

**Congress, Politics and Elections in  
a Time of Crisis**

FALL 2020

Tu 10am-11:30am; Thurs 10 am-11:30am (California time)

Instructor: John Lawrence, Ph.D.

Email: john.lawrence@ucdc.edu

Office hours: By arrangement

### **Instructor**

John Lawrence has taught at UCDC since 2013, when he left Capitol Hill after a 38 year career as a staff member in the U.S. House of Representatives, the last eight as Chief of Staff to Speaker Nancy Pelosi. He is the author of *The Class of '74: Congress After Watergate and the Roots of Partisanship* (2018, Johns Hopkins University Press) as well as numerous articles on Congress and national politics. He blogs on American politics at **DOMEocracy** (johnlawrence.wordpress.com) and tweets at @johnlawrencedc. He also is the author of numerous Sherlock Holmes published short stories. He has a Ph.D. in American History from the University of California (Berkeley), and an undergraduate history degree from Oberlin College.

### **Description**

This course will focus on the organization and operations of Congress, the American government and the electorate during a period in which four historic forces are colliding simultaneously: the coronavirus pandemic and related societal disruptions; the widespread political/social responses to multiple incidents that document systemic racism affecting policing and other public policies; the electoral season; and lastly, the sharply divided public attitudes reflected in the hyper-partisan atmosphere of US politics and society more broadly..

Congress and other branches of the U.S. government were designed nearly two and a half centuries ago under circumstances and reflecting values and philosophies that bear little relationship to contemporary America. All of these institutions have evolved over time in response to changing conditions domestically and internationally. The American electorate had undergone significant evolution as well, especially in the last half century. All of these developments place dramatic and consequential pressures on government, elected officials and voters. How are they responding and what can we anticipate, based on historical precedent, will change as a result of these unprecedented, simultaneous crises?

Class meetings will involve discussions of recent developments in the political landscape leading up to and following the November 2020 elections; the implications of the election for congressional reorganization and reform; potential new directions for public policy resulting from the 2020 election results; and reform of the political system.

Class presentation and discussions will include discussion board postings and comments that will be analyzed and critiqued by class members.

In addition to the instructor, there will be periodic guest presenters including former members of Congress, congressional officers, congressional staff, journalists, congressional scholars and others. Students should have completed all reading for each week prior to the class meeting and be prepared to ask questions of the instructor and special guest speakers (when appearing live).

### **Zoom Policies**

This [class/meeting] is being conducted over Zoom. As the host, I may choose to record a class, and I would like to record the interviews that I conduct with guests. No one else will be able to record through Zoom, and no recording by other means is permitted.

**Please send me an email ([john.lawrence@ucdc.edu](mailto:john.lawrence@ucdc.edu)) informing me of your consent/disapproval to record the class.**

- If you have privacy concerns and do not wish to appear in the recording, do not turn on your video.
- If you also prefer to use a pseudonym instead of your name, please let me know what name you will be using so that I know who you are during the session. If you would like to ask a question, you may do so privately through the Zoom chat by addressing your chat question to me only (and not to “everyone”), or you may contact me by another private method.
- You may also choose to use a generic Zoom background.
- If you have questions or concerns about this, please contact me.

### **Requirements and Evaluation**

Course requirements are: (1) regular class attendance and participation; (2) one research paper on an assigned topic; (3) discussion board postings and comments (4) questions to be prepared for guest speakers.

### **Grading**

**Research Paper): 30%**

**DUE: November 20, 2020**

**Discussion board postings and comments (20%)**

**DUE: Several Dates**

**Short essays: 30%**

**DUE: Several Dates**

**Class Participation (20%)**

*NOTE: All times are Pacific (California) times.*

## Module 1

### Tuesday, September 21, 10-11:30 AM: Class Introduction

All students should participate LIVE on Zoom in this introductory class during which we will introduce ourselves and our expectations for the quarter, review readings and assignments, and discuss the syllabus. Zoom access is through Canvas.

