

Congress as an Institution

Fall 2019

Tues., 12:30 pm - 3:15 pm

Harkness Hall, rm. 329

Dan Alexander

dan.alexander@rochester.edu

Office Hrs.: Wed., 2-3 pm; Thurs., 2-3 pm

Gerald Gamm

gerald.gamm@rochester.edu

Office Hrs.: Mon., 2-3 pm; Fri., 9-10 am

Course Overview

This seminar will provide students with the necessary historical background and methodological tools to conduct original research on the US Congress. The course emphasizes how Congress as an institution provides structure that scholars must embrace – and from which they may often benefit – when applying the more abstract concepts and techniques of political economy.

Responsibilities & Evaluation

Each student will be responsible for robust in-class participation (reflective of thorough preparation)

htacrw

1. The Fundamental Question of Deliberative Bodies – How do the rules of the game, i.e., institutions, allow for the existence of equilibria? What are the properties of those equilibria?
2. Endogeneity of Institutions – Under what conditions do the rules of the game change?
3. Collective Action – How do coalitions overcome the challenge of collective action, both in day-to-day legislating and in seeking reform?
- 4.

- Krehbiel, Keith. 1993. "Where's the Party?" *British Journal of Political Science*, 23(2): 235–266.
- Shepsle, Kenneth A., 1989. "The Changing Textbook Congress." In *Can the Government Govern?*, Washington, DC: Brookings, pp. 238–266.

Congressional Reform

Sept. 17 – Leaving the "Textbook Congress"

- Cooper, Joseph and David W. Brady. 1981. "Institutional Context and Leadership Style: The House from Cannon to Rayburn." *The American Political Science Review*, 75(2): 411–425.
- Rohde, David W. 1991. *Parties and Leaders in the Postreform House*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Zelizer, Julian E. 2000. "Bridging State and Society: The Origins of 1970s Congressional Reform." *Social Science History*, 24(2): 379–393.

Sept. 24 – Race and Congress

-

- Alexander, Dan, Christopher R. Berry, and William G. Howell. 2016. "Distributive Politics and Legislator Ideology." *The Journal of Politics*, 78(1): 214–231.
- Berry, Christopher R. and Anthony Fowler. 2016. "Cardinals or Clerics? Congressional Committees and the Distribution of Pork." *American Journal of Political Science*, 60(3): 692–708.
- Gordon, Sanford C. and Hannah K. Simpson. 2018. "The Birth of Pork: Local Appropriations in America's First Century." *American Political Science Review*, 112(3): 564–579.

Nov. 19 – Empirical Validation for Theories of Lawmaking

- Bianco, William T. and Itai Sened. 2005. "Uncovering Evidence of Conditional Party Government: Reassessing Majority Party Influence in Congress and State Legislatures." *The American Political Science Review*, 99(3): 361–371.
- Jeong, Gyung Ho, Gary J. Miller, and Itai Sened. 2009. "Closing the deal: Negotiating civil rights legislation." *American Political Science Review*

- McCarty, Nolan. 2016. "In Defense of DW-NOMINATE." *Studies in American Political Development*, 30(2): 172–184.
- Volden, Craig, Alan E. Wiseman, and Dana E. Wittmer. 2013. "When Are Women More Effective Lawmakers Than Men?" *American Journal of Political Science*, 57(2): 326–341.

Dec. 3 – Partisanship and Polarization

- Aldrich, John H. and David W. Rohde. 2000. "The Republican Revolution and the House Appropriations Committee." *Journal of Politics*, 62(1): 1–33.
- Aldrich, John H., Brittany N. Perry, and David W. Rohde, 2013. "Richard Fenno's Theory of Congressional Committees and the Partisan Polarization of the House." In Lawrence C. Dodd and Bruce I. Oppenheimer, eds., *Congress Reconsidered*, Washington, DC: CQ Press. 10th edition.
- Bonica, Adam. 2014. "The Punctuated Origins of Senate Polarization." *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 39(1): 5–26.
- Lax, Jeffrey R., Justin H. Phillips, and Adam Zelizer. 2019. "The Party or the Purse: Unequal Representation in the US Senate." *American Political Science Review*.
- Alexander, Dan & Asya Magazinnik. 2019. "The Problem of Aggregational Inference," working paper.

Dec. 10 – Partisanship w/o Polarization?

- Lee, Frances E. 2016. *Insecure Majorities*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Be prepared to provide an informal discussion of your term paper during this session, as well.