

Draft Syllabus

The Congress and Politics in Washington

Tu 10am-1pm, Room 318

Instructor: John Lawrence, Ph.D

Email: JAL221B@gmail.com

Office: 325

Phone: 202-821-2378

Office hours: 2:00-3:30 Tuesday, and by appointment

Turnitin code: **19132351**

Instructor

John Lawrence has a Ph.D. in American History from the University of California (Berkeley), and an undergraduate history degree from Oberlin College. He is the author of *The Class of '74: Congress After Watergate and the Roots of Partisanship* (March 1, 2018, Johns Hopkins University Press). Dr. Lawrence served as a senior staff person in Congress for nearly four decades, the last eight as Chief of Staff to Speaker Nancy Pelosi. He has taught at UCDC since 2013. He blogs on American politics at **DOMEocracy** (johnlawrence.wordpress.com)

Description

This thematic research seminar explores the history of Congress—the *first* branch under the Constitution—and its role in making public policy, as well as other issues in contemporary politics and government. The subject matter will cover the relationship between Congress and the Presidency, the organization and operation of Congress, and the emergence of a highly polarized electorate and government. The course is also designed to provide students with a balanced understanding of the broader political process and the political environment in Washington. For the WINTER Quarter 2018, there will be a special on the results of the 2018 midterm election and the organization and early activities of the House of Representatives and Senate in 2019.

Goals and Objectives

The Washington Center emphasizes experiential learning and critical thinking and writing, which will be reflected in the work of this seminar.

Goal #1: Students will be able to relate their internship experience with the skills and substance learned in their course. Throughout the quarter, students will be asked to discuss activities undertaken during their internship

Goal #2: Students will attend at least one congressional hearing, a think tank seminar or lecture, or NGO/advocacy/nonprofit event.

Goal #3: Student will be required to prepare a briefing memo that describes the subject under discussion at the event, including any legislation or regulation under consideration, the prospects for passage or implementation, and the likely political reaction.

Goal #4: The two research papers will require both evidence-based research.

Class Hours

The course will meet on Tuesdays from 10am until 1pm. Room: 318. Attendance at class is mandatory. Students should schedule other activities, including those related to your internship, so as not to interfere with class meetings. Any request for an absence must be approved by the instructor in advance.

Students are encouraged to attend weekly UCDC Monday Night Policy/Politics Forums.

In the event of a weather emergency, UCDC follows the federal government's decisions about delays and closures.

Office Hours

Office hours will follow class on Tuesdays from 2:00-3:30 pm in 325 or by appointment. Students should schedule appointments with the instructor either in person or through email at: jal221B@gmail.com. All students are encouraged to meet with the instructor to discuss their research papers.

Requirements and Evaluation

Course requirements are: (1) regular class attendance and participation in discussions; (2) two research papers on an assigned topic; (3) one additional applied writing assignment; and (4) participation in an internship.

Student papers must comport with the original scholarship requirements of a UCDC research seminar. An account for this class has been created on Turnitin. The instructor will provide log in information.

Students are required to complete the weekly readings and participate in seminar discussions..

Classroom Conduct

- *Electronic devices of any type may not be used during this class unless specifically approved by the instructor.*

The University of California is committed to creating and maintaining a community where all individuals who participate in University programs and activities can work and learn together in an atmosphere free of harassment, exploitation, or

intimidation. Every member of the community should be aware that the University prohibits sexual harassment and sexual violence, and that such behavior violates both law and University policy. The University will respond promptly and effectively to reports of sexual harassment and sexual violence, and will take appropriate action to prevent, to correct, and when necessary, to discipline behavior that violates this policy on Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence.

Students who wish to speak confidentially about an incident of misconduct should contact UCDC's Counseling Services at UCDCCounseling@gmail.com. To report misconduct to ask questions about UCDC policies and procedures regarding misconduct, please contact the UCDC Title IX administrator, Josh Brimmeier (202-974-6214 or josh.brimmeier@ucdc.edu). Because the University of California is legally obligated to investigate reports of sexual misconduct, the confidentiality of reported misconduct cannot be guaranteed.

ADA Accommodations for Students

Any student requiring accommodations for class should inform the instructor at the first class meeting (if not earlier). In compliance with the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (Public Law 93- 112) and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-336), University of California policy prohibits unlawful discrimination on the basis of disability in its programs, services, and activities.

Grading

Research Papers (30% apiece)

Paper 1: DUE @ February 5, 2019 11:59PM

Paper 2: DUE @ March 5, 2019 11:59PM

Memo Writing Assignment (20%)

DUE: Anytime during the course

Class Attendance and Participation (20%)

Policy on Original Work and Use of Sources

UCDC has a zero-tolerance policy for cheating, plagiarism, and any other form of dishonest scholarship. Students should refer to their home campus Student Code of Conduct for the regulations that apply to them. The burden is on each student to know what behaviors constitute cheating and plagiarism. **Unfamiliarity with these behaviors is not an adequate defense. All papers must be submitted to Turnitin;** the code will be provided. If you are having problems doing so, alert the instructor immediately.

