

6. Congress

Breakout Sessions

POLS 1101

8:40am-9:35am Baldwin 322

& 9:55am-10:50am Journalism 509

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Exam Hand Back

- **Adding points wrong**
 - ***WITHIN TODAY (Friday), email or in-person talk after class***
- **Questions on why I lost points in short-answers**
 - ***WITHIN TODAY (Friday), email or in-person talk after class***
- **Appealing your grade**
 - ***24 hours later (Saturday), email***
 - ***Do as told by the syllabus***
 - You must write a statement to have the assignment regraded saying why you believe you should have received more credit and you will need to give me your blue book.
 - If you appeal your grade, I (your TA) will need to regrade which could result in a higher grade, a lower grade, or no change at all.
 - Only submit an appeal if you are sure that you can make a strong case for a higher score!
 - If you are still unsatisfied with your grade after that, you can repeat the process with Professor Nicholson.

Midterm 1 Feedback

- **Grasp both *key ideas* and *details*!**
 - Multiple choice: 1) texts in slides; 2) general idea of the reading materials; 3) “confusing pairs” of key concepts; 4) basic understanding of “overlooked” concepts in the review sheet
- **Clear & Comprehensive Logic**
 - Stressing ALL of the three concepts: freedom, equality, order (Q1)
 - Stressing BOTH ways to formally amend the Constitution (Q2, national convention)
- **Use key items / theories**
 - Procedural democracy (3 principles, 1 point for each; only telling me “it focuses on the process” earned 1 point.); Substantive democracy (civil liberties; civil rights) (Q3)
 - Constitutional foundations of dual/cooperative federalism (Q5) - **but it’s not your fault!**
 - Civil liberties / rights: the key difference is “what the government cannot take away” (negative rights) vs. “what the government must do to protect citizens” (positive rights) (Q7)

In-class Discussion

(also helpful to review)

Electing the Congress

- **The Incumbency Effect – Centralization of resources; Seniority matters!**
 - **Redistricting:** Strategic redistribution of representatives - **gerrymandering**
 - **Name recognition**
 - Franking privilege: the right to send mass communications at taxpayer expense
 - Use of social media
 - **Casework:** Solving problems in person for constituents
 - **Campaign financing**
- Whom do we elect? – Most are upper-class professionals.
 - Elite theory? **Why does majoritarian democracy lead to elite ruling?**
 - We probably want the “elite” representatives to speak for us, but are they trustable / really able to provide “substantive representation”?

Political Representation

- **Concepts**

- Descriptive representation: regarding “who you (representatives) are”
 - Substantive representation: regarding “what you prefer / do”
 - (Symbolic representation: regarding “how people feel about you”)
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- Is descriptive representation causally related to substantive representation?
 - No!
 - Suppose a government agency hires more female managers, but these managers oppose paid family leave and flexible work arrangements.
 - Can someone substantively represent a group they do not belong to?
 - (Would you like to substantively represent a group you do not belong to?)

Political Representation (cont'd)

- **What factors can influence the conversion of descriptive representation to substantive representation? (Policy Process Perspective)**
 - Problem Recognition
 - Agenda Setting
 - Policy Design
 - Policy Implementation
 - Policy Outcome / Feedback
- A city police department has significantly **increased the proportion of minority officers**, especially at the frontline and mid-level positions. However, public concern about **unfair policing, use of force, and lack of community trust** remains high.
- How, and at what stages, does descriptive representation translate – or fail to translate – into substantive change? Identify the pros & cons in each stage.

Majoritarian & Pluralist Democracy in Congress

- **Majoritarian**

- One view: Congress members are **trustees** of their constituents. (They aren't obliged to vote according to their constituents' views if they think it wrong.)
- When legislators act as **trustees**, policymaking becomes less tied to the narrower interests of districts and states. (more **majoritarian**)
 - However, ... can be more tied to partisanship
- Both parties can have similar policy focus (e.g. reduction in deficits).