#### Reading

- Thomas Edsall, “I Fear That We Are Witnessing the End of American Democracy” *New York Times* (August 27, 2020)  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/26/opinion/trump-republican-convention-racism.html>
- Robin Wright, “Is America a Myth?” *New Yorker* (September 8, 2020)  
[https://www.newyorker.com/news/our-columnists/is-america-a-myth?utm\\_source=nl&utm\\_brand=tny&utm\\_mailing=TNY\\_Daily\\_090820&utm\\_campaign=aud-dev&utm\\_medium=email&bxid=5bd672753f92a41245dd6875&cndid=28521238&hasha=af15ef986debd79e48ddc9da0f3e31c&hashb=824ed78d2fe8a858cbb521827cf5c577705b22e4&hashc=029507b3b0f7985f5cba63cb86cca538ddb82b22ec27762af42c24acb27a42b9&esrc=AUTO\\_NYB&utm\\_term=TNY\\_DailySeptember 8, 2020](https://www.newyorker.com/news/our-columnists/is-america-a-myth?utm_source=nl&utm_brand=tny&utm_mailing=TNY_Daily_090820&utm_campaign=aud-dev&utm_medium=email&bxid=5bd672753f92a41245dd6875&cndid=28521238&hasha=af15ef986debd79e48ddc9da0f3e31c&hashb=824ed78d2fe8a858cbb521827cf5c577705b22e4&hashc=029507b3b0f7985f5cba63cb86cca538ddb82b22ec27762af42c24acb27a42b9&esrc=AUTO_NYB&utm_term=TNY_DailySeptember 8, 2020)

## Module 2

### Thursday, September 23, 10-11:30 AM: Welcome to Washington!

#### Reading

- The Politics and History of the DC Statehood Vote (Brookings)  
<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/fixgov/2020/06/25/the-politics-and-history-of-the-d-c-statehood-vote/>

#### Videos: Tour the U.S. Capitol

- Senate tour: <https://www.c-span.org/video/?192302-4/senate-chamber>
- House tour: <https://www.c-span.org/video/?192301-2/capitol-us-house-representatives> From 17:42-1:35:20

**Assignment for Discussion Board: Describe the most interesting fact you learned about the Capitol from the videos.**

#### Guest Speaker

Hon. Paul Irving, Sergeant at Arms, U.S House of Representatives

### Module 3

Tuesday, September 29, 10-11:30 AM: Is this Election on the Level?

#### Reading

- Garrett Graff, “8 Big Reasons Election Day 2020 Could Be a Disaster” *Politico Magazine* (July 24, 2020)  
<https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2020/07/24/2020-election-disaster-perfect-storm-372778>
- Tim Wirth and Tom Rogers, “How Trump Could Lose the Election -- and Still Remain President,” *Newsweek* (July 3, 2020)  
<https://www.newsweek.com/how-trump-could-lose-election-still-remain-president-opinion-1513975>
- Barton Gellman, “The Election That Could Break America” *The Atlantic* (September 2020)  
[https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2020/11/what-if-trump-refuses-concede/616424/?utm\\_source=email&utm\\_medium=cr&utm\\_campaign=oct-cover-actives&utm\\_content=20200923&silverid-ref=MzEwMTU3NTUyNzMyS0](https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2020/11/what-if-trump-refuses-concede/616424/?utm_source=email&utm_medium=cr&utm_campaign=oct-cover-actives&utm_content=20200923&silverid-ref=MzEwMTU3NTUyNzMyS0)
- Michael Anton, “The Coming Coup?” *The American Mind* (September 4, 2020) <https://americanmind.org/essays/the-coming-coup/>
- Louis Jacobson, “Six Scenarios for Confusion in Counting the 2020 Ballots: Not Just Scary Campfire Stories Any More” Cook Political Report (May 25, 2020) <https://cookpolitical.com/analysis/national/national-politics/six-scenarios-confusion-counting-2020-ballots-not-just-scary>
- Jeffrey Davis, “How Donald Trump Could Steal the Election” <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/03/coronavirus-election/608989/> *The Atlantic* (March 29, 2020)
- “The Hive Interview: Could Trump Steal the Election?” <https://www.vanityfair.com/news/2020/06/the-hive-interview-could-trump-steal-the-election> (includes radio interview)
- *Supplemental Reading: U.S. Department of State, “Pillars of Russia’s Disinformation and Propaganda Ecosystem” (August 2020)* [https://content.govdelivery.com/attachments/USSTATEBPA/2020/08/05/file\\_attachments/1512230/Pillars%20of%20Russias%20Disinformation%20and%20Propaganda%20Ecosystem\\_08-04-20%20%281%29.pdf](https://content.govdelivery.com/attachments/USSTATEBPA/2020/08/05/file_attachments/1512230/Pillars%20of%20Russias%20Disinformation%20and%20Propaganda%20Ecosystem_08-04-20%20%281%29.pdf); U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Report on Russian Interference, [https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/18/us/politics/senate-intelligence-russian-interference-report.html?campaign\\_id=60&emc=edit\\_na\\_20200818&instance\\_id=0&nl=breaking-news&ref=cta&regi\\_id=73194429&segment\\_id=36403&user\\_id=705d1752109a90521ae844fd01fe91d5](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/18/us/politics/senate-intelligence-russian-interference-report.html?campaign_id=60&emc=edit_na_20200818&instance_id=0&nl=breaking-news&ref=cta&regi_id=73194429&segment_id=36403&user_id=705d1752109a90521ae844fd01fe91d5)

