

Political Science 409/509: Spring 2009
U.S. Congress and Public Policy

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Class Times and Locations:
T/Th 9:30-10:45, Holmstedt #14
Office Hours: Monday 11:30-12:30, Tuesday 11:45-
1:00, or by appointment. I usually respond to e-
mails very quickly.

E-mail: cklarner@isugw.indstate.edu

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, THE FIRST STEP IS TO CHECK THE SYLLABUS.

Course Readings

I will assign readings as the course goes on. This will give me a chance to see how the class is going as we move along so I can alter it if necessary. All readings will be posted on Blackboard so that books need not be purchased.

Overview of Course / Course Outline

1. Overview of how Congress works
The input-output model: what does Congress produce and why?
Overview of significant legislation
2. How are laws made?
From an American Government textbook.
3. What do Political Scientists know about patterns in roll-call voting and what do they tell us?

Papers can be written on the following topics

4. How does the committee system operate?
5. How do Congressional elections work?
Erikson & Wright, from Congress Reconsidered
6. What is the impact of public opinion on policy making?
Bartels' article
7. What is the impact of interest groups and social movements on the policy making process?
8. What is the impact of political parties on the policy making process?
9. What is the impact of legislators' ideology on the policy making process?
10. What impact does the president have on law making?
11. Assessing criticisms of how Congress works.
How much pork is there?

Optional topics: students can decide if they want to cover these topics

12. Does there have to be descriptive representation of racial and ethnic minorities in Congress for the interests of racial and ethnic minorities to be represented?
13. Does there have to be descriptive representation of women in Congress for the interests of women to be represented?
14. Topics on state legislatures

Grading

Your final grade will be determined by the following work.

1. Exams: 40% of grade: There will be five tests, and I will drop your lowest score. These will be short answer and essay in format. You can only make up a missed midterm or final with an excused absence. You must contact me as soon as possible if you miss an exam and wish to make it up. Makeup tests will be all essay and extremely hard. The class as a whole may choose when to have these tests, as long as they are spaced out about equally throughout the semester, with one being on the day of the final exam.

January 20th, 2009 addition: the class has decided on February 3rd, February 26th, March 24th and April 14th as the four class days.

2. Three Papers: 30% of grade (10% each). These will be a minimum of 1500 words in length and can be as long as you want. These are to be handed in using Blackboard's Digital Dropbox feature (this is under "tools" in Blackboard). No hardcopy is to be turned in. They are to be in Microsoft Word 2003 format. Papers are due at 3:00 PM the day before the discussion day in question. Late papers will lose 5% of the percentage grade of the paper per day. Papers will be returned with your grade using the Digital Dropbox feature of Blackboard, and it is your responsibility to get them there. Wait three days after the due date of a paper before asking me if I've received it.

It is your responsibility to make sure that I have received and graded your papers. If you don't get a graded paper back, e-mail me about it and ask. No paper will be accepted after the last class day (i.e., this does not mean the final exam day).

If you are absent from class and you did a paper for that day, you lose 10% from your paper grade, unless you have a university excused absence.

You may pick a paper topic on the lists that come around. Not more than a certain number of students (to be determined in class) can pick a paper topic. Students not picking papers on these days will have their paper due dates assigned to them by me.

IF YOU FORGET WHAT PAPER UNIT YOU ARE SIGNED UP FOR, DO NOT CONTACT ME. LOOK AT THE EXCEL SHEET POSTED ON BLACKBOARD THAT HAS THIS INFORMATION. It is titled "PaperUnitsAssignedToStudents."

3. Participation / In-Class Writing: 30% total. Your participation grade will be determined by how much you speak during class discussion and your participation in the in-class simulation of how Congress works. **NOTE: YOU CAN'T GET THE PARTICIPATION PORTION OF YOUR GRADE IF YOU DON'T COME TO CLASS, NO EXCUSES.** In class writing assignments will also be a component of this part of your grade.

