OBJECTIVE

Students should be able to describe the parts of the policy-making process they have covered in this class. Students should understand how government officials decide what policies to pursue.

BOOKS

There is a goodly chunk of reading in this course. We will be reading substantial portions of four paperbacks. (I have used as many as six, so don’t complain!) These "required" books are available at the University Bookstore.

- Davidson & Oleszek, Congress and Its Members (14th ed.)
- Dolan & Ezra, CQ's Legislative Simulation
- Mayhew, Congress: The Electoral Connection (2nd ed.)
- Oleszek, Congressional Procedures and the Policy Process (9th ed.)

The Davidson & Oleszek, Dolan & Ezra, and Oleszek are all published by CQ Press and are available as a package at the University Bookstore for $140.

All readings have also been ordered for reserve at the Melville Library.

BLACKBOARD SYSTEM: The University has some computer software – Blackboard – that will be used to maintain a web site for our course. Blackboard will allow students to check on exam dates, schedule changes, grades, and various announcements concerning the course. The Blackboard system is available from any computer with access
to the Internet. The Blackboard address is

\textit{http://blackboard.stonybrook.edu}

Logging into Blackboard requires a \textbf{Net ID} and a \textbf{password}:

You can check your Net ID & password by logging into the SOLAR system and opening the “Security and Personal Data” folder.

\textit{From time to time I will send email to the class, and you won't get it unless you check your stonybrook.edu email address.}

For additional assistance in using Blackboard, see the student consultants in the Main Library SINC site (S1460 Library).

\section*{COURSE REQUIREMENTS}

There will be three unit tests and a legislative simulation in the course.

Each of the unit tests will count as 25\% of the course grade; as a whole, the tests will comprise 75\% of the course grade. Test questions will typically consist of identification or essay questions. There will be no multiple choice questions.

There will generally be \textbf{NO} make-up tests except under the most extraordinary circumstances as determined by the instructor. “Extraordinary circumstances” consist of student illness, death in the family, or something of a similar nature. “My alarm did not go off” or “my car did not start” will not suffice. In any case adequate documentation will be required. If a student is ill, a note that the student visited the infirmary will \textit{not} be sufficient; a doctor or nurse must indicate that the student was \textit{unable} to take the test at the regular time.

I have indicated in the Reading Assignments where the tests will fall during the term. I will post Blackboard notices and make class announcements before each of the first two unit tests.

There will be no final exam as such, i.e., \textit{no cumulative exam} at the end of the term. University regulations require the last unit test be given during exam week, however, when our final exam would ordinarily be scheduled. For us that means the third test will be on \textbf{Monday, May 19th from 9:45 to 10:45 AM in our regular classroom}. We will not need to use the full final exam period available since this will \textbf{not} be a cumulative exam.

The legislative simulation will count as 25\% of the course grade. Further details are given after the Reading Assignment section of the syllabus.
BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Anything you might ever want to know about Congress may be found in Congressional Quarterly’s comprehensive *Guide to Congress*. The *Guide* is available in the Melville Library’s Reference department.

The best ongoing coverage of Congress is found in *CQ Weekly* and *CQ*'s annual *Almanac*. *CQ Weekly* is available online (as an ‘E-Journal’) through our Library website for relatively recent years.

Michael Barone’s *Almanac of American Politics* comes out every two years and has very nice snapshots of the demographics and politics of congressional districts. It is in the Reference department. The current edition is available online through our Library website (in the ‘Reference Shelf’).
READING ASSIGNMENTS

Organization and Introductory Remarks
   Note: on average each topic will take 2 or 3 class periods (except for Rules, which will take a couple of weeks)

I. Early History
   Colonial period - Continental Congress and Articles of Confederation
      Davidson and Oleszek {D&O} - chapter 2
   Constitutional Convention and early operation of Congress
      D&O - chapter 2

II. Internal Operations
   Overview - How a Bill Becomes a Law
      D&O - chapter 8
   Committee System
      D&O - chapter 7
   Party Leadership
      D&O - chapter 6
   Budgeting
      D&O - chapter 14 (pp. 412-29: “Congressional Budgeting”)
      Oleszek {O} - chapter 2

Unit Test #1 at this point (~ 6th week of term - week of March 3rd)

Rules
   O - chapters 3-8

Unit Test #2 at this point (~ 9th week of term - week of March 31st)

Voting
   D&O - chapter 9

III. The Electoral Environment

Recruitment, Campaigning, and Styles
   D&O - chapters 3-5
The Electoral Connection
Mayhew - all (including Foreword and Preface!)

