

## Course Information

Course Location	Meeting Days	Time
Oak 112	Monday, Wednesday, & Friday	11:15-12:05pm

## Instructor Information

Instructor	E-Mail	Office Location	Hours
Dr. Jason S. Byers	<a href="mailto:jason.byers@uconn.edu">jason.byers@uconn.edu</a>	Oak 433	10 - 11 MW

## Syllabus

**Course Home**  
Everything you need for this class (announcements, resources, assignments and other activities) will be posted on HuskyCT. Please plan to check the page regularly.

**Course Description**  
This course is an introduction to the political and legislative process of the United States Congress. The course will focus on a semester-long legislative simulation in which students will play the role of United States Senators. Students will organize the legislature, form parties and caucuses, select their own leaders, draft their own bills, debate, and vote on legislation. The first part of the course will consist of traditional lectures to familiarize students with how Congress works; the rest of the semester will be primarily devoted to the legislative simulation.

**Learning Outcomes**  
Together, we will strive for your individual and collective success in achieving the learning outcomes of this course. At the conclusion of this course, students will be able to:

- Understand the evolution of the legislative process through American history.
- Describe prominent concepts, theories, positions, and problems at stake in the study and practice of legislative politics.
- Demonstrate an appreciation for:
  - The role of Congress in lawmaking and society.
  - The goals and constraints shaping legislative behavior.
  - The legislative process, its logic, and the potential implications of reforms.
  - The value of information and the importance of agenda setting in policymaking.
- Improve communication and listening skills.
- Improve collaborative skills.
- Improve ability to plan and execute a strategy.
- Become an effective representative and legislator.

**Course Materials**  
To maximize access to this class, we will use textbooks, scientific research papers, and other resources, with a focus on the following:

- Primary Text (TUSC): Adler, E. Scott, Jeffery A. Jenkins, and Charles R. Shipan. 2021. [The United States Congress](#). 2nd Edition. W. W. Norton & Company. This textbook is available for purchase in the bookstore, but students are welcome to purchase the book elsewhere.

**University Policies**  
The University of Connecticut is committed to protecting the rights of individuals with disabilities and assuring that the learning environment is accessible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability or pregnancy, please let me know immediately so that we can discuss options. Students who require accommodations should contact the Center for Students with Disabilities, Wilbur Cross Building Room 204, (860) 486-2020 or <http://csd.uconn.edu/>.

**Policy Against Discrimination, Harassment and Related Interpersonal Violence**  
The University is committed to maintaining an environment free of discrimination or discriminatory harassment directed toward any person or group within its community – students, employees, or visitors. Academic and professional excellence can flourish only when each member of our community is assured an atmosphere of mutual respect. All members of the University community are responsible for the maintenance of an academic and work environment in which people are free to learn and work without fear of discrimination or discriminatory harassment. In addition, inappropriate amorous relationships can undermine the University's mission when those in positions of authority abuse or appear to abuse their authority. To that end, and in accordance with federal and state law, the University prohibits discrimination and discriminatory harassment, as well as inappropriate amorous relationships, and such behavior will be met with appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the University. Additionally, to protect the campus community, all non-confidential University employees (including faculty) are required to report sexual assaults, intimate partner violence, and/or stalking involving a student that they witness or are told about to the Office of Institutional Equity. The University takes all reports with the utmost seriousness. Please be aware that while the information you provide will remain private, it will not be confidential and will be shared with University officials who can help. More information is available at [equity.uconn.edu](http://equity.uconn.edu) and [titleix.uconn.edu](http://titleix.uconn.edu).

**Absences from Class Due to Religious Observances and Extra-Curricular Activities**  
Faculty and instructors are expected to reasonably accommodate individual religious practices unless doing so would result in fundamental alteration of class objectives or undue hardship to the University's legitimate business purposes. Such accommodations may include rescheduling an exam or giving a make-up exam, allowing a presentation to be made on a different date or assigning the student appropriate make-up work that is intrinsically no more difficult than the original assignment. Faculty and instructors are strongly encouraged to allow students to complete work missed due to participation in extra-curricular activities that enrich their experience, support their scholarly development, and benefit the university community. Examples include participation in scholarly presentations, performing arts, and intercollegiate sports, when the participation is at the request of, or coordinated by, a University official. Students should be encouraged to review the course syllabus at the beginning of the semester for potential conflicts and promptly notify their instructor of any anticipated accommodation needs. Students are responsible for making arrangements in advance to make up missed work. For conflicts with final examinations, students should contact the Dean of Students Office.