NO LAPTOPS OR CELL PHONE USE / TEXTING IN CLASS AT ANY TIME. I will deduct participation points from students who are texting, using laptops for purposes that don't relate to the class, or engaged in other activities that disrupt class or their ability to learn in class. I reserve the right to not announce this in class (this would disrupt class), but to merely note it in my records.

4. Class Attendance: If you miss five or more days of class, you will automatically receive a failing grade. I will take attendance three minutes after the hour. If you miss the first four days of class, you cannot take the class, no exceptions. I will not deal with excused absences. It doesn't matter why you miss class, you can't pass if you have six or more absences. The only excused absences are for university activities.

If you come in after I take attendance, you will only receive a "half attendance" score. If you get to class after 25 minutes of class, you will receive an "absence."

If you have three or more absences by the time midterm grades are due, I will notify you by e-mail the number of absences I have for you.

DO NOT CONTACT ME ABOUT MISSING CLASS AND DO NOT TRY AND EXCUSE YOUR ABSENCES. DO NOT ASK ME WHAT YOU MISSED WHEN YOU WERE ABSENT FROM CLASS.

Grades for graduate students: graduate students will write a 20 page research paper on a topic of their choice due on Friday May 1st. This will be worth one-third of their grade, and the other grades will be adjusted down proportionately. This means that the exams will be worth 6.67 percent of your total grade each, all four exams will be worth 26.67 percent of your grade, short papers will be worth 6.67 percent of your grade each (all three will total 20 percent), and your participation grade will be worth 20 percent of your overall grade.

IF YOU WANT SPECIAL CONSIDERATION ABOUT SOMETHING, E-MAIL ME YOUR REQUEST OR TALK TO ME IN PRIVATE. THIS IS NOT TO BE DISCUSSED DURING CLASS.

I use standard break points for determining grades.

Percent	Grade	Percent	Grade	Percent	Grade	Percent	Grade
90-100	A	80-85	B	70-75	C	60-65	D
85-90	B+	75-80	C+	65-70	D+	0-60	F

Requests for a grade change must be submitted in writing. No discussion of changing a grade will be allowed before a full description in writing of the student's concern has been submitted. This request for a re-grade must be submitted in the body of an e-mail. In addition, you must give me any materials pertaining to the re-grade before I will start to reconsider your grade. All materials pertaining to the re-grade (i.e. your written statement and the material to be re-graded) must be received by me within one day of my handing the material back to the class. The more specific your description of your concerns, the higher the chance your grade will be changed. A simple statement that you do not think your grade is fair will not result in a higher grade.

Maximizing Learning

It is important for students to come to class. Important announcements are made in class. It is students' responsibility to get this information from their classmates when they miss class.

It is very important for students to take notes over lectures. It saves you time when studying for the midterm and final, and is an essential life skill.

I expect students to do all the readings due for a class and to read them carefully.

Please feel free to talk to me about the content of the class whenever you see me outside of class. E-mail is an excellent way to communicate with me. If you feel shy about asking questions in class or making suggestions, feel free to e-mail me or talk with me after class.

Respect for Other People

Respect for other people, by not interrupting them, listening carefully to them, and acknowledging their ideas by responding to them is expected. Under no circumstances are students to belittle the ideas of other people although you are encouraged to disagree.

Asking Questions about Grades / Notifications of Class Absences

It is your responsibility to be in class everyday. If minor changes are made to the syllabus, for example, these changes will be announced in class. You are responsible for knowing this information by coming to class.

If you wish to ask me questions about your grade or attendance, send me an e-mail. I don't bring my grade records to class.

Cheating and Plagiarism

Cheating on tests includes (but may not be limited to) copying answers from another student, supplying answers to another student, obtaining unauthorized copies of the exam, and so forth. Plagiarism is the representation of someone else's work as your own. One should use quotation marks and citations when quoting from another source. One should also use citations when using another's ideas, even if you do not use their words. Cheating and plagiarism in this class will be punished to the maximum extent possible, which will entail, at a minimum, receiving a "0" on the assignment where plagiarism was evident, and may also result in a failing grade for the course. I electronically archive all papers students turn in, and use the software "TurnItIn" to detect plagiarism.

