constitutional Conflicts Between Congress and the President*, Chapter 7: The Power of the Purse, (section on “Combining Purse and Sword: The Iran-Contra Affair” starting on page 214. Blackboard.

Spring Break: March 16-20.

March 26 (10)

Case Studies: When Congress Leads – An Activist Congress

Congress, as an institution or its foreign policy leaders, can take the lead, often bringing a reluctant White House around to its position. This is Congress at its most assertive. Examples include the Nunn-Lugar Nonproliferation program and sanctions against apartheid South Africa.

Readings: 1. Crabb 2000, Chapter 1: Legislative Activism and Foreign Affairs, pp. 30-50.

2. Crabb and Holt, 1991, Chapter 9: Congressional Assertiveness and Foreign Affairs – A Balance Sheet, pp 261-303. (Repeat) Blackboard.

3. Stephen R. Weissman, *A Culture of Deference: Congress' Failure of Leadership In Foreign Policy*, Chapter 5: Transcending the Culture: Congressional Leadership and El Salvador, the Philippines, and South Africa. Blackboard.

April 2 (11) Case Studies: When Congress Follows – A Passive Congress

In many situations, Congress defers to White House leadership. Can we identify when it is more likely that Congress will be passive? What are the factors that result in such a situation?

Readings: 1. Crabb 2000. Chapter 2: Congressional Acquiescence in the Foreign Policy Field, pp. 63-79.

2. Weissman, *Culture of Deference*, Chapter 1: A Congressional Culture. Blackboard.

3. Weissman, *Culture of Deference*, Chapter 2: Giving the President the Benefit of the Doubt: The Congressional Opposition and US Policy Toward El Salvador, 1980-1984. Blackboard.

April 9 (12) Case Studies: Other Modes of Engagement

More often than believed, Congress and the Executive branch work cooperatively and collaboratively, even if behind the scene. Does such cooperation enhance US foreign policy? Are there policy trade-offs that result from cooperation?

Readings: 1. Crabb 2000. Chapter 3: Bipartisan Collaboration in the Decision-Making Process, pp. 81-109.

2. Crabb 2000. Chapter 4: The Division of Labor Model of Executive-Legislative Relations, pp. 111-135.

3. Bert. A. Rockman, "Reinventing What for Whom? President and Congress in the Making of Foreign Policy, in *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, Vol 30, No. 1, March 2000, pp. 133-154. Aladin.

April 16 (13) Case Study Presentations

April 23 (14) Case Study Presentations

Papers Due – No later than May 7.