



**Department of History and Political Science**  
**Political Science 380: Congress and the Presidency**  
**Fall 2017 Syllabus**



Meeting Days: Monday and Wednesday	Instructor: Professor Shawn E. Fields
Meeting Times: 11:00 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.	Email: <a href="mailto:sfields1@pointloma.edu">sfields1@pointloma.edu</a>
Meeting Location: Colt Hall 120	Office location: Clara Colt Hall 118
Midterm Exam: October 18 from 11:00–12:45	Office Hours: Mon. & Wed., 9:45-10:45 a.m.
Final Exam: TBD	Course Website: <a href="https://canvas.pointloma.edu">https://canvas.pointloma.edu</a>

**PLNU MISSION**

**To Teach ~ To Shape ~ To Send**

Point Loma Nazarene University exists to provide higher education in a vital Christian community where minds are engaged and challenged, character is modeled and formed, and service is an expression of faith. Being of Wesleyan heritage, we strive to be a learning community where grace is foundational, truth is pursued, and holiness is a way of life.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course exams the relationship between two of our three branches of government in the United States. We will begin by analyzing each of these institutions separately, but in the last part of the course, we will analyze the dynamic interactions between the two. This course will look at the policy power-struggle between these two bodies, with the House of Representatives and the Senate on one side and the President and his/her administration (including the federal bureaucracy) on the other side. By the end of the course, you should be able to assess whether the Congress and the President

are rivals or partners and whether or not they share power or operate in a system characterized by a separation of power. This course will take you inside the U.S. Capitol and the White House (figuratively of course) so that you more fully understand and appreciate the role these two branches play with regard to their influence on the political, social, and economic events that shape our daily lives.

### **COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Students will:

- 1) Possess a factual and theoretical understanding of political knowledge, behavior, theories, systems, processes, structures, and outcomes
- 2) Think critically, analytically, and synthetically
- 3) Sharpen their communication skills
- 4) Exhibit a heightened sense of personal political efficacy and civil responsibility
- 5) Be encouraged to become thoughtful participants of the political world
- 6) Be exposed to some of the most pressing political problems of the day, including poverty, voting rights, gender inequity, lack of freedom, and declining participation rates.

### **COURSE READINGS**

Required Texts:

Thomas E. Cronin and Michael A. Genovese, *The Paradoxes of the American Presidency*, Oxford University Press (5th ed. 2017).

Lee Hamilton, *How Congress Works and Why You Should Care*, Indiana University Press (2004).

James A. Thurber, ed., *Rivals for Power*, Maryland: Rowen & Littlefield (5th ed. 2013).

Selected Readings on Canvas (see Syllabus and Canvas for details)

### **ADDITIONAL READINGS**

As budding political scientists and citizens, you should regularly follow current political events at the local, national, and international level. Make it a habit now that continues throughout your lifetime – you wake up, grab a cup of coffee, and read the news (and no, Facebook feeds, other social media outlets, and BuzzFeed quizzes and listicles do not count as “news”). I’d love to see you explore more sophisticated news outlets, such as *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *International Herald Tribune*, NPR, BBC News, *The Atlantic*, and *The Economist*. I strongly recommend you peruse these media sources on a regular basis and contribute what relevant information you learn with class.

## COURSE FORMAT AND EXPECTATIONS

Politics is an inherently interactive endeavor, and it has been shown time and again that the best learning methods involve hands-on, interactive practice of new concepts. Therefore, this class will involve a lot of student-directed learning, group engagement, and critical thinking that goes well beyond the assigned reading. However, for this learning model to succeed, it is critically important that students COME TO CLASS and COME TO CLASS PREPARED. We cannot build on the readings and engage in higher level critical thinking without students being present and prepared.

For that reason, I expect the following from all my students:

1. **Attend Class:** Attendance is mandatory and will only be excused with both prior notice and a good justification for the absence. I recognize that each of you are extremely busy during the semester and that life happens from time to time, so if you must miss a class for some reason please provide with as much advance notice as possible. Attendance will be taken each class.
2. **Come to Class Prepared:** It is very important that you complete all the assigned reading and come to class prepared to participate in a discussion about the reading and its main concepts.
3. **Complete all Coursework:** In addition to the graded midterm, you will have the option to complete a final exam or longer term paper (see below). In addition, I will occasionally assign short “read and respond” writing exercises throughout the semester. These assignments will generally take the form of a hypothetical fact pattern relating to a topic covered in class and require you to think analytically and provide your own opinion in response to prompted questions following the fact pattern. These assignments are not given an individual grade, but satisfactory completion of these assignments is required to pass the course.
4. **Engage:** Our class will be interactive, meaning that I expect to do less talking than in a typical lecture survey course. I will expect each of you to participate, and I will work hard to facilitate a safe space for discussion and a respectful exchange of ideas.

## ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS

The following components of the class count towards your final grade:

1. **Read and Respond Papers:** At various times throughout the semester I will draft a hypothetical political scenario and ask for high level critical thinking to apply the concepts learned in class to that hypothetical situation. These response papers are not designed to regurgitate vocabulary or definitions, but to apply your knowledge to a new set of facts.
2. **Midterm:** The midterm exam will test your knowledge and understanding of concepts discussed through the first few weeks of class, and will consist of a mix of short response questions and higher level critical thinking essays. More details about the structure of the exam will be discussed closer to exam time.
3. **Final:** The final exam will test your knowledge and understanding of concepts discussed through the entire semester and will consist of a mix of short response questions and higher level critical thinking essays. More details about the structure of the exam will be discussed closer to exam time.

