Course description: Under the U.S. Constitution, the Congress is the most powerful of the three branches of the federal government. This class will consider Congress as an institution. We will explore its membership; reapportionment and redistricting in the House of Representatives; campaigns and elections; differences between the House and the Senate; the role of party leadership; committee structure; the legislative process; congressional relations with other branches of government; and the public policy “outputs” which all of these produce.

We will spend the last three weeks of the semester doing a simulation exercise of the passage of a bill through Congress. The bill to be considered will be a current piece of legislation chosen by the class. The members of the class will role-play several of the actors who are involved in this process. This will include committee hearings, interest group testimony, and floor action in both the House and the Senate. You will be assigned specific roles which will be determined at random. The final paper will be a substantive analysis of the bill which we consider. You will also write a number of short reflection papers pertaining to the different roles you play during the simulation.

The course fulfills a social science requirement in the Touchstone/General Education program; it satisfies the upper division American Government and Politics requirement in the Political Science major program, and satisfies an upper division requirement for Political Science minor program. This course helps students master general education goals 1.1 (“to read, write and speak standard English”) and 7 (“to examine values, attitudes, beliefs, and habits which define the nature and quality of life”).

Student Learning Objectives: At the end of this course, students will be able to describe and analyze the dual functions of the US Congress (legislative and representative), identify and evaluate key differences between the two chambers, and recount the historical development of the institution.


*Additional readings will be assigned throughout the semester, and the syllabus is subject to change at the instructor’s discretion.*

**Grading factors:**
Four short papers related to the simulation exercise, 10% each.
Midterm exam, 20%.
Final paper, 20%.
Final exam, 20%.
The course will use Winthrop University’s +/- grading system. Final grades will be assigned as follows:

93-100 = A
90-92 = A-
87-89 = B+
83-86 = B
80-82 = B-
77-79 = C+
73-76 = C
70-72 = C-
67-69 = D+
63-66 = D
60-62 = D-
59 or below = F.

**Administrative announcements:**
Class cancellations, changes in schedule, guest speakers, etc., will be announced via the class listserv, to which you will be automatically subscribed through your winthrop.edu e-mail address. Check your WU e-mail frequently. You may use the listserv for discussion or to share information with classmates, review for exams, or ask questions about course material. *Note that anything you post to the listserv will be seen by everyone in the class.*

**Attendance:**
Attendance will be taken by means of a sign-in sheet circulated at the *beginning* of each class meeting. In accordance with Winthrop’s attendance policies, if you are absent without excuse from one-quarter of the class meetings or more (in this case, seven), you will receive an N or an F, as appropriate. In this class, signing in an absent classmate is considered an act of academic dishonesty. I do not require documentation for absences *except* for exams.

**Technology:**
You are welcome to use a computer to take notes in class. However, this class follows the College of Arts and Sciences policy on use of technology in the classroom. Please turn off all cell phones and other electronic communication devices during class meetings. If you need to leave your phone on during a particular class for emergency reasons, please let me know in advance. *The use of any kind of electronic device, including a phone, iPod or Internet access, during an exam constitutes academic dishonesty.*


**Academic Honesty and Integrity:**
Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in this class. This class follows the policies of Winthrop University and the Department of Political Science, which are linked below, on academic misconduct and plagiarism. Please be aware of these policies and abide by them. In addition to what is listed in these policies, it is an act of academic misconduct in this class to sign in an absent classmate on the attendance sheet. In addition to any penalties imposed by the
instructor, academic misconduct of any kind will result in referral to the Dean of Students for possible additional sanctions.

Political Science Department policy statement:

Office of Academic Affairs policy statement:

**Students with Disabilities:** Winthrop University is dedicated to providing access to education. If you have a disability and require specific accommodations to complete this course, contact Services for Students with Disabilities, at (803) 323-3290. Once you have your official notice of accommodations, please inform me as early as possible in the semester.

**Schedule of Readings and Assignments**

Mon., Jan 12: Introduction to the Course.


Mon., Jan. 19: No Class – Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Holiday.

The Articles of Confederation: [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/artconf.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/artconf.asp)
United States Constitution, Article I,
[http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution_transcript.html](http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution_transcript.html)

Week of Jan. 26: DOL&S, Chs. 3 and 4.
Jennifer E. Manning, “Membership of the 114th Congress: A Profile,” Congressional Research Service, Web address TBA.

Week of Feb. 2: U.S. Bureau of the Census,
Reapportionment and redistricting simulation exercise in class.

Week of Feb. 9: DOL&S, Ch. 5 and 6.


Wed., Feb. 18: Catch up and review for midterm exam.


Week of Mar. 2: DOL&S, Chs. 9 and 10.

Week of Mar. 9: DOL&S, Chs. 11 and 12.

Week of Mar. 16: No Class – Spring Break.


Week of Mar. 30: DOL&S, Chs. 15 and 16.

Week of Apr. 6: Committee Hearing Simulation, readings TBA

Week of Apr. 13: House Floor Simulation, readings TBA

Week of Apr. 20: Senate Floor Simulation, readings TBA

Mon., Apr. 27: Last Class. Papers Due. Catch up and review for final exam.

Tues., May 5, 11:30 AM – 2:00 PM: Final Exam.