#### Video

- John Lawrence interview with former Sen. Tim Wirth (D-CO) and Sen. Tom Udall (D-NM) (September 3, 2020)  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nqiT\\_yrxFVi4yb\\_1l2RYkZTLKajrjYh4/view?ts=5f53e2b9](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nqiT_yrxFVi4yb_1l2RYkZTLKajrjYh4/view?ts=5f53e2b9) -0r -  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nqiT\\_yrxFVi4yb\\_1l2RYkZTLKajrjYh4/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nqiT_yrxFVi4yb_1l2RYkZTLKajrjYh4/view?usp=sharing)

➤ View from 13:34 through 59:15.

**Essay: Explain why you find the arguments about election interference persuasive or inflated. Do they seem designed to describe realistic scenarios? Influence the voting positively or negatively?**

#### **Module 4**

**Thursday, October 1, 10-11:30 AM: Why Run?**

##### **Reading)**

- Bonior Chapter 1
- Clark Chapter 6
- Clem, Chapter 1
- Jenrette Chapter 6
- Lawrence Chapter 3
- Loomis Chapter 8
- O'Neill Chapter 5
- Ramey and Haley, Chapters 17-18

##### **Guest Speaker**

Hon. Bob Carr (D-MI), Congressman 1975-1981; 1983-1993; Adjunct Professor, Graduate School of Political Management at George Washington University, Adjunct faculty at Brookings Institution's Executive Education

**Please prepare questions for Rep. Carr**

#### **Module 5**

**Tuesday, October 6, 10-11:30 AM: What do they do?**

##### **Reading**

- Life in Congress: The Member Perspective,” Congressional Management Foundation. Download the file and click on the report:<http://congressfoundation.org/projects/life-in-congress/the-member>

perspective.  "Life in Congress: The Member Perspective" (PDF - 2.37 MB)

**Guest speaker**

Teresa Leger Fernandez, Democratic Nominee for Congress (NM-3)

**Please prepare questions for Ms. Leger Fernandez**

**Module 6**

**Thursday, October 8, 2020: What We They *Thinking?* Designing Congress**

**Reading**

- Jack N. Rakove, "From the Old Congress to the New," in Julian Zelizer, *The American Congress*, New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin. 2-22.

**Guest speaker**

Professor Richard D. Brown, Board of Trustees Distinguished Professor, History, University of Connecticut

**Written Assignment: You are a member of the Constitutional Convention in 1788. Knowing what we have learned about the United States in the last 232 years, what would you change in the original Constitution; would your change have been acceptable to the Framers; how would it have produced a "more perfect Union"? Be sure to explain what you are changing, why it was included in the first place, and whether your change would have helped or complicated securing ratification. Due: Monday, October 12**

**Module 7**

**Tuesday, October 13, 2020, 10-11:30 AM: The Modern Congress**

**Reading**

- Eric Rauchway, "The Transformation of the Congressional Experience," in Zelizer, 319-334.
- Rep. Jamie Raskin (D-MD), "Congress isn't just a co-equal branch. We're first among equals" Washington Post (May 10, 2019)  
[https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/congress-isnt-just-a-co-equal-branch-were-first-among-equals/2019/05/09/e3caa552-7206-11e9-9eb4-0828f5389013\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/congress-isnt-just-a-co-equal-branch-were-first-among-equals/2019/05/09/e3caa552-7206-11e9-9eb4-0828f5389013_story.html)

**Guest speaker:** Professor Julian Zelizer, Princeton University, author, *Burning Down the House: Newt Gingrich, the Fall of a Speaker, and the Rise of the New Republican Party* (2020) (pre-recorded)

## Module 8

Thursday, October 15, 10-11:30 AM: How Is Congress Organized?