Unit Test #3 - Monday, May 19th from 9:45 to 10:45 AM in our regular classroom
ON THE DOLAN & EZRA SIMULATION

We will run a simulation this term to give the class some hands-on experience in acting as a member of the House of Representatives. Dolan & Ezra’s Legislative Simulation will be our starting point.

Everyone will read Part I, “A Legislative Primer.”

Part II, “Legislative Research Materials,” presents some basic information on two bills, one on health care and one on transportation, each of which was handled by a different House committee (health care by the Energy & Commerce Committee and transportation by the Transportation & Infrastructure Committee). I will assign students to particular committees during the first week or so of the term. In general I will randomly assign students to play the role of a designated member on one of the two committees. The complete committee roster for Energy Committee is on page 40 of the simulation booklet; the roster of the Transportation Committee is on page 77. Students will need to study the research materials only for their assigned bill.

There are two positions on each committee of special importance, the committee chair and the ranking minority member. To help me fill these leadership slots, I will need volunteers. If you wish to be considered for one of these positions, you should email me in the first few days of the term stating that you would like to be assigned to a committee leadership position and telling me why you feel qualified. (If you are selected as a leader, I will decide the committee on which you will serve and the party you will lead.) The payoff? Previous leaders who did a good job have gotten an “A” for the simulation. (Note: you can get an “A” without being a leader; regular members can get this grade as well!)

I will use Blackboard’s email to tell students what their assignment will be.

After finding out which committee member you will play in the simulation and what district you represent, you will need to do research to find out about your voting record, ideology, and district characteristics. Keep in mind that you are trying to find information about members and their districts in the late 1990's when the two bills were considered by Congress (between 1997 and 1999), not the members and districts as they are now, over a decade and a half later.

The simulation booklet has a “Questionnaire on your Member of Congress” {p. 15}. You will fill out this questionnaire on your assigned member and his or her district, answering the questions laid out there to the best of your ability. (Type out the questionnaire and the answers.) There is a helpful list of information sources in the booklet on member biographies, campaign finance, district characteristics, and so forth.
Give me a printed copy. I will give a specific deadline during the term, but my initial goal would be to have this done **February 24th**. Get started on this early; there is no reason to make yourself crazy gathering the information close to the deadline.

Everyone will be responsible for asking two questions of each witness appearing before your committee. The witness list for each committee appears in the booklet (p. 41 for the Energy Committee and p. 79 for the Transportation Committee). The actual testimony appears online at [http://www.cqpress.com/library/gia/witness testimonies.htm](http://www.cqpress.com/library/gia/witness testimonies.htm). You will print up a report for me with the witness, the two questions, the expected answers, and the rationale for each question. (You may actually find something unclear; you may wish to support a friendly witness; you may wish to destroy an unfriendly one; etc) There is no set length on this, but it will probably run something like a half page per witness. Once again, I will give a specific deadline during the term, but my initial target is to have this done by **March 10th**, two weeks after the initial member report.

Everyone will be responsible for offering two amendments to his or her bill at the committee stage. (The bills are in the booklets - pp. 28-39 for the Energy Committee and pp. 74-6 for the Transportation Committee.) The text of the proposed amendments should be included in a single “Dear Colleague” letter you will write to explain why the proposed amendments are desirable. The letter should be sent via email to your committee chair if you are a Republican representative and to the ranking minority member of the committee if you are in the Democratic minority on your committee. Also email a copy to me. (The Blackboard announcement assigning students to committees will identify the committee leaders.) There is no given length for a letter, but in general they should be about two pages. The initial target here, subject to a specific deadline given during the term, will be to get this done by **March 26th**.

