



POLS

4113

Fall 2025

THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS (CRN: 5645)

Time: TR 12³⁰pm to 1⁴⁵pm; **Location:** X017 Oakes Center; **Credit:** 3 hrs
Prof.: Carl Cavalli; **Office:** 338 Hansford; **E-mail:** carl.cavalli@ung.edu
Office Hours: MW 3-5³⁰pm, TR 4⁴⁵-5¹⁵pm, by email or appointment

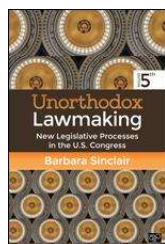
Once begin the dance of legislation, and you must struggle through its mazes to the breathless end – if any end there be.
- Woodrow Wilson

Course Description:

Prerequisite: POLS 1101

This course examines the formulation and implementation of legislation and how the structure and dynamics of political institutions affect it. The focus is on how executives and legislatures co-operate and conflict in shaping policy.

Texts:



Sinclair, Barbara. 2017. *Unorthodox Lawmaking*, 5e



Cavalli, Carl. 2006. *Presidential Legislative Activity*

Required Readings:

Case Studies:



Reid, T.R. 1980. *Congressional Odyssey*.

We will also examine the **2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act** using various sources. Documents will be available on D2L.

Web Sites:



Google News/Politics
<https://news.google.com/news/section?&q=Politics>

POLITICO

<http://www.politico.com>

(We will likely also use several other sites as article sources)

Additional material: see <http://faculty.ung.edu/ccavalli/3124bib.htm>

ONLINE: Home – <http://faculty.ung.edu/ccavalli/3124.htm>, D2L (“eLearning”) – <https://ung.view.usg.edu>, Turnitin – <http://turnitin.com>

Course Objectives and Format:

Outcomes: Students will acquire an understanding of the legislative process, understand how Congress and the Presidency share legislative authority in a constitutional system of checks and balances, and understand the role of **nongovernmental institutions** in the legislative process.

This is a hybrid course which will meet part of the week, with online activities filling out the week. We will use D2L online (also known as *eLearning*), but I like to keep things simple. We will not use any “modules”, etc. Unless otherwise noted, all activity and communication will take place via the announcement and discussion sections. In class, we will engage in as much **discussion** possible. To that end, *you need to read the assignments before their due date*. Be able to *discuss* and answer *questions* about them. The texts lay out the basics. We will start each new topic (see Schedule) with the appropriate readings. We will examine past and current legislative activities to get a “current” view. Therefore, you must also *stay informed* of the progress of these events. We will follow current events mainly as covered in the *Google News* (<https://news.google.com/news/section?&q=Politics>) web site.

In addition to assigned readings, we will review *Google News/Politics* articles (or articles from other sources) each week. *You will present* and lead **class discussions** of these. Together, we will select articles that complement class topics¹. So in a real sense, you will help shape course content! Of course, you **all** are responsible for **all** assigned articles, text, and any other materials. In presenting articles, I would like each of you to assume a particular role (e.g., presidential advisors, members of Congress, the press). This helps us gain particular insights into different perspectives on legislative issues. A list of roles appears at the end of this syllabus.

For **most weeks** (see course schedule, below), the class meets **Tuesdays only**. **Online discussion replaces most Thursday classes**: We will begin new topics and readings *after* each Tuesday class. You are **required** to post comments on that material to our D2L (“eLearning”) discussion site. You are **required** to post at least one **substantive response** (1. *not* just “I liked...”, or “I didn’t like” or similar words; 2. *analytical*, not judgmental) to discussion/notes I will post on D2L each week *and* at least one **substantive original comment**. Treat online discussions as required readings – you are responsible for and may be tested on them. There may be videos to view, or other activities assigned as part of these discussions.

