American Legislative Process POL 304 Fall 2021 MWF 2:00 PM-2:50 PM Location: Bishop Room 105

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Office Hours - Zoom Only by appointment

Office Hours by appointment

Course Description

This course is an introduction to the political and legislative process of the United States Congress. The course will focus on a half-semester-long legislative simulation in which students will play the role of United States Senators. Students will organize the legislature, form parties and caucuses, select their own leaders, draft their own bills, debate, and vote on legislation. The first part of the course will consist of traditional lectures to familiarize students with how Congress works; the rest of the semester will be primarily devoted to the legislative simulation.

Objectives

To introduce students to the role of Congress in lawmaking and American society

To acquaint students with the political science concepts which characterize Congress, including:

The goals and constraints which shape the behavior of legislators

The legislative process and the logic behind it, as well as the implications of proposed reforms

The particular value of information and agenda setting in the legislative process

To familiarize students with the requirements of effectively serving as a representative and public officeholder

To develop students' communication, collaboration, and strategic planning skills through engagement in a simulation of policymaking

Required Course Materials

Davidson, Roger H., Walter J. Oleszek, Frances E. Lee, and Eric Schickler, ed. 2020. (17th Edition) *Congress and Its Members.*

The Washington Post frequently publishes short articles on scientific findings from political scientists, and several articles from The Washington Post are assigned as course readings. The Washington Post limits the number of articles which may be read each month for free. If you find that you exceed the limit and are blocked from accessing course readings, you should purchase a student 'All-Access Digital' subscription to The Washington Post for two months of the course, starting on September 1 through the midterm at the end of October.

The Academic All-Access Digital subscription currently costs \$1 for the first four weeks and \$1 for the second four weeks. Frequently, the second month goes on sale for \$5, so you may be able to pay even less. You can find the academic subscription option at https://subscribe.washingtonpost.com/checkout and scrolling down until you see 'Academic Rate.'

You will also need to register and create a profile on LegSim. LegSim is maintained by a political scientist at the University of Washington, so if you see references to the University of Washington, do not worry. There is a \$16 nonrefundable registration fee which you will be asked to pay at the moment you register. Visit www.legsim.org/users/sign_up to sign up as a new user. Enter the Chamber Authorization Code at the bottom, which is d5ca50bc6334782d90707e71953318cc. You must enter in your credit/debit card information to pay right after you register, or you will likely be locked out of your account and fixing the problem can be a big hassle, so make sure you have this information with you when you go to sign up. After signing up and paying you will receive an activation email, and once your account is activated you can sign into our Senate session under "Ole Miss: Fall 2021."

Supplemental Readings

Readings may be assigned to supplement the required text from online sources or excerpted from other books. Assigned readings derived from online sources are accessible through links within the course content folders on the class Blackboard page. Those readings which are are open-access are denoted (Online-BB) on the syllabus. Assigned readings from the Washington Post are denoted (Washington Post-BB) on the syllabus.

Grading

Attendance 5%; Section Quizzes 5%; Participation 5%; Practice Exam 5%; Exam 25%; Simulation Assignments 55%.

Class attendance counts for 5% of your final grade. There is substantial evidence that students who attend class regularly at Ole Miss get much better grades than those who do not, and obviously, those who do not attend class cannot participate in the Senate simulation. Students who do not show up regularly for the simulation create problems for the rest of the class and failing to do your part by showing up will negatively impact your grade. Attendance in class will be taken using the classroom attendance scanners between 1:45 PM and 2:10 PM. Missing a class will result in 1/45 of your attendance points being lost.

Section quiz questions count for 5% of your final grade. For each topical section during the lecture component of class, several multiple choice questions on the readings and lecture material will be

posted on Blackboard. You must complete the section quiz before 11:59 PM on the last class day of a section as marked in the syllabus. The section quiz questions will be automatically graded and will be designed to reward you for paying attention to the readings and lectures.

Class participation counts for 5% of your final grade. Participation will be assessed through your participation in discussions posted on Blackboard. For each section of the class, a discussion will be created on Blackboard in the Discussions section, with several provocative questions posted by Dr. Klingler. You should post a written response at least **two times** in each section discussion which captures your critical thinking about the material and well-reasoned opinion. Your responses may be to the question itself or to another person's response. You will have until 11:59 PM on the last class day included in a section to complete the participation questions. Written participation responses will be graded as a fail (0 points), a pass (1 point) or high pass (2 points) based on the thoughtfulness of the three responses.