Students are encouraged to review the University's Academic Dishonesty Policy found in the Student Code of Conduct.

Disability Accommodations

Go to the link http://www.indstate.edu/humres/affactdiversity/ADA_Final_Policy.htm for the University's disability policy.

Academic Freedom

According to the American Association of University Professors 1940 statement on academic freedom "teachers are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject." What academic freedom entails is further clarified in the following passages.

It is not appropriate for professors to indoctrinate: to dogmatically assert that propositions that are uncertain are fact. But, as stated by the AAUP "indoctrination occurs only when instructors dogmatically insist on the truth of propositions by refusing to accord their students the opportunity to contest them." It is appropriate for a professor to assert that a proposition is true if this is based on the professor's study and research. Professors should note when there is controversy about a topic within their discipline, but are not required to do so. It is also a fundamental error to assume that materials assigned by a teacher are endorsed by a teacher.

Professors are free to select material and ideas in class that in her or his professional opinion is most relevant to understanding the phenomena under study. They may not omit the teaching of major ideas in their discipline that are generally perceived as absolutely essential, but such ideas are rare in the social sciences. An instructor has the freedom to introduce a broad and diverse number of subjects to a class if they deem that they are relevant to the subject matter at hand.

These passages were adapted from the AAUP's statements about academic freedom (<http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/issues/AF/>).

Writing Assignment Instructions

Find three articles or books that are related to your topic to help you answer it. These must all be academic articles. Utilize the library search engines that you were informed about in class to find these. Your sources should be from within the last ten years (i.e., 1999 or later). Read these articles/books, and write about the information in them that pertains to your question. Most of your words should talk about what are in these articles.

Your paper should be at least 1500 words, and have a bibliography within the same document (the bibliography doesn't count towards your word limit). A document is posted on Blackboard (called "02APSASStyleManual") that shows you exactly how to cite things in your bibliography and text.

Try and write as concisely as possible, and not take up your paper with "filler" intended to reach the word minimum. Do not plagiarize, but also DO NOT QUOTE other's words. I want you to speak with your own voice. Paraphrase what the article or books says and attribute ideas to the source you obtained them from. Check your grammar and spelling.

Write your paper in Microsoft word. Title your paper's file name with your last name first, then your first name, then the date you turned your paper in (year, number of month (always two digits), number of day (always two digits)). For example, if you look at your paper in its folder on your computer it should look like "KlarnerCarl2007_08_23.doc." (Do not type in ".doc," that might just appear there if you were looking at it.) Be sure and capitalize the first letters of your last and first names.

Papers for a particular unit are to be discussed on the last day of a unit (see list of dates on syllabus) and are due at 3:00 PM the day before the class the paper will be discussed in. You are to address one of the questions that were provided in the list of paper assignment topics for each unit.

Papers are due through the "Digital Dropbox" on Blackboard. Do not hand in a hardcopy.

Grading Rubric for Paper

Students should read the following so you understand exactly how I grade papers, or if you want to improve your paper writing in this and other classes in general.

A grading rubric is a formal statement by a teacher about what he or she expects from a paper. It says exactly how grades will be computed from your paper.

Papers will start off with a 100% grade. If your paper has one of the problems listed below, the percentage listed by it will be deducted from your paper grade.

I. Administrative Instructions

1. Did the student follow instructions on how to title the file name of their paper? (2%)

Title your paper's file name with your last name first, then your first name, then the date you turned your paper in (year, number of month, number of day). For example, if you look at your paper in its folder on your computer it should look like "KlarnerCarl2007_08_23.doc." (Do not type in ".doc" yourself, that would just appear there if you were looking at it.) Be sure and capitalize the first letters of your last and first names.