Papers

Two 8 page research papers will be required for this class. The first will focus on the new member of Congress has chosen to follow including the member's background,

platform, and recent campaign, as well as the outcome of the election, assignment of committees, and any legislation or other action initiated by the new member. The second paper will focus on reforms of the electoral process and the Congress itself that are designed to increase transparency and accountability, expand voting participation, and reduce partisanship and gridlock. For both papers, citations from the required readings as well as additional research will be required.

One 2-4 page paper will also be required that describes and summarizes a hearing, press conference, briefing or other public event attended by the student.

Students are strongly advised to speak with the instructor, and should meet with the UCDC methodology advisor to discuss any concerns about their research and writing skills.

Deadlines

Assignments are due at **11:59pm on the day noted** and should be posted on the Turnitin page as well as emailed using Word to the instructor at JAL221B@gmail.com. [The TURNITIN CODE for the class will be provided.](#)

Please note: Assignments arriving late will receive a reduction in grades. No extensions will be granted without *prior approval* of the instructor. Incompletes must be arranged in accordance with UC policy, before the end of the quarter/ semester.

Readings are available online and/or on Dropbox.

Week 1: Introduction to the Class: The State of American Politics

Reading

- Elaine Godfrey, "House Democrats Don't Know What to Make of Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez" *The Atlantic* (November 21, 2018)
https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2018/11/alexandria-ocasio-cortez-confounds-house-democrats/576307/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=politics-daily-newsletter&utm_content=20181121&silverid=MzI1NTY2MDA2NjQ5S
- Ronald Brownstein, "California Has Become a Crisis for the Republicans" *The Atlantic* (11/21/18)
<https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2018/11/democrats-greatly-reduce-gop-california-delegation/576559/>
- Norman J. Ornstein, "The Republicans Broke Congress. Democrats Can Fix It," *New Republic* (November 9, 2018)
<https://newrepublic.com/article/152127/republicans-broke-congress-democrats-can-fix-it>

- PETER BEINART, “**WILL THE LEFT GO TOO FAR?**” *ATLANTIC*, (DECEMBER, 2018)
[HTTPS://WWW.THEATLANTIC.COM/MAGAZINE/ARCHIVE/2018/12/DEMOCRATIC-PARTY-MOVES-LEFT/573946/?FBCLID=IWAR08H-1IDS9MINDSUFEFEV4RPWN-F45WGORY8YTHF33J8OZNI5HFLQ6WD0](https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2018/12/democratic-party-moves-left/573946/?fbclid=IWAR08H-1IDS9MINDSUFEFEV4RPWN-F45WGORY8YTHF33J8OZNI5HFLQ6WD0)

Week 2: Congress in American History

Reading

- Jack N. Rakove, “From the Old Congress to the New,” in Julian Zelizer, *The American Congress*, New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin. 2-22.
- Eric Rauchway, “The Transformation of the Congressional Experience,” in Zelizer, 319-334.
- Nelson Polsby, Chapter 5, “Overview: How Congress Evolves” in *How Congress Evolves*.

Week 3: Running for Congress

Reading

Note: Students will read some, not all, of these excerpts:

- Hardeman, Rayburn excerpt
- Cline, Five Profiles, excerpt
- Loomis excerpt
- Lawrence excerpt
- Fraser excerpt
- Jenrette excerpt
- Bonior excerpt
- O’Neill excerpt

Week 4: Visit to Capitol Hill

NOTE: This visit could take place another week based on the congressional session.

Reading

- <http://clerk.house.gov/about/house-chamber-brochure.pdf>
 - http://clerk.house.gov/about/house_chamber.aspx
- ***Students will meet at the SOUTH DOOR of the Capitol Building at 10:45 AM to tour the House floor and other areas of the building.***

Week 5: House and Senate Organization

Reading

- Roger Davidson, Walter Oleszek, Frances Lee. *Congress and Its Members*. Chapter 8, Congressional Rules and Procedures,” 215-251
- 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>
- Linda L. Fowler, “The Long Decline of Congressional Oversight” *Foreign Affairs* (Nov 15, 2018) https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2018-11-15/long-decline-congressional-oversight?cid=nlc-fa_fatoday-20181115

Week 6 : The Budget and Appropriations Process, and reports on first papers

Reading

- Eric Patashnik, “Congress and the Budget Since 1974,” in Zelizer, *American Congress*, 668-686
- “So ... This is Nixon’s Fault? (Politico (Oct 24, 2015) <http://www.politico.com/agenda/story/2015/10/richard-nixon-congressional-budget-control-act-history-000282>