### Reading

- Politico Guide to the Legislative Process (July 30, 2019)  
[https://www.politicopro.com/blog/guide-to-legislation?cid=promkt\\_19q3\\_corenews\\_legg](https://www.politicopro.com/blog/guide-to-legislation?cid=promkt_19q3_corenews_legg)
- Roger Davidson, Walter Oleszek, Frances Lee. *Congress and Its Members*. Chapter 8, Congressional Rules and Procedures,” 215-251

### Guest speaker

Charles Johnson, Former Parliamentarian, U.S. House of Representatives

**Assignment for Discussion Board: At C-Span Library, <https://www.c-span.org/30years/> find a hearing (legislative or oversight, House or Senate); watch a portion of it. Explain the topic, legislative/oversight, witnesses, participation. Was the hearing balanced? Informative? Is there a likely outcome? Due: October 20**

## Module 9

Tuesday, October 20, 2020 10-11:30 AM: Diversity on the Hill: Is Congress Changing, and Does It Matter?

### Reading

- Michele Swers, “Gender and Party Politics in a Polarized Era,”
- Kathryn Lyons, “Demeaned, overlooked, fighting back: What it’s like to be a woman in Congress” *Roll Call* (August 5, 2020)  
<https://www.rollcall.com/2020/08/05/demeaned-overlooked-fighting-women-congress-aoc/>
- Bridget Bowman, “House members are more diverse, but does the same go for staff? *Roll Call* (January 25, 2019)<https://www.rollcall.com/news/congress/house-members-diverse-go-staff>
- Readings from Black Americans in Congress and Hispanics in Congress
- DeSipio, Louis, “Demanding Equal Political Voice...And Accepting Nothing Less: The Quest for Latino Political Inclusion,” in *American Latinos and the Making of the United States: A Theme Study*, pp. 273-287.
- Claudine Gay, *The Effect of Minority Districts and Minority Representation on Political Participation in California*, (2001), Public Policy Institute of California [http://www.ppic.org/content/pubs/report/R\\_601CGR.pdf](http://www.ppic.org/content/pubs/report/R_601CGR.pdf)

### Video

<https://www.c-span.org/video/?192301-2/capitol-us-house-representatives>

From the beginning to 21:52

**Guest speaker**

Professor Menna Demessie, Ph.D., Vice President of Policy Analysis and Research at the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation; Visiting Professor, UCDC

**Discussion Board: Describe an issue that benefits by the diversity of membership in Congress; how does diversity complicate resolution of the issue; what differences between the House and Senate complicate reaching agreement on such issues?**

**Module 10**

**Thursday, October 22, 10-11:30 AM: Lobbying the Hill**

**Reading**

- Smith, et al., “Congress, Lobbyists and Interest Groups” in *The American Congress*, pp. 335-361
- Thomas Spulak, “What’s So Bad About Lobbyists Anyway?” *The Hill* (January 13, 2009) <https://thehill.com/business-a-lobbying/k-street-insiders/k-street-insiders/20174-whats-so-bad-about-lobbyists-anyway>

**Module 11**

**Thursday, October 27, 10-11:30 AM: Should the Majority Decide I? The Filibuster**

**Reading**

- William Dauster, “The Senate in Transition or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Nuclear Option,” *NYU Journal of Legislation & Public Policy* <http://www.nyujlpp.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/The-Senate-in-Transition-or-How-I-Learned-to-Stop-Worrying-and-Love-the-Nuclear-Option-19nyujlpp631.pdf>
- Richard Arenberg, “Unintended consequences of killing the filibuster” *The Hill* (August 18, 2020) <https://thehill.com/opinion/white-house/512512-unintended-consequences-of-killing-the-filibuster>
- Norm Ornstein, “The Smart Way to Fix the Filibuster” *Atlantic* (September 3, 2020) <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/09/fix-filibuster/615961/>
- Ronald Brownstein, “The End of the Filibuster—No, Really” *Atlantic* (July 20, 2020) <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2020/07/why-senate-filibuster-could-be-gone-2021/614278/>

**Video**



- “History of the Filibuster” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IK9rGQcwI7Y>
- John Lawrence interview with former Sen. Tim Wirth (D-CO) and Sen. Tom Udall (D-NM) (September 3, 2020)  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nqiT\\_yrxFVi4yb\\_I12RYkZTLKajrjYh4/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nqiT_yrxFVi4yb_I12RYkZTLKajrjYh4/view?usp=sharing) View from 59:16-1:15:00.

