

**Instructor: Ann Jablon**

**Boston University Washington Legislative Internship Program**

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**SYLLABUS for CAS PO 406 – Spring 2013**

**Introduction to Congressional Policy Making  
6:30 PM – 9:30 PM**

**Purpose of Course:**

The purpose of this course is for you, the student, to gain a working knowledge of the U.S. Congress, from both a theoretical and a practical perspective, in an effort to further develop your own views into the legislative and political processes. This will be done by combining themes from assigned readings and lectures with insight gathered from guest speakers, current periodicals, and in-class discussions.

**Required Readings:**

**The Washington Post.**

**How Congress Works, 4th Edition, Congressional Quarterly, Inc., Washington, D.C., April, 2008.**

**Walter Oleszek, Congressional Procedures and the Policy Process, CQ Press, 8<sup>th</sup> Edition.**

**Various readings as assigned.**

**Grade Determination:**

40% Final Examination

30% Take-Home Midterm

20% Various Assignments (paper, issue brief)

10% Class Participation, Attendance and Knowledge of Readings

**Office Hours:**

I will be available to meet with students immediately following class sessions on Monday night, or by appointment at other times.

**Assignments:**

You have been given several deadlines to meet throughout the semester and you are expected to meet them.

## Class Schedule:

\*\*\*This schedule is subject to change throughout the semester. When guest speakers and events become available, the time and place of class sessions may change. *Special class sessions will be added to those listed on the syllabus and you are required to attend these additional sessions.* I realize the difficulty this adds to balancing your schedule and you will be given as much advanced warning as possible of these additions.\*\*\*

**Monday, 1/28**

### **Introduction –**

An overview of the syllabus, course expectations, discussion of books.  
Discussion of current events before the Congress.  
Contact information to be collected and distributed.

**Monday, 2/4**

### **The Role of the Party**

The powers of the Speaker of the House; The Republican Conference and the Democratic Caucus, The “Whip” Organization...  
Readings: How Congress Works, Chapter 1.

**Monday, 2/11**

### **The Legislative Process**

How a bill becomes a law - the intricacies. U.S. House - protection of majority rights vs. U.S. Senate - and minority rights; The Rules Committee vs. Unanimous Consent  
Readings: How Congress Works, Chapter 2.

**Monday, 2/18**

### **The Committee Process –**

Hearings; Markups; An overview of how legislation is created. Committee staff, legislative procedure.  
Readings: How Congress Works, Chapter 3.  
**Assignment Due:** Three to four page (typed and double spaced) paper on your observations at a Congressional hearing of your choice.  
**Take Home Midterm handed out at end of class**

**Monday, 2/25**

### **The Congressional Budgeting Process**

A discussion and clarification of the authorization and appropriations process in the Congress, the role of the President’s budget and the House and Senate Budget Committees. Readings to be assigned. **Midterm Due!**

**Monday, 3/4**

### **Campaigns and Elections**

A discussion of issues including the role of PACs, soft money vs. hard money, issue advocacy and campaign finance reform.  
Readings to be assigned.

**Monday, 3/11**

**No class - Spring Break**

- Monday, 3/18**      **The Impact of Lobbyists on the Legislative Process. Lobbyist presentation.**  
Readings to be assigned.
- Monday, 3/25**      **“Congressional Questions and Answers”**  
**Assignment:** Bring in an article from a current newspaper or periodical relating to the Congress. Make sufficient copies for the entire class. Article should address an issue or question you have relating to the Congress. Be prepared to present article to the class.  
Readings to be assigned.
- Monday, 4/1**      **No Class**
- Monday, 4/8**      **Field Trip – Details to be announced – during the day.**  
Readings to be assigned.
- Monday, 4/15**      **Legislative / Executive Branch Relations**  
Communication between The White House and Capitol Hill. The role of the office of legislative affairs. Checks and balances on executive branch activities.  
Readings to be assigned.
- Monday, 4/22**      **Legislative Topic / Presentations In Class**  
Readings to be assigned. Final Exams to be handed out in class.
- Monday, 4/29**      **Final Exams Due**