The 111th Congress is seeking to address a number of complex and critical national problems including healthcare, climate change, the economic recession, and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Forging workable compromises on these issues in the Congress is difficult. This has raised concerns about Congress’ ability to function as a policy-making institution. In this course, we explore this issue by examining the U.S. Congress as a policy-making institution. We will look at how party politics, representative pressures, and government fragmentation affect the ability to find collective solutions to national problems. The class is divided into five sections. First, we look at the constitutional foundations and historical development of Congress. Second, we examine how members get to Congress and how the electoral connection influences their behavior. Third, we focus on the internal structure of the institution and the relationship of Congress to other institutions to see how these affect the policy-making process. Fourth, we analyze the policy process, looking at the rules that govern policy making and specific domestic and foreign policy case studies. We conclude the course with a discussion of the desirability and potential for congressional reform. By the end of the semester, students should have a better understanding of the policy process in both the House and Senate.

Course Requirements

This course will be primarily a discussion-based class. The class meets twice a week. The class requirements include attendance, participation, careful reading, several short papers, a research paper, and a final exam.

Attendance: Attendance is required and students who have more than two unexcused absences will receive a grade penalty. Students who have a fever or the flu should not come to class. A student with excessive absences may be asked to withdraw from the class.

Written Assignments: There are several written assignments for this course. The two longer assignments include a research paper (15 pages) that analyzes the progress of a policy issue in the 109th, 110th or 111th Congress and a final examination that will be given in the regularly scheduled exam period (December 18, 6:30 p.m.). You must take the exam in the regularly scheduled exam period unless you have a note from the Dean of Students. In addition, there will be several shorter papers and several oral presentations and simulations. Some of these shorter papers will also require outside research.

For the research paper, students should choose a congressional policy, examine patterns of congressional activity, and explain this pattern in terms of congressional politics and structure. The
paper must include some analysis of how and why Congress was able to pass this policy (or not pass the policy) and why the legislation took the form it did. This is NOT a paper in which you review the arguments for and against the policy and take a stance; it is a paper in which you analyze congressional decision-making and look at the actors involved in the policy process. The policy must be something Congress has considered in this or the last two legislative sessions. Possible topics include credit card reform, the economic stimulus package, education reform, corporate and accounting regulations, national service legislation, defense authorization, agricultural subsidies, or transport policy, or any other bill or policy issue that has been considered in the 109th, 110th or current Congress. The paper is due **Friday, December 11** at 5 p.m. in my office. Papers must be typed and double-spaced. They should be well written and proofread. Deductions will be made for typographical, spelling and grammatical errors. Late papers will be penalized one grade per day and no paper will be accepted if it is more than a week late. Paper grades are based on the originality and clarity of the thesis, the logic, persuasiveness and depth of the argument, the evidence provided and the organization and style. **All information that is paraphrased or quoted MUST be fully cited in footnotes or endnotes. All papers must also include a bibliography.** The bibliography must include all websites and materials that were consulted and there must be a minimum of 15 sources per paper, not including the readings for the class.

In addition, students will write several shorter papers during the semester. One short paper (5 to 7 pages) and presentation will be an analysis of your Congressman’s district, the Congressman’s background, why he or she was elected and what his/her prospects are for reelection in 2010. You must include information on the demographics of the district, the partisan balance of the district, the challengers the legislator has faced in elections, how much money he/she has raised, what committees he/she serves on in the Congress and which issues he/she has been involved with. You should discuss his/her chances for reelection in 2010. This is due at the beginning of class on **September 24.** Students will report that day on their representative. Students will also write two shorter reaction papers to the readings during the semester (September 8 and October 27) and prepare for a simulation.

Students are encouraged not to fall behind in the readings since it may be difficult to catch up later in the semester. Students are also expected to keep up with current events in Congress. I would recommend reading The Washington Post on-line. I would also recommend reading National Journal and Congressional Quarterly Weekly. There are also three insider newspapers that cover the politics of the Congress: Roll Call, The Hill, and Politico. These will be useful for choosing topics for your research papers. You may also find it useful to tune into CSPAN’s coverage of Congress.

The final grade for the course will be determined as follows:

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Short papers/simulations/presentations</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Long Research paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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**Participation:** Class participation is an important component of your grade. There will be many class exercises and simulations that will require your active participation. Much of the success of the class will depend on contributions from you. To facilitate discussion, students are expected to complete the readings in advance and come to class prepared to discuss them. Careful preparation of the readings is essential. Active and valuable contributions to the class discussion can earn an
improvement in your final grade. I may give unannounced quizzes on the readings.

I reserve the right to make changes in the syllabus should we fall behind or get ahead on certain topics. These changes will be announced in class.

**Books and Readings**

There are four required books for this course. They are available for purchase in the bookstore.


There is one recommended text: Hamilton, Madison and Jay. *The Federalist Papers*. Those of you who have taken PSCI 200, may have a copy.

There is a Moodle site for this class and an e-res account. These contain most of the readings. The rest you will need to find via Kenyon’s databases. You should check the Moodle site regularly and keep a folder with copies of these articles and bring them to class on the day we discuss them.

**Communications with the Class:** I will communicate with the class via e-mail. Please check your e-mail regularly. It is your responsibility to ensure that your e-mail account is not full. I will generally respond to e-mails within 24 hours (not immediately).

**Academic Honesty**

All students must follow the College’s policies regarding academic honesty as outlined in the Student Handbook. Academic dishonesty is a serious offense. Any case of suspected dishonesty will be forwarded to the Academic Infractions Board. If you have any questions regarding this issue, please consult with me before submitting your work. All work for this class must your own and done specifically for this class. All work from other sources must be cited and footnoted in papers.