### **Guest speaker**

Ambassador Ira Shapiro, former Chief U.S. Trade Negotiator with Japan and Canada; former Senate staff; author, *The Last Great Senate* and *Broken: Can the Senate Save Itself and the Country?*

**Written Assignment: You are an incoming member of the U.S. Senate from a marginal seat. One of your first votes will be whether to modify the filibuster rule. If you vote yes, you will appear to diminish the traditional rights given to the minority, which could help your opponents to label you a run-of-the-mill partisan. If you vote against a change, it is likely you will be unable to achieve any of the legislative goals you promised voters you would deliver. Write a blog post to your constituents explaining your vote and your reasoning. Due: Monday, October 28**

## **Module 12**

**Tuesday, October 29, 10-11:30 AM: Differentiation and Denunciation**

### **Reading**

- Schudson, Michael, “Congress and the Media,” in Zelizer, American Congress, pp.650-662
- Susan Milligan, “Scare Tactics: Trump Focuses on Fear to Win” *U.S. News* (July 24, 2020) <https://www.usnews.com/news/elections/articles/2020-07-24/trump-focuses-on-fear-to-win-over-voters>
- Trump Messaging 2016, 2020:
  1. [https://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/05/us/politics/campaign%20has%20spent%20almost%20\\$20%20million%20over%20the%20last%20%20days%20on%20that%20ad%20and%20two%20other%20similar%20ones-in-first-ad-donald-trump-plays-to-fears-on-immigration-and-isis.html](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/05/us/politics/campaign%20has%20spent%20almost%20$20%20million%20over%20the%20last%20%20days%20on%20that%20ad%20and%20two%20other%20similar%20ones-in-first-ad-donald-trump-plays-to-fears-on-immigration-and-isis.html);
  2. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/21/us/politics/trump-portland-federal-agents.html>
  3. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/from-sleepy-joe-to-the-dystopian-candidate-how-trump-has-recast-his-attacks-on-biden/2020/07/18/5a6a3e36-c830-11ea-b037-f9711f89ee46\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/from-sleepy-joe-to-the-dystopian-candidate-how-trump-has-recast-his-attacks-on-biden/2020/07/18/5a6a3e36-c830-11ea-b037-f9711f89ee46_story.html)
  4. Trump 2020: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OXiPAI-\\_gyE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OXiPAI-_gyE)
- David Siders, “Democratic ad makers think they’ve discovered Trump’s soft spot” *Politico Magazine* (July 2, 2020)  
<https://www.politico.com/news/2020/07/02/democrats-ads-trump-341903>
- Biden Messaging

1. <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/meet-the-press/blog/meet-press-blog-latest-news-analysis-data-driving-political-discussion-n988541/ncrd1187041#blogHeader>
- Independent Messaging
  1. Lincoln project 2020: <https://www.yahoo.com/news/lincoln-project-ad-presents-brutal-042611927.html>

### **Congressional ads** (illustrative)

- Mark Kelly for Senate (Arizona)  
[https://www.washingtonpost.com/video/politics/mark-kelly-full-speed-ahead--campaign-2020/2019/02/12/b3760a42-a1d7-4a84-8300-f6697a5e769e\\_video.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/video/politics/mark-kelly-full-speed-ahead--campaign-2020/2019/02/12/b3760a42-a1d7-4a84-8300-f6697a5e769e_video.html)
- Martha McSally for Senate (Arizona)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fmLEZL5akbk>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=51dwdO7horU>  
<http://www.mcsallyforsenate.com/>

**In Class: Be prepared to critique ads for and against a congressional candidate; What are the ads trying to do? Are they successful? Are they explaining the candidate’s strength or criticizing the opponent?**

