

American Legislative Politics – Spring 2022  
PS 3230, Section 101  
MWF, 11:00-11:50  
BH Room 105

## Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. William D. Hicks  
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Office Hours: 12–1, MWF  
Make appointment here: [Google Calendar](#)  
Meet here: [Zoom Link](#)

## Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

This course introduces students to the politics and policymaking processes of American legislatures - i.e., Congress and the 50 state legislatures. Students will learn about critical features of the legislative processes - e.g., the filibuster, executive vetoes, standing committees, bicameralism - and why and how these features matter. The goal is to develop and understanding of how such features shape the behavior of elected representatives and, by extension, the products they deliver to citizens. Additionally, this course will teach students how political scientists research the politics and policymaking patterns of modern legislatures.

## Required Texts and Materials

Brunell, Thomas. 2008. Redistricting and Representation: Why Competitive Elections are Bad for America. New York: Routledge.

Lee, Frances E. 2016. Insecure Majorities: Congress and the Perpetual Campaign. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

## Exams & Graded Activities

Exams: 50% of each student's grade is based on his or her performance on two non-cumulative exams. These exams are comprised of multiple choice, true/false, and short essay questions.

Quizzes: 30% of each student's grade is based on his or her quiz grade. See below for further information.

Assignments: 20% of each student's grade is based on his or her performance on two assignments. I will provide more details about assignments as the semester proceeds.

## Course Grades

<i>Grading Scale</i>			<i>Grade Requirements</i>		
A	94-100	C	74-76	Midterm Exam	25%
A-	90-93	C-	70-73	Final Exam	25%
B+	87-89	D+	67-69	Quizzes	30%
B	84-86	D	64-66	Assignments	20%
B-	80-83	D-	60-63		
C+	77-79	F	0-59		

## AsULearn Quizzes

This course will include roughly 1 quiz per week about the readings. These quizzes will be short answer and consist of no more than a handful of short questions. The purpose of these quizzes is to encourage students to keep up with the readings. The questions are not designed to be difficult, but rather should be very easy for students who have engaged the reading.

## Absence Policies

Given the prevalence of Covid-19 in our broader community, it is irresponsible to require attendance. Many of you may encounter situations where attending class puts others at risk. I ask seriously if any of you have any symptoms related to Covid-19 or more generally of a cold or flu, e.g., fever, cough, sneezing, fatigue, chest tightness, etc., or you have been in close contact with someone who has, please **do not attend**. I have designed this course so that all graded assignments, quizzes, discussions will be available online.

## Appalachian State Face Covering Policy

Appalachian State University Policy 302.8 requires that all students wear face coverings at all times that social distancing is not feasible. Even if social distancing is feasible face coverings shall

be worn at all times in classrooms, conference rooms, meeting rooms, elevators, research laboratory spaces, and any other instructional areas, unless an approved modification has been provided pursuant to the policy. Appropriate face coverings include cloth face coverings and other reusable University-approved face coverings that cover the nose and mouth of the individual. Failure to comply with this policy may result in dismissal from the current class session and charges under the Code of Student Conduct.

## COVID-19 Statement

We are in the midst of a global pandemic, and we must all do our best to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and work to protect each other. Appalachian State has put in place a number of measures aimed at preventing the spread of this disease. Please be aware of the following:

- Face coverings are required for students, faculty, and staff when on campus, including in all classrooms. If you do not have a face covering on, you will not be allowed to attend class. (See policy below)
  - Keep in mind: Because COVID-19 is spread through droplets when an infected person speaks, coughs, or sneezes, one of the most important tools we have in this fight are face coverings.
  - Students who seek an exception to this policy because they are unable to wear a face covering due to a medical condition should contact the [Office of Disability Resources](#).
- The **symptoms** of COVID-19 include the following:
  - Fever
  - Cough
  - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
  - Chills
  - Repeated shaking with chills
  - Muscle pain
  - Headache
  - Sore throat
  - Loss of taste or smell
- If you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, please call Student Health Service at **828-262-3100** or AppHealthCare at **828-264-4995**.
  - Here is a list of testing locations in [Watauga County](#)
- If you feel sick, **stay home**
  - If you have had a fever, do not return to class until you have been fever-free for a minimum of **48 hours** without the use of fever-reducing medication.