**Disabilities**

If you have a hidden or visible disability which may require classroom or test accommodations, please see me as soon as possible during a scheduled office hour. If you have not already done so, you must register with the Coordinator of Disability Services, Erin Salva, (salva@kenyon.edu or ext. 5145). She is responsible for coordinating accommodations and services for students with disabilities. All information and documentation of disability is strictly confidential. No accommodations will be granted in this course without notification from the Office of Disability Services.
Congress and Policy-Making

I. Introduction: Congress and Representation – September 1

No readings

September 3 – No class - Professor is out of town from the morning of September 1-September 3. A short (3 page) reaction paper on the readings is due on September 8 at the beginning of class. Among the questions you might consider addressing in that paper: Why did the Founders set up the legislature as they did? What were their major concerns of the Founders? What were the major concerns of their opponents, the Anti-federalists? Why are there two legislative houses? Why are there differences between the two houses?

II. Historical Development of Congress

A. The Founders' Expectations and Constitutional Foundations – September 8

D&O, Congress and Its Members, Introduction and Ch. 1
The U.S. Constitution
Hamilton, Madison and Jay, The Federalist Papers, Nos. 1, 10, 35, 37, 48, 51, 52, 57, 62, 63
Baker, Ross. House and Senate, Ch. 1 – on e-res

B. The Historical Development of Congress – September 10

D&O, Congress and Its Members, Ch. 2
Mann and Ornstein, The Broken Branch, Chs. 1, 2

C. The Modern Congress – September 15

Mann and Ornstein, The Broken Branch, Chs. 3-6

III. Campaigns and Elections

A. Getting Elected: The Rules of the Game – September 17

D&O, Congress and Its Members, Ch. 3
David Mayhew, Congress: The Electoral Connection, pp. 3-77 – on reserve
Mark Z. Barabak, “No Rest for the Elected,” Los Angeles Times, April 4, 2005
B. Campaigns and Elections – September 22

D&O, *Congress and Its Members*, Ch. 4

**Papers on House member due September 24 at the beginning of class**

D. Campaigns and Elections: Empirical Examples – September 24

Student presentations on House members/Senators

D. Congressmen and Their Constituents – September 29

Price, *The Congressional Experience*, Chs. 4 & 10
Fenno, *Homestyle: House Members and Their Districts*, “Presentation of Self I” – on e-res
Fenno, “U.S. House Members in their Constituencies: An Exploration”

III. Inside Congress

A. Members and Their Staffs – October 1

D&O, *Congress and Its Members*, Ch. 5

B. Committees – October 6

D&O, *Congress and Its Members*, Ch. 7
Price, *The Congressional Experience*, Ch. 5

B. Party and Leadership – October 8

D&O, *Congress and Its Members*, Ch. 6
Price, *The Congressional Experience*, Ch. 8
Burdett Loomis, “Blue Dog House Democrats: Lead Dogs or Mythical Beasts?” *Extensions*, Spring 2009,
IV. Congress and Its Relationship to Other Actors

A. Congress and the President - October 15

D&O, Congress and Its Members -- Ch. 10

B. Congress and the Bureaucracy – October 20

D&O, Congress and Its Members, Ch. 11
October 22-25: Professor out of town – Watch Democratic Policy Committee hearing on sodium dichromate (August 4, 2009) at dpc.senate.gov – Three page reaction paper based on hearings in which you discuss the relationship between Congress and the bureaucracy - Due October 27 at the beginning of class

C. Congress and the Judiciary – October 27

D&O, Congress and Its Members - Ch. 12
Extensions, special issue on Judicial Nominations - Editor’s introduction and special orders essays – at http://www.ou.edu/special/albertct/extensions/

D. Congress and Interest Groups – October 29

D&O, Congress and Its Members, Ch. 13

V. The Legislative Process

A. The Policy Making Process – November 3
D&O, Ch. 8
Oleszek, Chs. 1-3

B. Rules and Strategy – November 5

Oleszek, Chs. 4 &5

C. House and Senate – November 10

Olezak, Chs. 6&7

D. Decision Making – November 12

D&O, Ch. 9
Oleszek, Chs. 8-10
Price, Ch. 6

VI. Legislative Case Studies

A. The Budget Process – November 17, 19

D&O, Ch. 14
Oleszek, Ch. 2
Price, Ch. 7

B. The Politics of Health Care – December 1,3

Julie Rovner, Congress and Health Care Reform 1993-94,” in Mann and Ornstein, eds., Intensive Care – on e-res
Kaiser Family Foundation – Side-by-side comparison of different bills - online
Alexis Simendinger, The Echo Chamber, National Journal, August 1, 2009, p. 18
James Barnes and Marilyn Serafini, Learning from Failure, National Journal, August 1, 2009, p. 24
Kirk Victor, A Lose-Lose Situation, National Journal, August 1, 2009, p. 28
Public Views on Health Care Reform, National Journal, August 1, 2009, p. 31
Other articles TBA depending on what happens to health care bill

Debate on health care options – December 3

C. The Politics of Foreign Policy – December 8, 10

Davidson and Oleszek, Congress and Its Members, Ch. 15
Price, Ch. 9

VII. The Future of Congress

A. Is Congress the Broken Branch? - December 15

Mann and Ornstein, *The Broken Branch*, Ch. 7
D&O, *Congress and Its Members*, Ch. 16

Research Papers Due: Friday, December 11 at 5 p.m.
Final Exam: Thursday, December 18, 6:30 p.m.