Exams	Written exercises	Other		90+ = A
Exam #1	15% Bibliography/Outline	5% Online Discussions		80 to 89 = B
Exam #2	15% Project	10% ...including role playing		70 to 79 = C
Final	15% Presentation	10% ...and general participation	20%	60 to 69 = D
	Revision	10%		Grand Total:
Total:	45%	35%	20%	100%

There are **two ‘mid-term’ exams and a final**. Each is 15% of your grade. They consist of three essay questions. A few days *before* the exam, I will give you five essay questions. On the *day* of the exam, I will select three of these questions for you to answer. *Please do not miss exams* (you know *our* schedule *now*, so plan *your* schedule well ahead). *I will not give makeups unless you* 1) **notify me or the department in advance** (no exceptions); and 2) **verify a family/medical emergency in writing**. **Note:** I will *not* give any makeups *after* the graded exams are *handed back* in class. A **case study** of 12-21+ (depending upon group size) pages (another 10% of your grade) is due no later than **November 7th**. The exact format and topics will be discussed in class, but you must consult me before proceeding. To prepare you for the project, an **annotated bibliography** is due by **October 21st**, and an **annotated outline** is due by **October 24th**. Together, these are worth 5% of your grade. A **revision** worth 10% of your grade is due *in class during the last week* (see the schedule). *Do not turn in late papers!* If I accept them (and I may not!), you will lose either 5% or 1 point of your paper grade (whichever is *greater*) for each *day* late. Your **online posts** are another 20% of your grade. Finally, a **presentation** of your project during the last two weeks is another 10%.

I do not **grade** on a curve (You earn what you earn...I *hope* you all earn “A”’s!). A typical class average is about a mid- to upper- “C” (“C” is *average* — *not* below average...“B” is *above* average). Just completing the requirements most likely earns a “C” (70-79). “B” (80-89) requires effort *beyond* just requirements. “A” (90-100) requires *extraordinary* performance. *Notes on “attendance”*: 1. The **UNG attendance policy** (see the latest UNG *Student Handbook*, or *Bulletin*) applies to this course; 2. Any D2L **announcements** are considered sufficient notice. So, *attendance matters*, and please check your email and D2L often.

¹ Each week, we will select articles for discussion for the *following* week’s class. Links to articles will be posted on our web site and in our D2L discussion topics.

Course Schedule:

Legend: **Sinclair** = *Unorthodox Lawmaking*, 5th ed.; **Cavalli** = *Presidential Legislative Activity*; **Reid** = *Congressional Odyssey*; **Infrastructure Bill** = Material in D2L. **Numbers** following the names are chapter numbers. **Other names** refer to articles. **Italicized titles** refer to videos (see Additional Readings and Videos). **Articles** = *Google News/Politics* articles (to be selected in class—see updates on our 4113 Home page). Items in **Bold type** are activities or assignments. [**Class days**]. **Outside content** **Exams** **Project** **Off days**

Tuesday: Class discussion, articles, videos		Outside class: D2L discussion due noon Monday	
08/12	Introduction: "Hello, my name is..."	08/14	Refresher lecture; Drop/add ends Friday
08/19	Refresher lecture	08/21	Presidential Activity: Cavalli 1,2
08/26	Discussion; Role Playing (RP) Articles	Outside	Legislation - Introduction: Sinclair 1,6; Cavalli 3
09/02	Discussion; RP Articles	Outside	Legislation - The Process: Sinclair 2,3,4
09/09	Discussion; RP Articles	Outside	<== Partial set of exam questions by Wed. (full by Fri.)
09/16	—Exam 1 (material thru 9/11)—	Outside	Legislation - Non-budget: Sinclair 7, 9
09/23	Discussion; RP Articles; <i>Cliffhanger</i>	Outside	Legislation - Budget: Sinclair 5,8
09/30	Discussion; RP Articles; <i>Cliffhanger</i>	Outside	Conclusion: Sinclair 10; Cavalli 7,8,9;
10/07	Discussion; RP Articles; Discuss Project	Outside	<== Partial set of exam questions by Wed. (full by Fri.)
10/14	—Exam 2 (material thru 10/09)—	Outside	Case Study I: Reid 1-12; Friday is last day to withdraw
10/21	Discussion; RP Articles; Workshop; Bibliography due 8pm	Outside	Case Study I: Reid 13-19; Outline due Friday, 5pm
10/28	Discussion; RP Articles; [<i>Infrastructure video</i>]; Workshop	Outside	Case Study II: Infrastructure Bill (D2L); My Bday, be nice!
11/04	Discussion; RP Articles; [<i>Infrastructure video</i>]; Workshop	Outside	Case Study II: Infrastructure Bill (D2L); Proj. due Fri., 5p
11/11	Discussion; Presentations (If needed)	11/13	Presentations (if needed)
11/18	Presentations (Revisions due Tues., 12/01, 5pm)	11/20	Presentations (Revisions due Thurs., 12/03, 5pm)
11/24-8	—Thanksgiving Break (Turkey! Football!! Relatives who stay too long!!! I can't wait!)—		
Cancellations: we will pick up where we left off—and add Thursday classes if needed. Final Exam: Thurs., 12/04, 12:40-2:40pm			