- **Pluralist**

- Another view: Congress members are **delegates** of their constituents. (faithfully reflect the majority will of constituents)
- When legislators act as **delegates**, congressional policymaking is more **pluralistic**.
- However, when it comes to distribution of benefits, legislators can turn to what they can do for their district or state.

Discussion: Delegates or Trustees?

- Abortion legislation
 - Climate Change & Environmental Regulation
 - Marijuana Control
 - Foreign Policy & War Powers
 - Economic Policy & Taxation
 - Civil Rights Protection
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- For what kinds of issues do you want representatives to act as delegates / trustees?
Do you have your own criteria for making a choice?
 - What drives you to have such a standard? Is the standard different in your group members?
 - Any other interesting findings in your group discussion that you'd like to share?

Next week...

- Read materials on **Presidency** before class, and that will be helpful to participate in peer discussions.
- Feel free to email me if you have any questions!
- ENJOY YOUR WEEKEND!

More for Study & Review

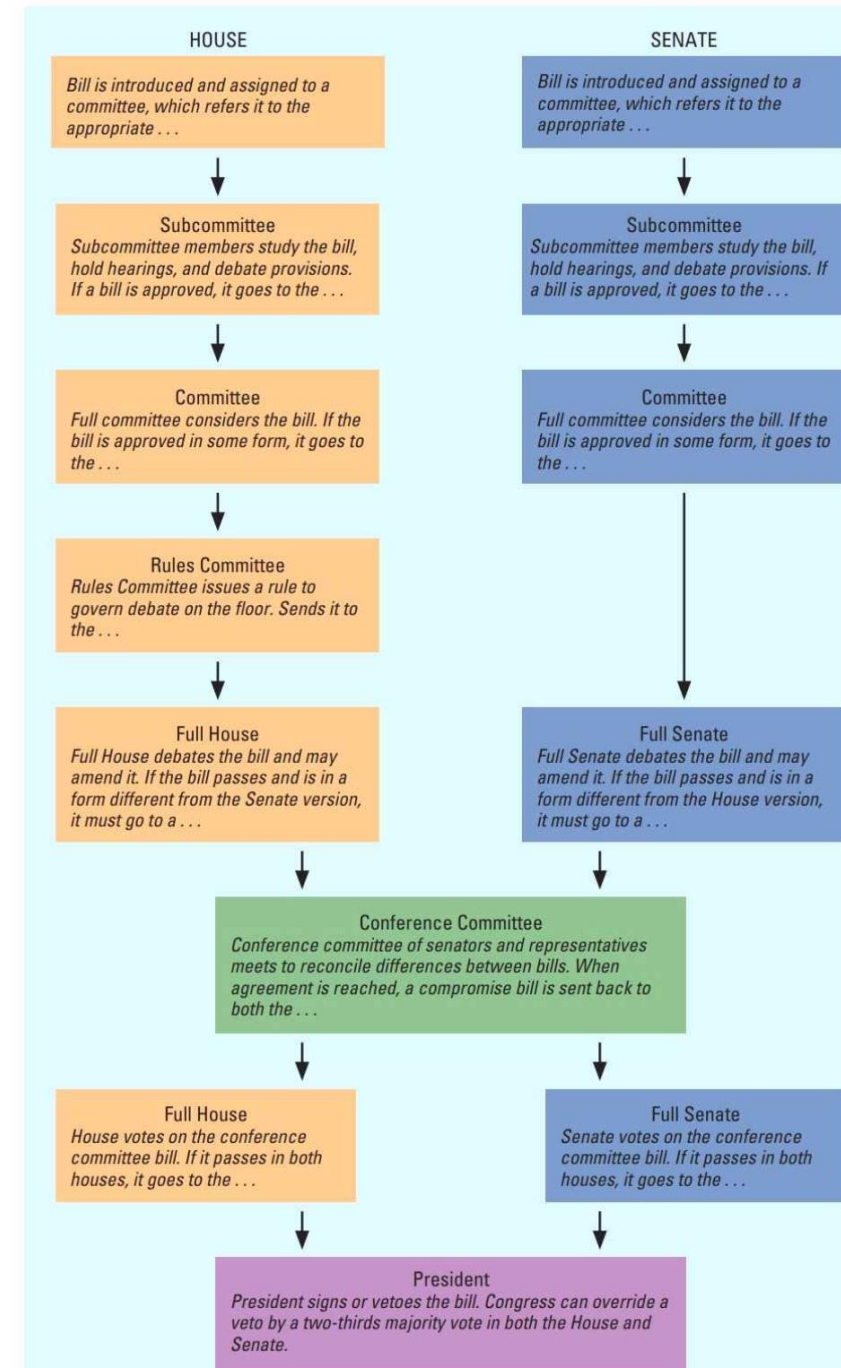
The Origin and Powers of Congress

- *The origin of Congress came as a balance of benefits between large and small states – the **Senate** for equal representation (small), the **House** for large ones.*
- **How are members of congress elected?**
 - The Senate: 17th Amendment -> direct election by popular vote
 - The House: directly based on population -> **reapportionment** (after each census, the redistribution of representatives among the states based on population change)
- **Powers**
 - The Senate: to approve major presidential appointments and treaties with foreign nations
 - The House: the power of **impeachment** (the formal charging of a government official with serious crimes)

How Congress Works?

- Agenda Setting
- Bill introduced
- Committee & subcommittee -> **specific expertise**
 - “Congress in session is Congress on public exhibition, whilst Congress in its committee-rooms is Congress at work.”
 - Markup sessions: the meetings at which subcommittees and committees actually debate and amend legislation.
 - **Why can members of Congress be usually willing to discuss and negotiate?**
