

Professor B. Welling Hall
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Tuesday, Thursday: 1:00
Class Room: LBC 124 and Lilly Lab
Optional Field Trip: 3/18 – 3/21

POLITICS 300: CIVIC ENGAGEMENT TOOLKIT FOR LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

Course Description:

This course is designed to prepare students for civic engagement by helping students translate how the work that they do in the liberal arts classroom is directly related to effective engagement in the legislative process. Students majoring in Politics, International Studies, and Peace Studies are especially welcome, although students with any liberal arts major may find that the skills and methods taught in the course will be useful preparation for internships and jobs in government or as lobbyists.

Over the semester we can anticipate some visits from representatives and staffers of elected officials. In addition to lobby training, the optional field trip will include some direct communication with elected officials in Washington, DC. (or, more likely, members of their staffs).

Although there is not an explicit prerequisite other than one introductory course in Politics, students must demonstrate competence in (1) fundamentals of American government, and (2) advanced English stylistics. All students **must** ace an English grammar and punctuation quiz by the time that early semester reports are due.

Course Objectives:

- Understand the daily work of a Congressional office.
- Learn the legislative priorities and communication styles of members of Congress.
- Develop a portfolio of writing samples that can be used in the process of securing government internships in Washington, DC or elsewhere.

Course Materials:

Required text: Strand, Johnson, Climer, *Surviving Inside Congress* (Congressional Institute, 2010)
Most course materials (not *Surviving Inside Congress*) will be available online or in the reference section of Lilly.

Evaluation:

This course will emphasize group drafting, redrafting, and editing as part of the process of electoral politics. At the end of the course, students will submit a final portfolio and will be graded based on a rubric such as the one attached below. Final evaluation in the course will also include some peer evaluation.

One anticipated special project will be doing the work of organizing a hearing and putting together a briefing book and preparing Members of Congress to question witnesses.

One project in this course will be a rapid-fire oral quiz in which you will need to assist your boss (in this case, your professor) in making an immediate decision.

Politics 300: Political Communication Portfolio					
Rubric for Final Evaluation					
	1	2	3	4	Total
Organization	Individual assignments cannot be understood because there is no clear sequence of thought.	Assignments are difficult to follow because themes and topics jump around.	Material is presented in logical sequence which reader can follow.	Material is presented in a logical, engaging sequence which reader can follow easily.	
Mastery of Material	Student does not demonstrate grasp of primary concepts in the course.	Student identifies main points in the reading for the course.	Student is at ease with several course concepts and provides some context.	Student demonstrates familiarity with the conceptual scheme of course authors, including some nuances.	
Synthetic Thinking	Assignments make no connection from this course to other readings or events.	Assignments make generic, unelaborated connection from this course to unspecified readings or events.	Assignments make unelaborated connection from this course to specific readings or events.	Assignments make original, insightful links from this course to other readings or events.	
Mechanics	Assignments have four or more spelling errors and/or grammatical errors.	Assignments have three misspellings and/or grammatical errors.	Assignments have no more than two misspellings and/or grammatical errors.	Assignments have no more than one misspelling or grammatical error.	
Professionalism*	Student's presentation is sloppy, i.e. marked by a lack of care, precision, or respect.	Student's presentation tends to the sloppy side - -misses several elements of professionalism.	Student's presentation is careful, precise, and respectful.	Student's presentation is noteworthy in its degree of professionalism.	
				Total Points:	

* For more ideas about what constitutes professionalism, see http://myopenuniversity.com/download/mou_pdf_artical/how_to_be_a_professional.pdf

Course Schedule: Anticipate Change! We will need to make some adjustments depending on when various elected officials and/or staff are willing and able to meet with us.