The chair and ranking minority member of each committee will sort through the suggested amendments from their fellow Republican or Democratic colleagues and make a decision on the two amendments from each side that will actually be presented at a simulated markup session of the committee. The selected amendments should be printed out by the committee leaders for distribution at the markup to all committee members. The markups will be done in class with each committee conducting its session on a designated
day. (Non-committee members may be observers during markup sessions if they wish.) The markup sessions will be run by the committee chairs with normal markup debate rules. The tentative dates are April 7th (for the Transportation) and April 9th (for Energy). The leaders will meet separately with their respective party members at the beginning of class to get things organized; then the committee will assemble to have the markup session during the rest of the period. There will be a recorded vote for each amendment in the markups. (Thus, attendance will in effect be taken for committee members.)

We will have a simulated floor debate on each bill in which the entire class will participate and vote. The floor simulations will be during the last week of classes (May 7th & May 9th). The Energy bill will be considered first, and the Transportation bill will be taken up at the next class. There will presumably be recorded votes as part of the floor simulations, so be there or you will be recorded as absent.

The majority and minority committee leaders will act as floor managers for their side; there will be a maximum of twenty minutes of general debate to be divided equally and controlled by the floor managers (who will have previously arranged for speakers); a maximum of two 'preprinted' amendments may be offered on the floor by each side; these will be limited to one minute of debate in favor and one in opposition, though one may move to 'strike the last word' to get more time. There must be enough preprinted amendments for the entire class. I will be Speaker and parliamentarian.

At the conclusion of the floor consideration of the bills, each member will write a letter to constituents, wrapping up the session that consists only of these two bills. The letter will explain what the bills were about in terms constituents might understand. It will offer a rationale for the member’s floor vote on each bill. (Remember there are recorded votes you will need to justify.) The letter will explain in more detail what the member was up to in his or her committee activity. Finally, it will assess whether or not the Senate should make further changes in the next session of this Congress on the bill that went to the member’s committee. The letter should be printed out and given to me by noon on Friday, May 16th in my office.
EXTRA CREDIT EXERCISE!

The “debt limit” (the amount of debt that the Secretary of the Treasury is authorized to issue by selling Treasury bonds and such to investors) is a topic that has reared its ugly head in Congress from time to time. There are various steps the Secretary can take to put off the day of reckoning, but there will come a time when the debt limit must be increased by Congress or the US will be forced to default on part of its debt, i.e., some bond holders won’t get the funds they expect when the bonds mature and should be paid off by the Treasury.

Write a paper of about seven double-spaced pages on the debt limit. How long have we had such a limit? How has Congress handled debt limit votes in the past? (As you can imagine, this is typically not a vote members look forward to, and so they have tried on occasion to avoid having to cast a vote directly on this.) Finally, how is the issue being handled currently?

The payoff will be a maximum of five points added to your term average. The exercise is due (printed out - not emailed) by noon on May 14th at my office.
The University Senate Undergraduate and Graduate Councils have authorized that the following required statements appear in all teaching syllabi (graduate and undergraduate courses) on the Stony Brook Campus.

**Americans with Disabilities Act:**

If you have a physical, psychological, medical or learning disability that may impact your course work, please contact Disability Support Services, ECC (Educational Communications Center) Building, room128, (631) 632-6748. They will determine with you what accommodations are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation is confidential.

**Academic Integrity:**

Each student must pursue his or her academic goals honestly and be personally accountable for all submitted work. Representing another person's work as your own is always wrong. Faculty are required to report and suspected instances of academic dishonesty to the Academic Judiciary. For more comprehensive information on academic integrity, including categories of academic dishonesty, please refer to the academic judiciary website at [http://www.stonybrook.edu/uaa/academicjudiciary/](http://www.stonybrook.edu/uaa/academicjudiciary/)

**Critical Incident Management:**

Stony Brook University expects students to respect the rights, privileges, and property of other people. Faculty are required to report to the Office of Judicial Affairs any disruptive behavior that interrupts their ability to teach, compromises the safety of the learning environment, or inhibits students' ability to learn.