- If you have a two or more COVID-19 symptoms, do not return to class until you are symptom-free for a minimum of **72 hours** without fever-reducing medication.
- If you have been tested for COVID-19, do not return to class until you have received a **negative test result**.
- If you test positive for COVID-19, do not return to class until you have **self-quarantined for 14 days**.
- If someone you have close contact with tests positive for COVID-19, do not return to class until you have **self-quarantined for 14 days**.
- If you have recently attended a large social event where people were unmasked, do not return to class until you have **self-quarantined for 14 days**.

## Student Conduct

As a community of learners at Appalachian State University, we must create an atmosphere of honesty, fairness, and responsibility, without which we cannot earn the trust and respect of each other. Furthermore, we recognize that academic dishonesty detracts from the value of an Appalachian degree. Therefore, we shall not tolerate lying, cheating, or stealing in any form and will oppose any instance of academic dishonesty. This course will follow the provisions of the Academic Integrity Code, which can be found on the Office of Student Conduct Web Site:

[www.studentconduct.appstate.edu](http://www.studentconduct.appstate.edu)

## Statement on Student Engagement with Courses

In its mission statement, Appalachian State University aims at “providing undergraduate students a rigorous liberal education that emphasizes transferable skills and preparation for professional careers” as well as “maintaining a faculty whose members serve as excellent teachers and scholarly mentors for their students.” Such rigor means that the foremost activity of Appalachian students is an intense engagement with their courses. In practical terms, students should expect to spend two to three hours of studying for every hour of class time. Hence, a fifteen-hour academic load might reasonably require between 30 and 45 hours per week of out-of-class work.

## Disability Support Services

Appalachian State University is committed to making reasonable accommodations for individuals with documented qualifying disabilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Those seeking accommodations based on a substantially limiting disability must contact and register with The Office of Disability Services (ODS) at <http://www.ods.appstate.edu/> or 828-262-3056. Once registration is complete, individuals will meet with ODS staff to discuss eligibility and appropriate accommodations.

## **Religious Observances Policy**

Faculty members are required to make reasonable accommodations for students requesting to miss class due to the observance of religious holidays. All ASU students are allowed a minimum of two absences per year for religious observances. Up to two absences for such observances will be excused, without penalty to the student, provided that the student has informed the instructor in the manner specified in the syllabus. Notice must be given by the student to the instructor before the absence occurs and no later than three weeks after the start of the semester in which the absence(s) will occur. Arrangements will be made to make up work missed by these religious observances, without penalty to the student. For the purposes of this policy, ASU defines the term “religious observance” to include religious holidays, holy days, or similar observances associated with a student’s faith that require absence from class. Faculty, at their discretion, may include class attendance as a criterion in determining a student’s final grade in the course. On the first day of class, faculty must inform students of their class attendance policy and the effect of that policy on their final grade; both policies must be clearly stated in the class syllabus.

## **Syllabus Change Policy**

This syllabus is only a guide for the course and is subject to change with advanced notice.

## **Course Schedule**

### **Week 1. January 10 – January 14**

Course Introduction: Why Legislatures?

### **Week 2. January 17 – January 21**

Redistricting & Representation (Part 1)

### **Week 3. January 24– January 28**

Redistricting & Representation (Part 2)

### **Week 4. January 31 – February 4**

Comparative Legislatures Assignment

### **Week 5. February 7 – February 11**

Congressional Elections – Jacobson

**Week 6. February 14 – February 18**

Insecure Majorities (Part 1)

**Week 7. February 21 – February 25**

Insecure Majorities (Part 2)

**Week 8. February 28 – March 4**

**Midterm Exam**

**Spring Break: March 7 – 11**

**Week 9: March 14 – March 18**

Parties – Smith and Gamm

**Week 10. March 21 – March 25**

Parties – Binder

**Week 11. March 28 – April 1**

Parties – Ragusa

**Week 12. April 4 – April 8**

Filibuster – Koger

**Week 13. April 11 – April 15**

Divided Government – Binder and Maltzman  
no class April 15

**Week 14. April 18 – April 22**

Legislative History Assignment

**Week 15. April 25 – April 27**

Review

**Final Exams. Friday, April 29**

**Final Exam**