**Office of Emergency Management on Emergency Preparedness**  
In case of inclement weather, a natural disaster, or a campus emergency, the University communicates through email and text message. Students are encouraged to sign up for alerts through <http://alert.uconn.edu>. Students should be aware of emergency procedures, and further information is available through the Office of Emergency Management at <http://publicsafety.uconn.edu/emergency/>.

**Course Organization**  
Modes of learning in this class (whether assessed directly or indirectly) require a range of skills and abilities. Every student's success is important to me, and I am happy to work with you to develop strategies for success in this class.

- Exam (20 Points).** There will be one exam to assess your mastery of the material covered in the course. The exam will take place during class and will be completed individually.
- Congressional Simulation (70 Points).** Over the course of the semester, the class will conduct an immersive simulation that is focused on the legislative process from the perspective of a U.S. Senator. There are multiple components of the simulation that will be produced throughout the semester.
  - A Legislative Profile (5 Points).** Each member of the U.S. Senate represents a state, which can include just over half a million or just under forty million citizens. This task asks you to create your member profile. Other students will be relying on your profile to learn more about you as a legislator. Focus on the characteristics that would likely affect your own priorities and behavior as an elected representative.
  - A Legislative Agenda (5 Points).** This task asks you to prepare a memo to distribute to your colleagues. In this memo you should begin with how you view your role as a representative, provide information about your personal issue priorities, and discuss how you intend to advance your issue goals given that there are many other legislators and issues competing for attention.
  - Quiz on Senate Procedure (5 Points).** The goal is to encourage you to familiarize yourselves with the rules for the simulation as well as legislative procedure in the Senate.
  - Committee Research Report (5 Points).** This assignment asks you and your colleagues to research your committee's primary issue responsibilities.
  - Major Bill (5 Points).** This assignment asks you to research and draft an original and significant bill of your choosing. It should have accompanying text explaining the problem that the bill address, how the bill will address the problem, and the rationale for the provisions of the bill and any cost estimates.
  - Campaign Advertisement and Reelection Strategy Memo (25 Points).** This assignment is based on a rather fantastic hypothetical event – the Constitution has been amended reducing the number of Senators in each state to one. In order to win reelection, you will have to face the other Senator from your own state, regardless of what party they are in. For this assignment, write a memo to your campaign manager outlining your reelection strategy against your fellow Senator. Focus on reelection tasks you have completed (and why you have chosen the tasks you have performed, given your party and state). Also address what your opponent's shortcomings might be. Additionally, create a campaign advertisement (for yourself) that mentions at least three reelection tasks, and try to make it as realistic as possible. (For example, don't say you "performed X reelection task." Instead, say something like "As Chair of the [name] Committee, Congressman Z has fought to ensure [something] for all residents of [state].") Note that the three reelection tasks can also include reelection tasks your opponent did not do; if you choose to mention your opponent, make it as realistic as possible (without ad hominem attacks).
  - Campaign Appearance (10 Points).** There will be no final exam. Instead, on the day of class set aside for final exams, we will listen to campaign advertisements and hold mock "campaign appearances." Each Senator will present his or her campaign advertisement and will then have five minutes to hold a "campaign appearance" wherein they will summarize the most important aspects of his or her case for reelection. Your goal will be to make the strongest case possible for your reelection in the allotted time. (Focus on explaining, given the contours of your state, why the things you did make a strong case for your reelection.)
  - Participation (10 Points).** Regular attendance and participation are absolutely essential to make a simulation-based course work. Your contributions to in-class activities not only provide opportunities for learning and evaluation, they also help other students learn. Accordingly, students will be evaluated based on frequency and quality of in-class participation. Students are expected to attend all classes. Failure to attend class will negatively affect your participation grade unless the absence is excused. If you cannot attend class due to an important family or medical reason, please notify the instructor. You will be responsible for getting notes from a classmate.

**Attendance Policy**  
Missing class will adversely affect your grade in many ways. Please look carefully at the syllabus during the first week of class. Should there be a conflict between any class session or assignment due date and a religious holiday or observance, athletic contest, or another academic or personal commitment please let me know well in advance. Religious observance warrants a legitimately excused absence. If you must miss class for any reason, excused or otherwise, you are responsible for getting notes from a classmate and turning in all work on time. Each student will be granted 2 unexcused absences.

