

# UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

Fall 2012

## Gov 370M: Research on the U.S. Congress

Unique #: 38850	<b>Instructors:</b>		<b>Expert Consultants:</b>
TTh, 5-6:15	Professor Sean M. Theriault	Professor Bryan Jones	Michelle Whyman
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### Course Description

This research course is the first half of a year-long research program under the direction of Professors Theriault (ST) and Jones (BJ). Throughout the year, we have two major goals. First, and less important, we aim to familiarize the students with our own research agendas (past and present). Second, and more important, we will introduce the students to the research experience. In this sense, the class will attempt to replicate the “laboratory” of the hard sciences. In those laboratories, students are engaged in independent, though related projects. Their work is coordinated and synthesized by a principal investigator who uses the independent projects to form a greater whole. This course is a social science laboratory. To that end, your work is synthesized by two principal investigators (ST and BJ) in the construction of major books on the legislative and policy processes.

### Special Needs

The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. To determine if you qualify, please contact the Dean of Students at 471-6259; 471-4641 TTY. If they certify your needs, I will work with you to make appropriate arrangements.

### Course Format

The class will meet regularly to discuss the two major course objectives. It is the student’s responsibility to come to class with all of the assigned work – both research and reading – completed. Rarely will the class stray from a seminar format.

### Grades

In these classes, we will NOT give pluses and minuses. We will not “round up” for students who are close to a cutoff. Grades will be determined according to the following formula:

- 25% Class Participation. I will take attendance every class meeting. Because of the nature of the course, frequent student absences will not be tolerated.
- 10% Homework Assignments
- 40% Research Assignments
- 25% Research Proposal

We frown on issues of academic dishonesty and will severely punish any student caught plagiarizing, cheating, fabricating data, or engaged in unethical classroom practices. All grade disputes must be type written and turned in within 1 week of receiving the grade.

### Course Readings

The course books are both available at the UT Co-op:

- Theriault, Sean M. 2008. *Party Polarization in Congress*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Baumgartner, Frank R., and Bryan D. Jones. 2009. *Agendas and Instability in American Politics*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

## Course Outline

Week 1 (August 29): Course Introduction

Week 2 (September 4 and 6): The Research Experience

Week 3 (September 11 and 13): ST's Research

- *Party Polarization in Congress*, all

Week 4 (September 18 and 20): BJ's Research

- *Agendas and Instability in American Politics*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, all

Week 5 (September 25 and 27): Research Assignments

Week 6 (October 2 and 4): Research Due and Assigned (RDA)

Week 7 (October 9 and 11): RDA – The Research Proposal

- URA Applications Due (Oct. 15)!

Week 8 (October 16 and 18): RDA – A panel of experts!

Week 9 (October 23 and 25): RDA

Week 10 (October 30 and November 1): RDA

Week 11 (November 6 and 8): RDA

Week 12 (November 13 and 15): RDA – Presentation of the Research Proposal

Week 13 (November 20): RDA

Week 14 (November 27 and 29): RDA

Week 15 (December 4 and 6): RDA – Research Proposals Due