A practice exam will be used to calculate 5% of your final grade and is due on September 20. Missed practice exams cannot be made up and will be graded as zeros.

One midterm exam constitutes 25% of your final grade. The midterm will take place during class on October 25 and will consist of 18 multiple choice questions and two short essay questions. You will need a purple scantron sheet to take the exam. Make up exams will be administered only with prior approval.

Several simulation assignments will be used to calculate 55% of your final grade. The simulation assignments are as follows:

A Legislator Profile will make up 2.5% of your final grade. Each member of the U.S. Senate represents a state, which can include anywhere from half a million to forty million citizens. This task asks you to create your member profile on the LegSim website. Other students will be relying on your profile to learn more about you. Focus on the characteristics that would likely affect your own priorities and behavior as an elected representative. This is due on or before class on September 8.

A Legislative Agenda will provide you with 5% of your final grade. This task asks you to prepare a memo to distribute to your colleagues in the Senate. In this memo you should begin with how you view your role as a representative, provide information about your personal issue priorities, and discuss how you intend to advance your issue goals given that there are many other legislators and issues competing for attention. This is due to Prof. Klingler as well as to the class (distributed via LegSim) on or before class on September 15.

A committee research report will contribute 5% of your final grade. In this project you and your colleagues will research your committee's primary issue responsibilities. In real life, committees do their work in a group, and **this report will result in a single group grade given to all committee members.** This is due on or before class on October 18.

A quiz on Senate procedure will make up 2.5% of your final grade. This online quiz must be completed before midnight on October 29. The goal is to encourage you to familiarize yourselves with the rules for the simulation as well as the resources available in LegSim before we get started.

Your Major Bill will comprise 5% of your final grade. In this assignment you are tasked with researching and drafting an original and significant bill of your own choosing. It should have accompanying text explaining the problem that the bill addresses, how the bill will address the problem, and the rationale for the provisions of the bill and any cost estimates. Copying and pasting an existing bill without making significant changes will result in a zero. The major bill must be submitted via LegSim before 2 PM on November 3.

Reelection Tasks will provide 10% of your final grade. Within the simulation you can earn Reelection Points in a variety of ways. If you earn more than ten Reelection Points, every point you earn beyond ten is worth an additional quarter of a percentage point of your final grade, with a limit of five full percentage points in extra credit.

A reelection strategy memo will provide 20% of your final grade and is due at 4 PM on December 6. This major assignment is based on an unlikely hypothetical scenario- the U.S. Constitution has been amended, and the number of Senators in each state has been reduced to one. In order to win reelection, you will have to face the other Senator from your own state, regardless of what party they are in. For this assignment, write a memo to your campaign manager outlining your reelection strategy against your fellow Senator. Focus on reelection tasks you have completed (and why you have chosen the tasks you performed, given your party and state). Also address what your opponent's shortcomings might be. Additionally, write a script for a 30-second campaign advertisement (for your self) that mentions at least three reelection tasks, and try to make it as realistic as possible. (For example, don't say you "performed X reelection task (committee chair) because it was worth Y number of points." Instead, say something like "[A]s Chair of the [name] Committee, Congressperson Z has fought to ensure [something] for all residents of [state].") Note that the three reelection tasks can also include reelection tasks your opponent *did not do*; if you choose to mention your opponent, make it as realistic as possible (without *ad hominem* attacks).

A campaign debate appearance will contribute 5% of your final grade. During the class final exam period on December 6 at 4 PM, we will hold mock "campaign debate appearances." Each Senator will have two minutes to make a verbal statement wherein they will summarize the most important aspects of his or her case for reelection. Your goal will be to make the strongest case possible for your reelection in the allotted time. (Focus on explaining why the things you did are good given the contours of your state.)

Extra credit will not only be available through the reelection tasks, but through three additional mechanisms which are geared toward overcoming potential collective action problems. These three mechanisms and the reelection tasks are the only ways of getting extra credit.