4. **Term Paper:** In lieu of the final exam, you have the option of completing a longer, thesis-style term paper. I will provide a series of broad topics from which you may choose and then direct the course of your paper. The paper will not involve any outside research beyond what is covered and assigned in class, though you are more than welcome to buttress your arguments with outside research. Term papers will be approximately 4,000-5,000 words in length, and I will work with you throughout the process to hone and refine your ideas. If you choose to complete the term paper, you will not need to take the final.

5. **Attendance and Participation:** As discussed above, attendance and participation are both essential and mandatory for the class.

### GRADING

The final grade is weighted as follows:

Assignment	Point Value
Read and Respond	20
Midterm	50
Final or Term Paper	100
Attendance and Participation	30
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>200</b>

### TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Given the topical nature of this course, the schedule below is flexible and subject to change. Teaching a Political Science course during such a period of unprecedented political upheaval is always an exciting challenge. I want to be sure we have the flexibility and freedom in our schedule to discuss current events as they relate to the overarching themes of this course. Accordingly, the timing and substance of assignments and readings may change, as well as class days and times. Revisions to the syllabus will be provided and distributed as they become necessary.

**NOTE: THERE IS NO CLASS ON AUGUST 29. THE FIRST CLASS WILL MEET ON WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 30, 2017.**

### **PART ONE: CONGRESS**

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**Week 1: Aug. 30**                      **Introduction and Welcome; Why Separate Branches of Government?**

**NOTE:**                                      **There is no class on Tuesday, August 29**

Reading:                                      None

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**Week 2: Sept. 6**

**The Legislative Branch – Our Founding**

NOTE:

There is no class on Monday, September 4 (Labor Day)

Reading:

For Wed: Federalist Papers No. 52 and 62 (on Canvas)

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**Week 3: Sept. 11 & 13**

**The Principles and Powers of Congress  
Congress and Our Lives**

Reading:

For Monday: Hamilton Chapter 1

For Wed: Hamilton Chapter 2  
Selected primary source readings on Canvas TBD

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**Week 4: Sept. 18 & 20**

**Laws and Sausages  
Congress and Public Approval**

Reading:

For Monday: Hamilton Chapter 3

For Wed: Hamilton Chapter 4  
Selected primary source readings on Canvas TBD

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**Week 5: Sept. 25 & 27**

**Congressional Elections: Part I  
Congressional Elections: Part II**

Reading:

For Monday: Selected readings on Canvas TBD

For Wed: Selected readings on Canvas TBD

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**Week 6: Oct. 2 & 4:**

**Working Toward a Better Congress: Us and Them  
In-Class Congressional Session**

Reading:

For Monday: Hamilton Chapters 5-6, appendix

For Wed: None

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## **PART TWO: THE PRESIDENCY**

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### **Week 7: Oct. 9 & 11**

#### **The Executive Branch: Our Founding Presidential Paradoxes**

Reading: For Monday: Federalist Papers No. 69 and 70 (on Canvas)  
For Wed: Cronin and Genovese Chapter 1

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### **Week 8: Oct 16 & 18**

#### **Presidential Elections Midterm Exam**

Reading: For Monday: Cronin and Genovese Chapter 2  
For Wed: No Reading – STUDY STUDY!

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### **Week 9: Oct. 23 & 25**

#### **Presidential Success: The President as Image-Maker Presidential Power and Leadership**

**NOTE:** Students must decide whether to write a term paper or take the final exam by **October 25**

Reading: For Monday: Cronin and Genovese Chapter 3  
For Wed: Cronin and Genovese Chapter 4

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### **Week 10: Oct. 30**

#### **The Presidency and Democracy**

**NOTE:** There is no class on Wednesday, November 1

Reading: For Monday: Cronin and Genovese Chapter 11

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## **PART THREE: CONGRESS AND THE PRESIDENCY**

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### **Week 11: Nov. 6 & 8**

#### **Executive-Legislative Relations: Our Founding Partisan Politics**

Reading: For Monday: Federalist Papers No. 47 and 51 (on Canvas)  
Thurber, pp. 1-23  
For Wed: Thurber Chapters 2 and 4

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**Week 12: Nov. 13 & 15**

**A Diffusion of Responsibility: Chief Legislator?  
The Power to Persuade**

Reading:

For Monday: Thurber Chapter 3

For Wed: Thurber Chapters 5 and 11

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**Week 13: Nov. 20**

**Party Control**

**NOTE:**

**There is no class on Wednesday, November 22**

Reading:

For Monday: Thurber Chapter 7

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**PART VII: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

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**Week 14: Nov. 27 & 29**

**Presidential Styles  
A Separation of Powers**

Reading:

For Monday: Selected readings on Canvas TBD

For Wed: Thurber Chapter 15

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**Week 15: Dec. 4 & 6**

**Congress and the Presidency: Post 9/11  
Congress and the Presidency: Post 9/11**

Reading:

For Monday: Thurber Chapters 12 and 14

For Wed: Thurber Chapters 8 and 9

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**FINAL EXAM:**

**TBD  
Term Papers Due TBD**