

# P SC 3143: U.S. Congress





University of Oklahoma - Fall 2024

Nathan Barron





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## Instructor

-  Nathan Barron
-  nathanbarron@ou.edu
-  101 Monnet Hall
-  W 9:00-11:00 AM

## Course Details

-  Tuesdays and Thursdays
-  August 19–December 6, 2024
-  1:30 - 2:45 PM
-  Sarkeys Energy Center M0207

## Course Objectives

This course examines the politics of the U.S. Congress. Successful students will demonstrate an analytic understanding of the historical development of Congress, representation and the interplay between candidates and voters in congressional elections, the evolution and significance of rules and procedures governing deliberation, the organizational rationales underlying the committee system, and the role of political parties and their leaders. The underlying theme of the course and the theoretical lens through which students will investigate congressional organization and the behavior of its members is also the basis of most contemporary research on legislative politics—the assumption that political elites act strategically in pursuing their goals. Each section of the course will emphasize this perspective and students will learn to draw out its implications for making sense of Congress while applying the basic tools of social science methodology.

## Course Materials

We will use the following books in this class:

- *Congress and Its Members*. 2024. Roger H. Davidson, Walter J. Oseszek, Frances E. Lee, Eric Schickler, and James M. Curry. CQ Press.
- *Congress: The Electoral Connection*. 1974. David Mayhew. Yale University Press.

The following book is optional, but may be helpful to build your understanding of the material:

- *Analyzing Congress*. 2012. Charles Stewart III. W.W. Norton & Company. 2nd edition.

## Course Evaluation

### Grades

The grade for the course will be based on three components: Midterm and Final Exams, Assignments, and Reading Assessments. Each assignment will be graded, with scores posted on Canvas. Grades are assigned on a 10-point scale: A=90-100, B=80-90, C=70-80, D=60-70, F=0-60. There are no additional opportunities for extra credit, so please know what grade you “need” and work toward it over the course of the semester.

Component	Percent of Final Grade	Due Date
Midterm 1	15%	Sept. 24
Midterm 2	15%	Oct. 31
Final Exam	25%	Dec. 10
Short Assignments	25%	varies
Reading Assessments	20%	weekly

### Midterm and Final Exams

Two midterm exams (15% each) and a final exam (25%) will be administered for the course. The exams will assess mastery of the major themes covered in readings, lecture, discussion, and other course assignments. A study guide will be posted the week prior to each exam.

Make-up exams will not be permitted. The instructor may grant an early midterm exam date on a case-by-case basis. There are no make-up or early exam dates for the final exam.

### Short Assignments

There will be a total of 10 short assignments over the course of the semester (2.5% each). These assignments are designed to provide opportunities for extending core concepts.

Late submissions will be penalized 11 points at the beginning of every 24-hour period after the deadline. For example, an assignment due at 5:00pm on a Friday and submitted at 5:01pm on the following day will receive a 22-point penalty.

#### Note

There will be one opportunity for “extra credit.” Students who attend the [Josh Lee Lecture](#) with Julian Zelizer will have their lowest short assignment grade dropped. The Lecture will take place on Wednesday, October 9, from 3:00-4:00pm in Gaylord Hall, Room 1140.

## Reading Assessments

Reading the textbook and accompanying reading is essential to success in this course. Accordingly, students will be required to complete short reading assessments on Canvas each week. The lowest two assessment scores will be dropped; therefore, there will be absolutely no make-up quizzes.

## Course Schedule

**CAM:** *Congress and Its Members*, **EC:** *Congress: The Electoral Connection*, **AC:** *Analyzing Congress* (avail. on Canvas)