2. Did the student write their paper in 2003 Microsoft Word, or did I have to ask for another copy? (2%)

3. Did the student use the Digital Dropbox on Blackboard for getting the paper to me? (5%)

Papers are due through the Digital Dropbox on Blackboard.

Wait three days after the due date of the paper before asking me if I've received your paper.

4. Did the student send me a bibliography as part of their paper or as a separate file (i.e., I want you to send your paper and your bibliography to me as one word document). (2%)

5. Did the student hand in the paper late? (5% for every day late)

If you're absent from class and you did a paper for that day, you lose 10% from your paper grade, unless you have a university excused absence.

6. Paper too short? The body of text for this paper should be at least 1500 words in length (this comes to about two pages). Your title and bibliography do not count toward your word total. (% deduction equals the % of words your paper is too low by)

II. Form of Paper

II. A. Grammar

12. Are there spelling errors? (1% each)

13. Are there grammatical errors? (1% each)

14. Has the student written as concisely as possible? Is the student trying to create "filler"? Are there unnecessary statements? (1% per sentence or $((\# \text{ unnecessary words} / 1500) * 100) = \% \text{ penalty}$)

15. Has the student used casual language (examples; used the word "I" in a sentence, use of conjugations, such as "don't"), used the phrase "in my opinion" (Note: you are encouraged to bring your opinion into the paper, but I'm trying to teach you a particular writing style that avoids speaking in the manner just identified. State your opinions in the form of assertions.) (1% each)

16. Are there awkward or poorly formed sentences? (1% each)

17. Are there passages that are vague or have ambiguous/unclear meanings? (1% each)

II. B. Organization

22. Is it clear what the student's thesis statement is? Does the student draw attention to their thesis statement to make it as easy as possible for the reader to identify? Your thesis statement should be in the first paragraph. (3%)

23. Does the student say where their argument will go and then walk the reader through it? (3%)

24. Are there passages that don't fit into the overall organization of the paper? (1% per sentence or $((\# \text{ words in passage} / 1500) * 100) = \% \text{ penalty}$)

25. Does each paragraph have one main point? (3% each)

26. No quoting is allowed in the paper. Instead of quoting from your sources, paraphrase what they say in your own words.

Has the student used quotations in his or her paper? $((\# \text{ words quoted} / 1500) * 100) = \% \text{ penalty}$

III. Content of Paper

III. A. Argument

Definition of an argument: a connected series of statements intended to establish a proposition.

You should come up with at least one major argument in support of your position. It can either be an argument you came up with, one from class or one from another source outside of class.

31. Did not address the topic of the paper assignment. (10%)

In general for papers, avoid talking about other countries, unless you are making an explicit comparison between other countries and the United States (this will often be done in class). For example, don't talk about Canadian studies of race and traffic stops. This is a class about the United States.

Also, do not talk about material in an upcoming unit if it is related to the current unit (i.e., don't talk about same sex marriage when doing a paper for unit 13).

Don't do the assignment for the next paper or for an earlier paper.

Quality of Argument

What was the quality of their argument? The following considerations contribute to assessing the quality of an argument.

32. Did student explain his or her argument fully? Was it clear? (3%)

33. Are there contradictions in the argument? (3% each)

34. Are there unstated links in the argument / unconnected clauses in the argument? (3% each)

35. Are there assertions that are not backed up by evidence or argument? (3% each)

36. Are there statements that don't make sense because they contradict well known facts? (3% each)

III. B. Evidence

Definition of evidence: "Evidence" in this context means information observed about the world that can be used to support or reject your arguments. Different types of evidence include "facts," "observations," "information," "data," "documentation," and "statistics." You are probably in "argument" or "theory" mode (versus evidence mode) if you say the words "reason," "this causes," "one might argue," or "because."