January 14	<u>Class Intro</u> Activities = quiz on fundamentals of US government, quiz on grammar and punctuation
January 18	<u>Introduction to the Daily Work of a Congressional Office – Lilly Lab</u> Read: Chapter One of <i>Surviving in Congress</i> : “In the Beginning” Activities = group time putting together a presentation on individual member – Lilly Lab
January 21	<u>Meeting Our Members – Lilly Lab</u> Prepare: Representatives Andre Carson, Mike Pence, Betty McCollum, John Boehner; and Senators Richard Lugar and Bernie Sanders Activities = putting together a schedule for a member of Congress
January 25	<u>First Steps in a Congressional Office – LBC 124</u> Read: Chapter Two of SiC: “A Job or A Career?” Update: What have our members been up to? Activities = read through some files, what is the variety of issues that a Member of Congress might have to confront?
January 28	<u>Preparing Talking Points for Constituents – Lilly Lab</u> Update: what have our members been up to? Read: CRS backgrounder on speech writing Activity: Research for Talking Points
February 1	<u>Day to Day Work with Constituents – Lilly Lab</u> Read: Chapter Three of SiC: “Who’s Who?” Update: What have our members been up to? Activity: Research Answers for Letters to Constituents Note: Steve Butler’s sociology class, “Institutions and Inequality,” will provide letters for us to write responses to.
February 4	<u>Mail, mail, mail – Lilly Lab</u> Update: what have our members been up to? Activity: Writing Letters to Constituents #2
February 8	Required Evening Session with Jim Cason from Friends Committee on National Legislation
February 11	NO CLASS
February 15	<u>What constituents and interest groups want – LBC 124</u> Read: Chapter Fourteen of SiC: “Working with the Private Sector” Update: What have our members been up to? Lecture: reform of the JJDPA
February 18	NO CLASS (Spring Break)
February 22	<u>What constituents and interest groups want – Lilly Lab</u> Update: what have our members been up to? Activity: Write a letter on behalf of constituent
February 25	<u>Non-Binding Resolutions – Lilly Lab</u>

	Update: What have our members been up to? Activity: Practice Writing a Non-Binding Resolution
March 1	<u>The Genesis of a Law – Lilly Lab</u> Read: Chapter Five of SiC: “The Genesis of a Law” Update: what have our members been up to? Activity: Put together a findings section for a bill
March 4	<u>Introducing a Bill – Lilly Lab</u> Read: Chapter Six in SiC: “Formal Introductions” and CRS backgrounder on speech writing Update: what have our members been up to? Activity: Write a one-minute on a bill
March 8	<u>Looking at Budgets and Appropriation Language – LBC 124</u> Read: TBA Update: what have our members been up to? Activity: Putting Together Report Language
March 11	<u>Working with the Press – LBC 124</u> Read: Chapter Nine in SiC: “Keys to Communication” Update: what have our members been up to? Activity: Write a Press Release
March 15-17	SPRING BREAK
March 18-21	FIELD TRIP to FRIENDS COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL LEGISLATION YOUNG ADULT LOBBY WEEKEND
March 22	FIELD TRIP continued
March 25	NO CLASS
March 29	<u>Communications Strategy – Lilly Lab</u> Read: Chapter Ten in SiC: “Strategic Communication” Update: what have our members been up to? Activity: Evaluate Congressional websites
April 1	<u>Making Change Happen -- Lilly Lab</u> Read: Chapter Twelve in SiC: “Leading Major Change” Update: what have our members been up to? Activity: Organizing a Hearing. We will be in touch with several Ford-Knight projects for student researchers to serve as expert witnesses.
April 5	<u>Making Change Happen continued – Lilly Lab</u> Update: what have our members been up to? Activity: Organizing a Hearing continued
April 8	<u>Holding a Hearing/Questions – LBC 124</u>
April 12	<u>Decision Memo on Hot Topic – Lilly Lab</u>
April 15	<u>Decision Memo on Hot Topic continued – Lilly Lab</u>
April 19	<u>The Role of Public Opinion – Lilly Lab</u> Read: Chapter Eleven in SiC: “Public Opinion and Public Judgment” Update: what have our members been up to?

	Activity: Talking Points again (controversial issue)
April 22, 26	<u>Work on Portfolios</u>
April 29	<u>Course Conclusion</u>