**Discussion Board: Write an ad for a specific candidate that you think would work and explain why.**

### **Guest speaker**

Mark Mellman, president, The Mellman Group

## **Module 13**

**Tuesday, November 3, 2020, 10-11:30 AM: Election Day**

### **Reading**

- Review of late polling
- “Seven Election Day Nightmares” *NYT* (September 9, 2020)  
[https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/09/opinion/election-security-trump.html?campaign\\_id=39&emc=edit\\_ty\\_20200909&instance\\_id=22028&nl=opinion-today&regi\\_id=73194429&segment\\_id=37668&te=1&user\\_id=705d1752109a90521ae844fd01fe91d5](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/09/opinion/election-security-trump.html?campaign_id=39&emc=edit_ty_20200909&instance_id=22028&nl=opinion-today&regi_id=73194429&segment_id=37668&te=1&user_id=705d1752109a90521ae844fd01fe91d5)
- Amy Gardner, “Barring a landslide, what’s probably not coming on Nov. 3? A result in the race for the White House” *Washington Post* (June 22, 2020)  
[https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/barring-a-landslide-whats-probably-not-coming-on-nov-3-a-result-in-the-race-for-the-white-house/2020/06/22/88ada5fa-b181-11ea-8758-bfd1d045525a\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/barring-a-landslide-whats-probably-not-coming-on-nov-3-a-result-in-the-race-for-the-white-house/2020/06/22/88ada5fa-b181-11ea-8758-bfd1d045525a_story.html)

- Elise Viebeck and Robert Costa, “Trump’s assault on election integrity forces question: What would happen if he refused to accept a loss?” *Washington Post* (July 22, 2020) [https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/trumps-assault-on-election-integrity-forces-question-what-would-happen-if-he-refused-to-accept-a-loss/2020/07/22/d2477150-caae-11ea-b0e3-d55bda07d66a\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/trumps-assault-on-election-integrity-forces-question-what-would-happen-if-he-refused-to-accept-a-loss/2020/07/22/d2477150-caae-11ea-b0e3-d55bda07d66a_story.html)
- Hannah Klain, Kevin Morris, Max Feldman, and Rebecca Ayala, “Waiting to Vote Racial Disparities in Election Day Experiences” Brennan Center at NYU (June 3, 2020 ) [https://www.brennancenter.org/sites/default/files/06/6\\_02\\_WaitingtoVote\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.brennancenter.org/sites/default/files/06/6_02_WaitingtoVote_FINAL.pdf)

## Module 14

**Thursday, November 5, 2020, 10-11:30 AM: What Happened? Red Mirage? Bradley Effect? Blue Wave?**

### Reading

- “Dem group warns of apparent Trump Election Day landslide” *Axios* (September 1, 2020); be sure to watch the video: <https://www.axios.com/bloomberg-group-trump-election-night-scenarios-a554e8f5-9702-437e-ae75-d2be478d42bb.html>
- “Trump Floats ‘Rigged Election’ As Democrats’ Concerns About Election Day ‘Red Mirage’ Grow” *Forbes* (September 2, 2020) <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jackbrewster/2020/09/02/trump-floats-rigged-election-as-democrats-concerns-about-election-day-red-mirage-grow/#aa8bb00559c7>
- David Graham, “The Blue Shift Will Decide the Election,” *The Atlantic* (August 10, 2020) <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/08/brace-blue-shift/615097/>

### Guest speakers

Norm Ornstein, American Enterprise Institute

Marianne LeVine, Senate reporter, *Politico*

**Class discussion: What was the biggest surprise – positively or negatively -- of the election, and why? How did the outcome influence your view of government?**

## Module 15

**Tuesday, November 10, 2020: “What Do We Do Now”?: Transition to Power Congressional Reorganization (leadership, committees, rules, etc.); potential presidential transition**

### Video

Excerpt from “The Candidate”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=myEpap3TxVs>

**Reading**

- John Lawrence, “Advice to Tuesday’s Winners: Your Aides Aren’t Decoration,” *Roll Call* (November 2, 2018)  
<https://www.rollcall.com/news/opinion/advice-winners-aides-decoration>
- Reading from the Transition Integrity Project

**Guest speakers**

Phil Schiliro, former director, White House Office of Legislative Affairs under President Barack Obama

Stacy Kerr, former executive assistant, Speaker Nancy Pelosi; Michael Steel, former communications director, Speaker John Boehner

