

Dr. Paul Lenchner
 Office: SS-161
 Hours: M--R, 8:25--9:25 a.m
 and by appointment

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PSCI 441: CONGRESSIONAL POLITICS

TEXTS

Richard F. Fenno, *Going Home: Black Representatives and Their Constituents*
 D.B. Hardeman and Donald C. Bacon, *Rayburn: A Biography* (selections on reserve)
 Steven S. Smith, Jason M. Roberts, and Ryan J. Vander Wielen, *The American Congress*, 6th
 ed. (S, R, & VW)

SCHEDULE

DATES	TOPICS	READINGS
Jan. 19--21	Introduction	S, R, &VW, ch. 1
Jan. 26--28	Constitutional and Historical Perspectives	S, R, & VW, ch. 2
Feb. 2--4	Congressional Elections	S, R, & VW, ch. 3
Feb. 9--11	Member Goals, Resources and Strategies	S, R, & VW, ch. 4
Feb. 16--23	Black Representatives: Introduction and Pioneers	Fenno, chs. 1-3
Feb. 25	Examination	
Mar. 2--9	Black Representatives: Contemporary Perspectives	Fenno, chs. 4-7
Mar. 11--25	Parties and Leaders	S, R, & VW, ch. 5; <i>Rayburn</i> , pp. 28-34 and ch. 21
Mar. 30--Apr. 1	Committees	S, R, &VW, ch. 6
Apr. 6	Rules and Procedures	S, R, & VW, ch. 7
Apr. 8	Examination	
Apr. 13--22	Congressional Committee Simulation	Materials to be distributed
Apr. 27--29	Congress and the President	S, R, & VW, ch. 9
May 4	Interest Groups and Lobbyists	S, R, & VW, ch. 11
May 6	Congress and Budget Politics	S, R, & VW, ch. 12
Exam Week	Final Examination	

Please Note

- Modifications in this syllabus are possible. If any changes are made, they will be announced in class.
- This syllabus may be accessed through the Department of Political Science website. Go to www.tamu-commerce.edu/psci. Click on Faculty, then Paul Lenchner, and finally Political Science 441.

PSCI 441: OBJECTIVES, REQUIREMENTS, AND ADVICE

OBJECTIVES

This course focuses on the United States Congress. During the term we will describe, analyze, and evaluate the performance of Congress and its members. By the end of the term, you will have a substantial understanding of Congress. You should appreciate the challenges facing our national legislature and the accomplishments of Congress in discharging its responsibilities. At the same time, an enhanced awareness of the shortcomings of Congress should also be gained. In sum, you will be equipped to make informed evaluations of congressional politics and policymaking.

REQUIREMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

There are readings from our textbooks and supplemental sources. Each of the readings is informative and well-written, and I expect that members of the class will keep current with them. The readings and related material will be the focus of most class meetings. For the course to succeed, I'm counting on your willingness to participate in discussions of them. Please note that students who participate regularly and effectively in class will be rewarded. To state the obvious, you can't participate if you're not in class. The more absences you have, the harder it will be to earn participation credit.

1. There will be two examinations during the term and a comprehensive final examination. The heart of each examination will be essay questions.
2. There will be a congressional simulation in which all class members will take an active part.
3. There will be a trip to the Sam Rayburn Library and the Rayburn House in Bonham, Texas.
4. There will be several videos on Congress.
5. There will be a number of written assignments in addition to the examinations. Each student will write three reaction papers after viewing congressional proceedings on C-SPAN. There will be an analysis of a scholarly article on Congress. Two papers will be written in conjunction with the congressional simulation. Detailed instructions will be distributed for each assignment.

Grades will be calculated as follows:

First Examination	15.0%
Second Examination	15.0%
Final Examination	20.0%
C-SPAN Papers	15.0%
Article Analysis	15.0%
Simulation Essays and Participation	<u>20.0%</u>
	100.0%

Please note: In addition to participation credit, occasional extra credit written assignments may be given. It is advisable to take advantage of these opportunities. In cases of borderline grades, a good attendance record will be beneficial. If the class is not conscientious in completing the readings, I reserve the option of giving quizzes and including performance on them in calculating grades.

ADDITIONAL POLICIES

1. **Attendance.** Attendance is expected for all classes and is mandatory for some sessions, including the class trip and simulation sessions. If a mandatory class is missed, a substantial penalty will be assessed unless *written verification* is submitted to document that the absence was for a legitimate reason. Legitimate reasons include illness severe enough to require professional treatment, death in the immediate family, participation in University activities, and legal obligations. Make-up assignments will be given at the instructor's discretion.
2. **Lateness for class.** It is rude and disruptive to arrive late for class. While anyone can be a minute or two late on rare occasions (say, once during the term), chronic lateness is unacceptable. Everyone is expected to be in class on time. The door will close very soon after the start of class, and late arrivals may be locked out. To avoid problems and the embarrassment of being locked out, arrive on time.
3. **Proper behavior in class.** All students at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See the *Student's Guide Handbook*, Policies and Procedures, Conduct.) Besides arriving on time and staying for the whole class, these tenets include the following:
 - Not leaving the room during class except for major emergencies. Use the restroom before, not during, class.
 - Being attentive during class. Having personal conversations, doing work for another class, sending text messages, surfing the Internet, listening to music, or reading personal materials is unacceptable.
 - Using laptops only to take notes.
 - Not eating, wearing hooded garments, or engaging in personal grooming during class.
 - Turning off cell phones and all other electronic devices (except for laptops being used to take notes). If your cell phone goes off during class, it may be taken from you. If you text during class, you may be removed from the room.
 - Showing respectful tolerance for views other than your own. A university is a place for thoughtful exchange of ideas. There is no justification for disrespectful behavior when someone else is speaking.
4. **Students with disabilities.** The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination law that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe that you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Office of Disability Resources and Services, Gee Library, Room 132, 903-886-5835/5150, StudentDisabilityServices@tamu-commerce.edu

GUIDELINES AND ADVICE

1. The likelihood of success on an assignment is greatly enhanced if three simple guidelines are kept in mind: (1) follow instructions; (2) write in clear, correct English; and (3) submit your work on time.
2. Feel free to visit with me. If you are having problems or concerns in class, *please come in early*. The longer you delay, the harder it will be to address your needs. I will work with you in developing strategies appropriate for your situation. But I cannot help if I'm unaware of your concerns. So please come in.
3. Don't feel that you must have a problem to stop by my office. If you want to pursue matters raised in class more fully, discuss other political topics, or simply wish to chat, please come in. I'll be glad to visit with you.
4. A good way to reach me is through e-mail (Paul_Lenchner@tamu-commerce.edu). I will make every effort to respond promptly to messages.
5. I want every student to do well in this class. The better you do, the happier I will be. Let's have a positive, rewarding experience.