Week 7: The Presidency and the Congress

Reading

- 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
- Erin Hawley, “Obama’s Curtain Call: A Look Back On A Legacy Of Executive Overreach” *The Hill* (December 24, 2016) <http://thehill.com/blogs/pundits-blog/the-administration/311608-obamas-curtain-call-a-look-back-on-a-legacy-of>

- 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>

Week 8: Is American Government Fair? Electoral College, Gerrymandering, and Minority Districts

Reading

- Ari Berman “Five myths about gerrymandering,” *Washington Post* (March 11, 2018) https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/five-myths/five-myths-about-gerrymandering/2018/03/08/f9d1a230-2241-11e8-badd-7c9f29a55815_story.html?utm_term=.a76145bca7e4
- 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
- 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.
- Christopher Ingraham, “This Is Actually What America Would Look Like Without Gerrymandering” *Washington Post* (January 13, 2016) <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2016/01/13/this-is-actually-what-america-would-look-like-without-gerrymandering/>
- John Sides, “Gerrymandering Is Not What’s Wrong With American Politics,” *Washington Post* (February 3, 2013) https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2013/02/03/gerrymandering-is-not-whats-wrong-with-american-politics/?utm_term=.f33d28146b5a

Optional Reading

- Smith, et al., *The American Congress*. Cambridge. Cambridge, “The American Congress: Modern Trends,” 1-25.
- David Lublin, *The Paradox of Reform*

Week 9: Partisanship and Gridlock

Reading

- 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>

- David Freedlander, “The Democrats’ Culture Divide” *Politico Magazine* November-December 2018)
<https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2018/10/30/democratic-party-culture-divide-wars-working-class-blue-collar-221913>
- Adam Rothman ‘Tribalism’ doesn’t explain our political conflicts” Washington Post (November 14, 2018)
https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2018/11/14/tribalism-doesnt-explain-our-political-conflicts/?utm_term=.bea35b86f225
- 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/>
- Gerald Seib, The Two Parties Aren’t Crazy, Just Changed
http://www.wsj.com/article_email/the-two-parties-arent-crazy-just-changed-1444673977-lMyQjAxMTE1NTEwNDgxMjQ2Wj

Optional Reading

- Frances Lee, *Insecure Majorities: Congress and the Perpetual Campaign*
- Nolan McCarty, Keith Poole and Howard Rosenthal, *Polarized America*

Week 10: Congressional Reform, and reports on second papers

Reading

- Congressional Problem Solvers Caucus, “Break the Gridlock” proposals (2018) https://www.nolabels.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/break_the_gridlock_packet.pdf
- *New York Times* Editorial Board, “America Needs a Bigger House” (November 10, 2018) **two parts**
 - (1)<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/11/09/opinion/expanded-house-representatives-size.html>
 - (2)<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/11/10/opinion/house-representatives-size-multi-member.html>
- Joseph J. Ellis, “Could the Founding Fathers Solve Today’s Political Gridlock?” *Los Angeles Times* (February 21, 2014)
<http://www.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-adv-ellis-congress-founders-filibuster-20140221-story.html>
- “46 Million Voted in Primaries This Year. That’s Not Enough” *Roll Call* (October 1, 2018). https://www.rollcall.com/news/opinion/46-million-voted-in-primaries-this-year-thats-not-enough?utm_source=rollcallheadlines&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=newsletters&utm_content=090418&bt_ee=xu2M4ZDBISRmqxXtBsUWmN52CBog+xi//uu1lbASZMoOwlfjb53VhFhNvaVef743&bt_ts=1538390796040&utm_source=rollcallheadlines&utm_medium=email

&utm_campaign=newsletters&utm_content=090418&bt_ee=A7T14w
 PMTubanmSI7NicdoTmNNNozSlw%2B7B8OWm8sdimjTNU0DAs3E
 %2FeiRS8suxo&bt_ts=1538390795947

- Richard Dorment, "22 Simple Reforms That Could Fix Congress Now," Esquire, 10/15/2014 <https://www.esquire.com/news-politics/news/a32838/congress-the-report-reforms-fixcongress-1114/>
- David Schanzer and Jay Sullivan, "Cancel the Midterms," New York Times, November 2, 2014. https://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/03/opinion/cancel-the-midterms.html?_r=0

Optional Reading

- Thomas Mann and Norman Ornstein, *It's Even Worse Than It Looks*. Chapter 4, "Bromides to Avoid."
- Mickey Edwards, *The Parties Versus the People: How to Turn Republicans and Democrats into Americans*, 35-87.
- Tom Davis, Martin Frost, and Richard Cohen, "The Way Forward" in *The Partisan Divide: Congress in Crisis*, 271-286.