Winning a **Senate Majority** can provide up to an extra 3% of the final grade. After the debates we will have an election, with the prize being a share of a 3% pot of extra credit points. Both Senators from the same state will compete, and the Senator with the most reelection points will win the state's Senate seat. The party that receives a majority of the <u>competitive</u> seats will receive a majority of the prize proportional to their majority, with the minority party receiving the remainder. (Competitive seats include all states which do not have two Senators from the same party.) So, if for example, a party received 2/3 of the competitive seats after the election, then everyone in the winning party would receive 2 additional percentage points on the final grade, and everyone in the losing party would receive one additional percentage point. Your likelihood of winning your

own reelection and contributing to your party's majority will be dependent on your ability to earn reelection points.

Completing **midsemester course evaluations** on Blackboard can provide up to an extra 2% of the final grade. If at least 90% of the class completes a midsemester course evaluation, everyone in the class will receive one extra percentage point on his or her final grade. For each additional percentage point of the class that completes a midsemester evaluation, everyone in the class will receive 1/10 of an additional bonus point. For example, if 95% of the class completes the midsemester course evaluation, then everyone will receive 1.5 bonus points from this pot. The total amount of extra credit students may receive from midsemester course evaluations is two bonus points. Note that I can see who answers the survey at any time as well as the content, but not who wrote what comment. I can see, however, the proportion of the class which completes evaluations. Winning **reelection to the Senate** at the end of the semester will provide 1 point extra credit added to the final grade. As stated above, both Senators from the same state will compete, and

Grade Scale

Below is how your final percentage grade will be mapped into a letter grade. There are opportunities for extra credit in this class so there will be no rounding. If you get an 87.99999999%, (for example) when the semester is over your final grade will be a B+. **No exceptions.**

the Senator with the most reelection points following the debates will win reelection.

Percentage Point Range	Letter Grade
92-100	А
88-91.99	A-
85-87.99	B+
81-84.99	В
78-80.99	В-
75-77.99	C+
71-75.99	C
68-70.99	C-
65-67.99	D+
62-64.99	D
60-61.99	D-
0-59.99	F

Class Policies

Changes to the syllabus may be made in order to correct errors, adjust the schedule, fine tune course details, or address unforeseen issues. Changes will be discussed and announced in class. It is the student's responsibility to attend class to be aware of any syllabus changes. The official syllabus will always be available on Blackboard.

Policy on Readings and Assignment Expectations

Reading and any additional assignments should be completed before the official start time for class on the day assigned. This means that email copies of assignments must be in the instructor/TA's

possession at the official start time for class or the assignment is late. Pay careful attention to the syllabus and to any adjustments that may occur. Material in the readings is fair game for exams even if not discussed in class.

Policy on Missed Classes and Assignments

The University requires that all students have a verified attendance at least once during the first two weeks of the semester for each course. If attendance is not verified, then a student will be dropped from the course and any financial aid is adjusted accordingly by the University. Attendance will be verified when you use the attendance scanners in class.. **Do not cheat on attendance. Do not scan someone else's ID and do not allow anyone else to scan your ID. If you are caught cheating you will fail the course without exception.**

Late and makeup assignments will be allowed only with a doctor's note or other equally serious documented reason for the absence. **Excused absences will only be given for dates listed in the documentation provided. Keep this in mind when requesting doctors notes or obtaining other documentation such as memorial programs in the event of a funeral.** Excused absences from mental health conditions such as depression, bereavement, or anxiety require a note from a doctor mentioning specific dates under which attendance was prevented as a result of the mental health condition. Excused absences may also be granted if the student must serve as a caregiver for a relative diagnosed with COVID-19 even if the student is not ill, so long as documentation is provided for the relative's diagnosis. If no date is provided in the documentation, there will be no excused absence given.

You are responsible for material presented in lectures and discussed in class regardless of your attendance. Notes will not be supplied for students who have missed class, so plan to make other arrangements. Athletes and other students who will miss class due to extra- or co-curricular travel should inform me of the relevant dates early in the semester.