POLS 4113 Roles:

Article presentations and other class discussions will use *Socratic Dialogues*, requiring class members to assume various roles during discussions.

What is a Socratic Dialogue? The Socratic Dialogue format uses role playing, hypothetical case studies, and a roving inquisitor to compel panelists to confront what they would do in situations where the "right" choice is not clear. The question "What would you do?" is different from "What do you think?" in that it drives a participant to reveal how he or she would confront a specific problem. The exercise is designed to identify the perceptions and decision-making processes of all sides and to enable participants to better understand both their own positions and the imperatives driving others' actions. As panelists wrestle with the hypothetical situations, the drama created helps illuminate complex issues in an enlightening way. [Viewer's Guide, Beyond Black and White: Affirmative Action in America. 1999. PBS. [WWWdocument]. URL <http://www.pbs.org/pov/tvraceinitiative/beyondblackandwhite/viewer.html#socratic>]

These are suggestions for 'characters' to assume when presenting articles and leading discussion in class:		
Executive Branch	House	Senate
The President (Carl Cavalli)	Majority (Republican) Leadership	Majority (Democratic) Leadership
White House Advisors	Committee Chairs/Members (Republican)	Committee Chairs/Members (Democratic)
Each class member must either select one of these roles or suggest another one subject to approval.		

STAY INFORMED: UNG Political Science and International Affairs on social media! Blog: <http://blog.ung.edu/psia-news/>



CHEAT = FAIL. Cheating or plagiarizing will result in an automatic zero for the exam or assignment, a zero for participation and attendance, AND forfeiture of all extra credit. At my discretion, it may ALSO result in academic integrity charges and an "F" for the course.

UNG Integrity Code: "I will not lie, cheat, steal, plagiarize, evade the truth or tolerate those that do."

All students in this class are bound by the above Integrity Code. For information on Academic Integrity as defined by UNG, see the *UNG 2013-2014 Undergraduate Catalog* (http://catalog.ung.edu/content.php?catoid=12&navoid=252#Academic_Integrity_Policy). See also <http://www.plagiarism.org/>.

Plagiarism in any form is a violation of UNG Academic Integrity policies and will not be tolerated:

Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the Terms and Conditions of Use posted on the Turnitin.com site.

The use of Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) is prohibited by the student code of conduct. This includes ChatGPT, Grammarly, Microsoft Copilot, and all other A.I., and applies to all written/online work.

For additional policies, see: <http://ung.edu/academic-affairs/policies-and-guidelines/supplemental-syllabus.php>

Accessibility Statement: If you need this document in another format, please email me (carl.cavalli@ung.edu) or call 706-864-1872.



Accommodations for disabilities: <http://ung.edu/student-disability-services/>

The University of North Georgia is committed to equal access to its programs, services, and activities for people with disabilities. If you believe that you have a disability requiring an accommodation, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the instructor and the Office of Student Disability Resources. In this case, contact Candis Hill, Assistant Director of Student Disabilities Services, in the Stewart Student Success Center, Room 233 (706-867-2782, disability-dah@ung.edu).