

**NOVA COLLEGE-WIDE COURSE CONTENT SUMMARY
PLS 230 – CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT (3 CR.)**

Course Description

Teaches the creation and development of the legislative branch of American government, and how that branch – Congress – interacts with the presidency, judiciary, and other aspects of American politics, such as campaigns, elections, political parties, media, bureaucracy, domestic policy, and foreign policy. Lecture 3 hours per week.

General Course Purpose

The general course objectives is to thoroughly teach students about the creation, development, and general practices of Congress in a full semester dedicated to all aspects of the Congressional branch of government.

Course Prerequisites/Co-requisites

Ability to use English language correctly and effectively as reflected in satisfactory scores on appropriate English proficiency examination.

Course Objectives

Upon completing the course, the student will be able to:

- Analyze the variety of factors that were involved in creating Congress, and to critically evaluate the historical and institutional developments that have taken place in Congress with regards to the following: leadership positions; role of parties in Congress; increasing importance of lobbying; and the changing dynamics of committees in congress relating to their rise in prominence, the increasing importance of committee chairpersons, and the rise of subcommittees.
- Analyze how congressional candidates are recruited to run for office, and how they conduct campaigns. This includes focus upon the role of money, media, campaign organization, interest groups, and district size and shape in determining how a campaign will be conducted.
- Compare and contrast the many differences between the House of Representatives and the Senate.
- Analyze in thorough detail the path legislation takes through both houses of Congress, from a bill's introduction, to its committee and subcommittee assignment, which includes mark-ups, investigations, and hearings, to the house floor, conference committee, the president's desk, and – possibly – veto override procedures.
- Critically analyze all of the above and present findings in a scholarly fashion via properly formatted research papers, class discussions, and oral presentations.

Major Topics to be Included

- a. Creation of Congress.
- b. Development of Congress throughout American history.
- c. Recruitment of candidates for Congress.
- d. General elections for seats in Congress.
- e. Members of Congress on the Hill, and in their home districts.
- f. Leaders and parties.
- g. Congressional committees.
- h. Congressional rules and procedures to see a bill become law.
- i. Congress and the president.

- j. Congress and bureaucracy.
- k. Congress and the courts.
- l. Congress and interest groups.
- m. Congress and the media.
- n. Congress and domestic policy.
- o. Congress and the federal budget.
- p. Congress and foreign and defense policies.