Week	Tuesday	Thursday
Week One	<b>Aug 20: Introduction</b>	<b>Aug 22: Theory &amp; Methods of Congress Research</b> Read: AC Chapter 1.
Week Two	<b>Aug 27: Constitutional Origins</b> Read: CAM Chapter 1. DUE: Reading Assessment, <i>submit by 1:30pm</i>	<b>Aug 29: A Developing Congress</b> Read: CAM Chapter 2.
Week Three	<b>Sep 3: Recruitment and Candidacy</b> Read: CAM Chapter 3. DUE: Reading Assessment, <i>submit by 1:30pm</i>	<b>Sep 5: Apportionment and Redistricting</b> DUE: Assignment 1, <i>submit by 6:00pm on 9/6</i>
Week Four	<b>Sep 10: Fundraising</b> Read: CAM Chapter 4. DUE: Reading Assessment, <i>submit by 1:30pm</i>	<b>Sep 12: Campaigns</b> DUE: Assignment 2, <i>submit by 6:00pm on 9/13</i>
Week Five	<b>Sep 17: The Electoral Connection</b> Read: EC Chapter 1. DUE: Reading Assessment, <i>submit by 1:30pm</i>	<b>Sep 19: Primary and General Elections</b> Read: CAM Chapter 5. DUE: Assignment 3, <i>submit by 6:00pm on 9/20</i>
Week Six	<b>Sep 24: Midterm Exam #1</b>	<b>Sep 26: Roll Call Voting</b> DUE: Assignment 4, <i>submit by 10:00am on 9/26</i>
Week Seven	<b>Oct 1: Avoiding Chaos</b> Read: CAM Chapter 9. DUE: Reading Assessment, <i>submit by 1:30pm</i>	<b>Oct 3: Theories of Process</b> Read: CAM Chapter 8.
Week Eight	<b>Oct 8: Unorthodox Lawmaking</b> Read: Available on Canvas. DUE: Reading Assessment, <i>submit by 1:30pm</i>	<b>Oct 10: Distributive Politics</b> Read: CAM Chapter 7. DUE: Assignment 5, <i>submit by 6:00pm on 10/11</i>

Week	Tuesday	Thursday
Week Nine	<b>Oct 15: Politics of Information</b> Read: Available on Canvas. DUE: Reading Assessment, <i>submit by 1:30pm</i>	<b>Oct 17: Party Leadership</b> Read: CAM Chapter 6. DUE: Assignment 6, <i>submit by 6:00pm on 10/18</i>
Week Ten	<b>Oct 22: No Class Today</b>	<b>Oct 24: Theories of Partisan Power</b> Read: Available on Canvas. DUE: Assignment 7, <i>submit by 6:00pm on 10/25</i>
Week Eleven	<b>Oct 29: Making Decisions</b> Read: EC Chapter 2. DUE: Reading Assessment, <i>submit by 1:30pm</i>	<b>Oct 31: Midterm Exam #2</b>
Week Twelve	<b>Nov 5: Election Forecasting</b> Read: Available on Canvas. DUE: Assignment 8, <i>submit by 6:00pm on 11/5</i>	<b>Nov 7: Congress &amp; the Presidency</b> Read: CAM Chapter 10.
Week Thirteen	<b>Nov 12: Congress &amp; the Bureaucracy</b> Read: CAM Chapter 11. DUE: Reading Assessment, <i>submit by 1:30pm</i>	<b>Nov 14: Theories of Gridlock</b> Read: CAM Chapter 13. DUE: Assignment 9, <i>submit by 6:00pm on 11/15</i>
Week Fourteen	<b>Nov 19: Domestic Policy</b> Read: CAM Chapter 14. DUE: Reading Assessment, <i>submit by 1:30pm</i>	<b>Nov 21: Foreign Policy</b> Read: CAM Chapter 15. DUE: Assignment 10, <i>submit by 6:00pm on 11/22</i>
Week Fifteen	<b>Nov 26: No Class Today</b>	<b>Nov 28: Thanksgiving Break</b>
Week Sixteen	<b>Dec 3: Spending &amp; Gridlock</b> Read: Available on Canvas. DUE: Reading Assessment, <i>submit by 1:30pm</i>	<b>Dec 5: Polarization</b> Read: Available on Canvas. DUE: Reading Assessment, <i>submit by 1:30pm</i>
Finals Week	<b>Dec 10: Final Exam</b>	

## Course Policies

### Office Hours and Availability

My office hours are Wednesdays 9:00-11:00 AM. I am happy to meet with anyone that might have questions about course material, assignments, or other course-related issues. If you are unable to meet during this time, please do not hesitate to set up an appointment by email ([nathanbarron@ou.edu](mailto:nathanbarron@ou.edu)).