**Grading**

Category	Points
Attendance / Participation	10 Points
Exam	20 Points
Congressional Simulation	70 Points

## Schedule

A tentative class schedule of topics, readings and due dates is available below. Minor adjustments will be made as needed, on the course web page. Please double check the web page before doing each reading assignment.

### Week 1

- Topics**
- Representation and Governing in a Separated System
  - Constitutional Foundations of Congress
- Date Readings**
- 8/28 Introduction
- 8/30 [TUSC Chapter 1](#)
- 9/1 [Federalist 51](#)  
[The US Constitution](#)

### Week 2

- Topics**
- The Historical Development of Congress
- Date Readings**
- 9/4 NO CLASS (Labor Day)
- 9/6 [TUSC Chapter 2](#)
- 9/8 [TUSC Chapter 2](#)

### Week 3

- Topics**
- Congressional Elections
- Date Readings**
- 9/11 [TUSC Chapter 3](#)
- 9/13 [TUSC Chapter 3](#)
- 9/15 Congressional Simulation - Introduction and The Draft
- Assignments**
- A Legislative Profile

### Week 4

- Topics**
- Representation
- Date Readings**
- 9/18 [TUSC Chapter 4](#)
- 9/20 [TUSC Chapter 4](#)
- 9/22 Congressional Simulation - Who are you as a Senator?
- Assignments**
- A Legislative Profile DUE
  - A Legislative Agenda

### Week 5

- Topics**
- Committees
- Date Readings**
- 9/25 [TUSC Chapter 5](#)
- 9/27 [TUSC Chapter 5](#)
- 9/29 Congressional Simulation - What's Your Agenda?
- Assignments**
- A Legislative Agenda DUE

### Week 6

- Topics**
- Parties
- Date Readings**
- 10/2 [TUSC Chapter 6](#)
- 10/4 [TUSC Chapter 6](#)
- 10/6 Congressional Simulation - Organizing the Legislature I (Forming Caucus & Electing Leaders)

### Week 7

- Topics**
- The Legislative Process in both Chambers
- Date Readings**
- 10/9 [TUSC Chapter 7](#)
- 10/11 [TUSC Chapter 7](#)
- 10/13 Congressional Simulation - Organizing the Legislature II (Committee Assignment)
- Assignments**
- Quiz on Senate Procedure DUE

### Week 8

- Topics**
- Exam 1
- Date Readings**
- 10/16 Exam 1
- 10/18 Exam 1
- 10/20 Exam 1

### Week 9

- Topics**
- Legislative Effectiveness
- Date Readings**
- 10/23 [TUSC Chapter 8](#)
- 10/25 [TUSC Chapter 8](#)
- 10/27 Congressional Simulation - Committee Meeting I
- Assignments**
- A Committee Report

### Week 10

- Topics**
- Congress and the President
- Date Readings**
- 10/30 [TUSC Chapter 9](#)
- 11/1 [TUSC Chapter 9](#)
- 11/3 Congressional Simulation - Committee Meeting II
- Assignments**
- A Committee Report DUE
  - A Major Bill

### Week 11

- Topics**
- Congress and the Courts
- Date Readings**
- 11/6 [TUSC Chapter 11](#)
- 11/8 [TUSC Chapter 11](#)
- 11/10 Congressional Simulation - Bill Introduction
- Assignments**
- A Major Bill DUE

### Week 12

- Topics**
- Congressional Simulation - Committee Action
- Date Readings**
- 11/13 Congressional Simulation
- 11/15 Congressional Simulation
- 11/17 Congressional Simulation

### Week 13

- Topics**
- Thanksgiving Break
- Date Readings**
- 11/20 NO CLASS (Thanksgiving Break)
- 11/22 NO CLASS (Thanksgiving Break)
- 11/24 NO CLASS (Thanksgiving Break)

### Week 14

- Topics**
- Congressional Simulation - Committee Action / Floor Action
- Date Readings**
- 11/27 Congressional Simulation
- 11/29 Congressional Simulation
- 12/1 Congressional Simulation

### Week 15

- Topics**
- Congressional Simulation - Floor Action / Campaign Appearance
- Date Readings**
- 12/4 Congressional Simulation
- 12/6 Congressional Simulation - Campaign Appearance
- 12/8 Congressional Simulation - Campaign Appearance
- Assignments**
- Campaign Advertisement an Relection Strategy Memo DUE