

THE POWER GAME:
A SIMULATION OF WASHINGTON POLITICS

This course examines the nature of political power in American politics, but it does so in an unusual way: by offering students an opportunity to immerse themselves into the political process. The core of the course is a simulation of the U.S. government in which students play the roles of real members of Congress, the executive branch, and interest group lobbyists. The simulation is designed to acquaint students with key national leaders, the complexities involved in policymaking, and the relationship between these different political actors.

Course Grades

Course grades will be based on a research project, a brief quiz, a take-home final exam, and participation.

For the project, you will be asked to research a member of Congress, the executive branch, or an interest group. If you play a representative, you must investigate this member so that you know the member's positions on a range of important issues, how he or she is likely to approach new issues, and the character of the member's district. Executive branch members will be asked to provide comparable information on the president, or another executive branch official. Lobbyists conduct research on an individual interest group. Once assigned a role, it is important that you begin work on this project immediately. I have placed a guide to valuable resource material, along with links, on the course's Blackboard site.

The quiz will focus on the rules of the simulation and congressional procedures. The final is cumulative, and will be based on class readings, lectures, discussions, and films.

Participation grades will be made by the professor with input from the class advisers. These evaluations will be made on the basis of qualitative and quantitative participation. Qualitative participation can be conceived in terms of: (1) realistic behavior and (2) legislative effectiveness. A portion of your grade will depend on quasi-objective indicators -- attendance records, voting records, number of bills introduced, number of bills passed, and so on. Attendance at the simulation is mandatory. If you have more than one unexcused absence from the game, your participation grade will be reduced. To ensure fairness, students are asked to turn in a short self-evaluation

of their performance at the end of the semester to help me determine their grade. The self-evaluation is not required.

Grades will be based on the following formula:

30 %	Project (120 points)
10 %	Quiz (40)
30 %	Participation (120)
30 %	Final (120)

Required Texts

The Power Game: A Simulation (Simulation manual; available at Clean Copy at 6th Avenue and Mill Street)

Burdett A. Loomis and Wendy J. Schiller, *The Contemporary Congress*, 4th edition (all books available at the PSU bookstore)

Lance LeLoup and Steven A. Shull, *The President and Congress*, 2d edition

Amy E. Black, *From Inspiration to Legislation: How an Idea Becomes a Bill*

In addition to these four texts, I have placed links to a few online readings on Black.

Course Outline and Reading Assignments

On the next page, I provide a day by day overview of the course, detailing what will be covered in lecture, where you should be in the readings, and the general schedule for the simulation. As you can see, the first part of the course is dominated by lectures, and the second by the simulation. I have listed all of the readings so they correspond to the related lectures. I know this means that there is a lot of reading at the beginning of the course. If you can keep up, you will acquire a better understanding of the material. If you can't get to all the readings immediately, try to read those marked with an asterisk as soon as possible. You do need to read the manual immediately, since there is a quiz on it in April.

Some changes in the schedule may occur, particularly in the simulation activities. Once the simulation gets rolling you will need to keep in touch with your party leaders to be certain of changes in the daily schedule.

Throughout the quarter, updates about the game will be posted on Blackboard. The students will also be asked to upload information to the Blackboard site. If you do have an Odin account, you will need to get one to access Blackboard.

SCHEDULE

<u>Date</u>	<u>Class Activity</u>	<u>Readings</u>
3/31	Introduction	*Manual: read all
4/2	"The Job of Governing" <u>ROLE PREFERENCE SHEETS DUE</u>	*Loomis: chapters 1-2
4/4	"Structure, duties, and powers"	

4/7	"Structure, duties, powers" <u>ROLE ASSIGNMENTS DISTRIBUTED</u>	*Loomis: 4, 7-8 Blackboard Reading #1
4/9	"Policymaking Process"	
4/11	"Policymaking Process"	

4/14	"Congressional Leadership"	Loomis: 5-6 Blackboard Readings #2&3
4/16	"The Power of the Presidency" <u>RESEARCH PROJECT DUE</u>	
4/18	First Caucus	

4/21	<u>QUIZ ON MANUAL</u> Second Caucus	
4/23	First General Session	
4/25	"Shared Governance"	LeLoup: 1-5

4/28	First committee meetings	
4/30	State of the Union <u>FIRST BILL DUE</u> (except President)	
5/2	"Interest Group Power"	Loomis: 3 Blackboard Reading #4 LeLoup: 6

(* Readings marked with an asterisk should be read immediately!)

5/5 Caucuses meet to consider agenda/
 Committees meet

5/7 Committees meet

5/9 "The Federal Budget" LeLoup: 7-8
 PRESIDENT'S BILL DUE Blackboard Reading #5
 BUDGET DIRECTOR'S BUDGET DUE

5/12 Committees meet Black: 1-3

5/14 Caucuses meet/General Session

5/16 Committees meet

5/19 Committees meet Black: 4-6

5/21 Caucuses meet/General Session

5/23 Committees or General Session

5/26 Holiday

5/28 Caucuses meet Black: 7-9

5/30 General Session

6/2 Committee or General Session

6/4 Caucuses meet/General Session
 TAKE-HOME FINAL POSTED ON BLACKBOARD

6/6 "Political Power in Perspective" LeLoup: 9
 SELF EVALUATION DUE (optional) Loomis: 9-10

6/9 12:30-2:20 p.m. (final exam time; **attendance required**)
 Caucuses meet/General Session
 FINAL BUDGET DEADLINE
 Adjourn sine die
 TAKE-HOME FINAL DUE (due by 5 p.m.—so be in class!!)