**Module 16**

**Thursday, November 12, 2020, 10-11:30 AM: Should the Majority Decide II? The Electoral College**

**Reading**

- Alexander Kayssar, “How Has the Electoral College Survived for This Long?” *NYT* (August 3, 2020)  
[https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/03/opinion/electoral-college-racism-white-supremacy.html?campaign\\_id=39&emc=edit\\_ty\\_20200803&instance\\_id=20932&nl=opinion-today&regi\\_id=73194429&segment\\_id=35092&te=1&user\\_id=705d1752109a90521ae844fd01fe91d5](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/03/opinion/electoral-college-racism-white-supremacy.html?campaign_id=39&emc=edit_ty_20200803&instance_id=20932&nl=opinion-today&regi_id=73194429&segment_id=35092&te=1&user_id=705d1752109a90521ae844fd01fe91d5)
- Lawrence Lessig, “Confused Electoral College Crises: Replying to Wirth/Rogers in Newsweek” *Medium* (July 4, 2020)  
<https://medium.com/@lessig/confused-electoral-college-crises-replying-to-wirth-rogers-in-newsweek-9e1be5aa0339>
- “Abolishing The Electoral College Would Be More Complicated Than It May Seem” NPR (March 22, 2019)  
<https://www.npr.org/2019/03/22/705627996/abolishing-the-electoral-college-would-be-more-complicated-than-it-may-seem>
- Jesse Wegman, “The electoral college will destroy America” *NYT* (September 9, 2020)  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/08/opinion/electoral-college-trump-biden.html>

**Module 17**

**Tuesday, November 17, 2020, 10-11:30 AM.: The Disappearing Middle: Polarization and Partisanship**

**Reading**

- Stewart Spencer, “We Lost the Battle for the Republican Party’s Soul Long Ago” *NYT* (July 29, 2020)[https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/29/opinion/trump-republican-party-racism.html?campaign\\_id=39&emc=edit\\_ty\\_20200729&instance\\_id=20737&nl=opinion-today&regi\\_id=73194429&segment\\_id=34627&te=1&user\\_id=705d1752109a90521ae844fd01fe91d5](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/29/opinion/trump-republican-party-racism.html?campaign_id=39&emc=edit_ty_20200729&instance_id=20737&nl=opinion-today&regi_id=73194429&segment_id=34627&te=1&user_id=705d1752109a90521ae844fd01fe91d5)
- Drew DeSilver, “The Polarized Congress Of Today Has Its Roots In The 1970s,” Pew (June 12, 2014) <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/06/12/polarized-politics-in-congress-began-in-the-1970s-and-has-been-getting-worse-ever-since/>
- Michael Grunwald, “How Everything Became the Culture War” *Politico Magazine* (Nov-Dec, 2018) <https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2018/11/02/culture-war-liberals-conservatives-trump-2018-222095>
- Gerald Seib, “The Two Parties Aren’t Crazy, Just Changed” <https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-two-parties-arent-crazy-just-changed-1444673977>

### Audio

- Ezra Klein Vox interview of Stuart Stevens <https://www.vox.com/ezra-klein-show-podcast/2020/8/10/21361966/stuart-stevens-gop-republicans-trump-romney-ezra-klein>

### Optional Video

- View John Lawrence presentation at the Wilson Center <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y-7HenDxsVc> Minutes: 31:49-41:58; 54:40:00-59:00

### **Guest speaker**

Professor Frances E. Lee, Ph.D., Princeton University; author, *Insecure Majorities, Beyond Ideology, Sizing Up the Senate, The Limits of Party: Congress and Lawmaking in a Polarized Age* (2016)

## **Module 18**

**Thursday, November 19, 2020: Bean Counting 101: Budgets, Appropriations, Entitlements, CRs, Omnibuses, Minibuses, Sequestration, Fiscal Cliffs and Reconciliation**

### Reading

- Eric Patashnik, “Congress and the Budget Since 1974,” in Zelizer, *American Congress*, 668-686