- **Committees**
 - Standing committees (permanent)
 - Joint committee: made up of members of both the House & the Senate, for fact finding or publicizing issues
 - Select committee: for specific, (temporary) purposes
 - Conference committee: rare in practice

Figure 11.3 The Legislative Process



How Congress Works? (cont`d)

- **Leadership**

- The House: Speaker of the house, majority / minority **leader** / **whip**
- The Senate: Vice president (rarely present), *President pro tempore* (honorary), majority leader (actual power holder)

- **Rules of procedure**

- Major differences between the House & the Senate
 - **Amendments:** directly relevant to the bill at hand **v.** they can be irrelevant
 - **Floor debate governing:** Rules committee **v.** unanimous consent agreements
 - **Length of debate:** Only the speaker & minority leader can speak more than 1 hour **v.**
 - **Filibuster:** A delaying tactic used in the Senate that allows any senator to prevent a bill from coming to a vote.
 - **Cloture:** The mechanism by which a filibuster is cut off in the Senate.
 - **Hold:** A letter requesting that a bill be held from floor debate, which signals filibuster.
- Great efforts in coordination -> centralize the authority of party leaders

How Congress Works? (cont`d)

- **Stakeholders in legislation**

- **Political Parties:** leading to majoritarianism

- As a reward to loyalty, those who vote in line with the party can get better assignments.

- **Partisan polarization** leads to harder procedures for a bill to be passed or revised.

- The House majority -> **closed rule**, which only allows amendments to come from the committee that brought the bill to the floor of the chamber.
 - The Senate majority -> **“filling the amendment tree”**, which allows the majority leader to propose all permissible amendments to a post-cloture bill on the floor, preventing the minority party from altering the bill.

- **President:** leading to majoritarianism

- Extension of presidency in the legislative process (“chief legislator”)

- **Constituents:** leading to pluralism

- The diversity of America is mirrored by the geographical basis of representation in Congress. Constituencies push and pull Congress in many different directions.

- **Interest groups:** leading to pluralism

- Lobbies