## Regrading Policy

If you feel there has been an error in the grading of one your assignment, you may request (in writing) a regrade of the assignment. Please send me your request in an email. I will regrade the entire assignment, not just the part you are disputing. Therefore, your regrade might increase or decrease the overall grade on the assignment.

## Academic Dishonesty

Cheating is strictly prohibited at the University of Oklahoma, because it devalues the degree you are working hard to get. As a member of the OU community it is your responsibility to protect your educational investment by knowing and following the rules. For specific definitions on what constitutes cheating, review the Student's Guide to Academic Integrity at [integrity.ou.edu](https://integrity.ou.edu).

## Generative AI

While learning to use generative artificial intelligence (GAI) is an emerging skill, the use of such programs (e.g. ChatGPT) is *strongly discouraged* for this course. Students should be informed that the material generated by these programs may be inaccurate, incomplete, or otherwise problematic. As such, the reliance on GAI can contradict the academic goals of exercising rigor, engaging critically, and pursuing knowledge.

If you include material generated by an AI program, it should be cited like any other reference material (with due consideration for the quality of the reference, which may be poor). Any plagiarism or other form of cheating will be dealt with severely under relevant University policies. Of course, there are many cases where I may not be able to tell if you cheated or not. Note however that, for any reason, including doubts about whether the paper was written with external help, any student can be required to come in for an oral examination on their assignment. In such a case, a grade for the oral examination will replace that for the paper.

## Required University Policies

### Non-Discrimination Policy and Religious Observance

**Non-Discrimination Policy:** The University does not discriminate or permit discrimination by any member of its community against any individual based on the individual's race, color, religion, political beliefs, national origin, age (40 or older), sex, sexual orientation, genetic information, gender identity, gender expression, disability, or veteran status in matters of admissions, employment, financial aid, housing, services in educational programs or activities, or health care services that the University operates or provides.

**Religious Observance:** It is the policy of the University to excuse the absences of students that result from religious observances and to reschedule examinations and additional required classwork that may fall on religious holidays, without penalty.

### **Reasonable Accommodation Policy**

The University of Oklahoma (OU) is committed to the goal of achieving equal educational opportunity and full educational participation for students with disabilities. If you have already established reasonable accommodations with the Accessibility and Disability Resource Center (ADRC), please submit your semester accommodation request through the ADRC as soon as possible and contact me privately, so that we have adequate time to arrange your approved academic accommodations.

If you have not yet established services through ADRC, but have a documented disability and require accommodations, please complete ADRC's pre-registration form to begin the registration process. ADRC facilitates the interactive process that establishes reasonable accommodations for students at OU. For more information on ADRC registration procedures, please review their Register with the ADRC web page. You may also contact them at (405)325-3852 or [adrc@ou.edu](mailto:adrc@ou.edu), or visit [www.ou.edu/adrc](http://www.ou.edu/adrc) for more information.

Note: disabilities may include, but are not limited to, mental health, chronic health, physical, vision, hearing, learning and attention disabilities, pregnancy-related. ADRC can also support students experiencing temporary medical conditions.

### **Title IX Resources and Reporting Requirement**

The University of Oklahoma faculty are committed to creating a safe learning environment for all members of our community, free from gender and sex-based discrimination, including sexual harassment, domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking, in accordance with Title IX. There are resources available to those impacted, including: speaking with someone confidentially about your options, medical attention, counseling, reporting, academic support, and safety plans. If you have (or someone you know has) experienced any form of sex or gender-based discrimination or violence and wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact [OU Advocates](#) (available 24/7 at 405-615-0013) or [University Counseling Center](#) (M-F 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at 405-325-2911).