Your evidence is extremely important to your paper grade. You should find three sources that pertain to the subject you are writing about, and then explain them in depth. Explain what was found in the article or book, and why the author came to the conclusions they came to. It would be a mistake to simply mention in a sentence a fact, and then cite a source as your source of evidence. The idea of gathering evidence is to find new information not presented in class. If you want to refer to things made in class, be sure that you have spent at least 1500 words describing new information from outside of class.

41. Are there three citations in the paper from sources the student has looked up on their own? Are they relevant to the topic? Did the student talk about them? -12% each

42. Was the evidence cited correctly? You have to say right in the text where you're getting the information from; -3% each
Am I able to find the information from the citation with the citation the student has given me (in the case of an Internet citation, I should be able to find it instantly)? Furthermore, it should be clear what information in the text the citation applies to.

A student must use the American Political Science Association's format for citing. The relevant sections of the *Style Manual for Political Science* have been posted on Blackboard. This manual will tell you how to appropriately use citations for your paper.

43. Were factual assertions made which were incorrect? -3% each

44. Piece of evidence not explained in depth; -3% each if only code is given, can be up to -6%

Or, did the student not understand the evidence they were using?

45. Is a piece of evidence relevant to the topic at hand; -3% each

46. Is a piece of evidence of "low quality"? -3% each if only code is given, can be up to -6%

Examples of "low quality" pieces of evidence are as follows.

46a) a mere assertion about a state of affairs the author believes, and not an actual observation about something that exists. A citation of someone's opinion.

46b) Something vague, that isn't observable in the real world. For example, a definition. If a statement reports on something that has been measured, it is a good sign that the statement isn't vague.

46c) You are to use academic journal articles for these papers. An excellent source for academic journals is www.jstor.org.

Something that comes from a source that is not credible is a low quality piece of evidence. Here are some examples of web sites that are not credible: fairly unknown Web sites, Wikipedia, or partisan sites of any type, for example, sites that cater specifically to liberals or conservatives. Credible sources of evidence are things like A) government documents, B) main stream media sources, and C) academic articles in published journals. Even these should be treated with skepticism. These types of credible sources can all be accessed on the Internet, although in general the Internet is not a good source for reliable evidence.

You may use Internet sources (that do not belong to categories A, B or C) as a source of ARGUMENTS but not EVIDENCE.

46d) A source that is too old to be useful. You are to use information from journals from 1997 or later.

46e) Obvious information or information that was covered in class already.

You can use such evidence, but they won't count toward your three pieces of evidence.

46f) Anecdotal evidence.

*Note: for any one piece of evidence, the student can't lose more than 12%.

III. C. Plagiarism

Did the student engage in plagiarism?

If a student engages in plagiarism, they will get a large penalty, which will mean receiving 0% on the assignment, at a minimum.

Turnitin is used to identify plagiarism.

If a student uses any portion of a paper another student has written, they will be disciplined to the full extent of "the law."

Aside from taking another student's work, there are other types of plagiarism. These have different levels of seriousness. I list them with more serious types of plagiarism listed first.

Type 1 plagiarism; The worst is to take someone's words, without altering them, and pretend that they are your own.

Type 2 plagiarism; Another serious type is to take someone's words, use them in your paper without using quotations, but cite the author as the source of your ideas. Students often do this because they are unaware of the seriousness of what they are doing.

Type 3 plagiarism; Another serious type is to take someone's words, copy and paste them into your document, and then alter them slightly. Quotations are not used in this type of plagiarism and the original author is not given credit. Students often do this because they are unaware of the seriousness of what they are doing.

Type 4 plagiarism; Another serious type is to take someone's words, copy and paste them into your document, and then alter them slightly. Quotations are not used in this type of plagiarism but the original author is given credit. Students often do this because they are unaware of the seriousness of what they are doing.

Taking the ideas of someone else and pretending that they are your own, without stealing any of their language, is another form of plagiarism, and should be avoided.

IV. Misc.

51. Are there other problems with paper?

V. Other Advice

Avoid using the word "proved."