- “The Dead Earmarks Society” *The Hill*, Feb. 15, 2019  
<https://www.rollcall.com/news/congress/pork-earmarks-making-comeback>
- David Winston, “As budget blues set in, get ready for a Democratic food fight” Roll Call (July 1, 2020)<https://www.rollcall.com/2020/07/01/budet-blues-set-get-ready-democratic-food-fight/>
- Asawin Suensaeng And Lachlan Markay, “Trump on Coming Debt Crisis: ‘I Won’t Be Here’ When It Blows Up” *Daily Beast* (December 5, 2018)  
<https://www.thedailybeast.com/trump-on-coming-debt-crisis-i-wont-be-here-when-it-blows-up>

### **Guest speakers**

Hon. Rosa DeLauro (D-CT), Member of the Appropriations Committee and candidate for chairman

Thomas S. Kahn, Professor, George Washington University Graduate School for Political Management; former Staff Director, House Budget Committee

**\*\*\*\* Paper Due: November 20, 2020 \*\*\*\***

■ **No Classes the Week of November 23 -- Thanksgiving**

### **Module 19**

**Tuesday, December 1, 2020: 10-11:30AM: The Imperial Presidency and the Resurgent Congress**

### **Reading**

- Emily Bazelon, “What Happens When a President and Congress Go to War?” *New York Times Magazine* (November 5, 2019)  
[https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/05/magazine/congress-president-impeachment.html?rref=collection%2Fbyline%2Ffamily-bazelon&action=click&contentCollection=undefined&region=stream&module=stream\\_unit&version=latest&contentPlacement=1&pgtype=collection](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/05/magazine/congress-president-impeachment.html?rref=collection%2Fbyline%2Ffamily-bazelon&action=click&contentCollection=undefined&region=stream&module=stream_unit&version=latest&contentPlacement=1&pgtype=collection)
- “Rewriting the Limits on Presidential Power,” CBS News (August 12, 2020) <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/rewriting-the-limits-of-presidential-powers/>
- James Surowiecki, “The Perils of Executive Action” *New Yorker* (August 8&15, 2016) <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/08/08/the-perils-of-executive-action>
- Ellen Nakashima, “‘It breeds resistance’: Even among conservatives, Trump’s use of presidential power causes alarm” *Washington Post* (September 29, 2018) <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/it-breeds-resistance-even-among-conservatives-trumps-use-of->

presidential-power-causes-alarm/2018/09/29/1769991a-bdbf-11e8-b7d2-0773aa1e33da\_story.html?utm\_term=.85b390b6dfc3

- Elizabeth Slattery and Andrew Kloster, *An Executive Unbound: The Obama Administration's Unilateral Actions* (Heritage, 2014)  
<http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2014/02/an-executive-unbound-the-obama-administrations-unilateral-actions>

## Module 20

Thursday, December 3, 2020: Module: Can This System Be Saved?

### Reading

- Readings from the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress website <https://modernizecongress.house.gov/about/membership>
- “How to Fix Politics in America” *Politico Magazine* (September 20, 2019) <https://www.politico.com/interactives/2019/how-to-fix-politics-in-america/>
- Lee Hamilton, William S. Cohen and Alton Frye, “How Congress can stop gerrymandering: Deny seats to states that do it” *Washington Post* (July 17, 2020) [https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/gerrymandering-redistricting-census-congress/2020/07/17/d1002146-c6f5-11ea-8ffe-372be8d82298\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/gerrymandering-redistricting-census-congress/2020/07/17/d1002146-c6f5-11ea-8ffe-372be8d82298_story.html)
- Congressional Problem Solvers Caucus, “Break the Gridlock” proposals (2018) [https://www.nolabels.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/break\\_the\\_gridlock\\_packet.pdf](https://www.nolabels.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/break_the_gridlock_packet.pdf)
- Parker Richards, “The People v. the U.S. Senate” *The Atlantic* (October 10, 2018) <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2018/10/senators-kavanaugh-represented-44-percent-us/572623/>
- Tom Davis, Martin Frost, and Richard Cohen, “The Way Forward” in *The Partisan Divide: Congress in Crisis*, 271-286.
- Frank Newport, “Bringing About More Compromise in Congress” Gallup (October 10, 2018) <https://news.gallup.com/opinion/polling-matters/243566/bringing-compromise-congress.aspx>

### Guest speaker

Rep. Derek Kilmer (D-WA), chairman, House Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress

**Assignment for Discussion Board: After reading the material for the week, prepare and post 2 questions for Rep. Kilmer. Due: Wednesday, December 2.**