Because the University of Oklahoma is committed to the safety of you and other students, and because of our Title IX obligations, I, as well as other faculty, Graduate Assistants, and Teaching Assistants, are mandatory reporters. This means that we are obligated to report gender-based violence that has been disclosed to us to the Institutional Equity Office. This means that we are obligated to report gender-based violence that has been disclosed to us to the Institutional Equity Office. This includes disclosures that occur in: class discussion, writing assignments, discussion boards, emails and during Student/Office Hours. You may also

choose to report directly to the Institutional Equity Office. After a report is filed, the Title IX Coordinator will reach out to provide resources, support, and information and the reported information will remain private. For more information regarding the University's Title IX Grievance procedures, reporting, or support measures, please visit [Institutional Equity Office](#) at 405-325-3546.

### **Adjustments for Pregnancy / Childbirth Related Issues**

Should you need modifications or adjustments to your course requirements because of documented pregnancy-related or childbirth-related issues, please contact the Accessibility and Disability Resource Center at 405/325-3852 and/or the Institutional Equity Office at 405/325-3546 as soon as possible. Also, see the Institutional Equity Office [FAQ section on Pregnant and Parenting Students' Rights](#) for answers to commonly asked questions.

### **Mental Health**

Support is available for any student experiencing mental health issues that are impacting their academic success. Students can either be seen at the University Counseling Center (UCC) located on the second floor of Goddard Health Center or receive 24/7/365 crisis support from a licensed mental health provider through [TELUS Health](#). To schedule an appointment or receive more information about mental health resources at OU please call the UCC at 405-325-2911 or visit [University Counseling Center](#). The UCC is located at 620 Elm Ave., Room 201, Norman, OK 73019.

### **Final Exam Preparation Period**

Pre-finals week will be defined as the seven calendar days before the first day of finals. Faculty may cover new course material throughout this week. For specific provisions of the policy please refer to OU's [Final Exam Preparation Period policy](#).

### **Emergency Protocol**

During an emergency, there are official university [procedures](#) that will maximize your safety.

Severe Weather: If you receive an OU Alert to seek refuge or hear a tornado siren that signals severe weather.

1. Look for severe weather refuge location maps located inside most OU buildings near the entrances.
2. Seek refuge inside a building. Do not leave one building to seek shelter in another building that you deem safer. If outside, get into the nearest building.



3. Go to the building's severe weather refuge location. If you do not know where that is, go to the lowest level possible and seek refuge in an innermost room. Avoid outside doors and windows.
4. Get in, Get Down, Cover Up
5. Wait for official notice to resume normal activities.

Additional [Weather Safety Information](#) is available through the Department of Campus Safety.

## **Active Threat Guidance**

The University of Oklahoma embraces a Run, Hide, Fight strategy for active threats on campus. This strategy is well known, widely accepted, and proven to save lives. To receive emergency campus alerts, be sure to update your contact information and preferences in the account settings section at [one.ou.edu](https://one.ou.edu).

**RUN:** Running away from the threat is usually the best option. If it is safe to run, run as far away from the threat as possible. Call 911 when you are in a safe location and let them know from which OU campus you're calling from and location of active threat.

**HIDE:** If running is not practical, the next best option is to hide. Lock and barricade all doors; turn off all lights; turn down your phone's volume; search for improvised weapons; hide behind solid objects and walls; and hide yourself completely and stay quiet. Remain in place until law enforcement arrives. Be patient and remain hidden.

**FIGHT:** If you are unable to run or hide, the last best option is to fight. Have one or more improvised weapons with you and be prepared to attack. Attack them when they are least expecting it and hit them where it hurts most: the face (specifically eyes, nose, and ears), the throat, the diaphragm (solar plexus), and the groin.

Please save OUPD's contact information in your phone.

**NORMAN campus:** For non-emergencies call (405) 325-1717. For emergencies call (405) 325-1911 or dial 911.

## **Fire Alarm/General Emergency**

If you receive an OU Alert that there is danger inside or near the building, or the fire alarm inside the building activates:

1. LEAVE the building. Do not use the elevators.
2. KNOW at least two building exits
3. ASSIST those that may need help
4. PROCEED to the emergency assembly area

5. ONCE safely outside, NOTIFY first responders of anyone that may still be inside building due to mobility issues.
6. WAIT for official notice before attempting to re-enter the building.

[OU Fire Safety on Campus](#)