Policy on COVID-19

Students are expected to comply with the University's protocols when they are in effect. Currently, a mask requirement is in place for vaccinated and unvaccinated people. As a result, proper mask wearing is required indoors and in the classroom. Current protocols can be found at https://coronavirus.olemiss.edu.Students who have a diagnosed health concern that interferes with the wearing of face masks may contact the Student Disabilities Services (SDS) Office to seek a University-approved accommodation. Please contact SDS at https://sds.olemiss.edu/for more information.If students test positive for COVID-19 at any health care facility, they must contact the Student Health Center at 662-915-7274. University Health Services will coordinate contact tracing to lessen the likelihood of spread.Students with COVID-19 should seek medical attention at the Student Health Center and contact Dr. Klingler to let them know that they will be missing class due to a health-related issue.If you are exposed to someone with COVID-19, you should contact the Student Health Center to get tested three to five days following exposure and follow the guidance recommended by the Health Center.If you are not fully vaccinated, you should follow quarantine protocols found athttps://coronavirus.olemiss.edu/students.

Currently, COVID-19 guidelines for the Fall 2021 semester include face masks for vaccinated and unvaccinated people inside University buildings; therefore, students should not be in classroom

spaces when they are out of compliance with these guidelines unless they have an accommodation approved by Student Disability Services. The University's Academic Conduct and Discipline Policy states that "disorderly behavior that disrupts the academic environment violates the standard of fair access to the academic experience." Failure to adhere to health requirements during the COVID-19 emergency will be deemed as disruptive to the classroom and will be enforced following the Academic Conduct and Discipline procedures. The University of Mississippi has adopted a tiered disciplinary protocol for non-adherence to COVID-19 health requirements. This disciplinary protocol is maintained by the Office of Conflict Resolution and Student Conduct: https://conflictresolution.olemiss.edu/covidupdates.

Policy on Grade Appeals

All grade appeals must be made in writing to the instructor. No grade appeals will be considered within the first 24 hours of a grade being posted or an assignment/exam being returned; those that come in within the first 24 hours will be discarded. All grade appeals must be received within ten calendar days of the grade being posted or the assignment/exam being returned; those that come in after this deadline will be discarded. All appeals must contain the following information:

The name of the assignment in question

The reason why you believe your grade should be higher. Be specific and discuss this in the context of the requirements of the assignment.

Determine whether you believe it is an error of calculation (the instructor/TA incorrectly tabulated points), judgment (the grade received does not reflect the quality of the work), or both.

If the instructor/TA determines that an error of calculation is present, then the correct grade will be calculated and the correct grade will be allocated. If it is argued by the student that an error of judgment is present, then the student has the option to have the assignment graded *de novo* by the instructor. As this will be a regrade from scratch, there is the possibility that the grade given to the regraded assignment will be lower than the initial grade given. All decisions by the instructor are final.

Policy on Disabilities

Students facing disabilities or mental health concerns who are not registered should apply for accommodation with Student Disability Services (SDS). Any student who has a documented disability and has received recommendations for accommodations from SDS should speak with the instructor as soon as possible regarding accommodations.

Policy on Email

Email communication must be used to make requests to the instructor/TA (*e.g.* for meetings outside of office hours) so that everyone has a record of the request and decision. For emails sent between Monday and Thursday, inclusive, please allow the instructor/TA up to 48 hours to respond. For those sent between Friday and Sunday, inclusive, please allow the instructor/TA up to 96 hours to respond.

It is the student's responsibility to check his/her Ole Miss email daily, since Blackboard works through Ole Miss email addresses and this is how I am able to communicate with you. If you

prefer another email address, set up forwarding from your Ole Miss address.

Writing a professional email is an important skill one should master before graduation. All emails to the instructor/TA should include the following: a subject line briefly explaining the topic of the email and that it pertains to POL 304; a greeting more professional than "Yo" or "Hey" (I prefer "Professor Klingler" or "Dr. Klingler."); a clear question or request; and should identify the sender by name. Emails lacking any of these criteria will not be returned. Before sending an email, please make sure you cannot easily get the answer from another source, such as the syllabus or other class documents.

Policy on Technology

This course, because of LegSim, relies heavily on access to computers and the Internet. At some point during the semester you will have a problem with technology. Your laptop will die, a file will become corrupted, a server will go down, or something else will occur. These are facts of life, not emergencies. Technology problems will not normally be accepted as excuses for unfinished work. Expect that "stuff" will happen and protect yourself by doing the following:

Plan ahead - start early, particularly if you'll need something hard to get.

Save work often at multiple stages - at least every ten minutes.

Make regular backups of files in a different location from the originals - there are several free cloud services that you can use to do this automatically.

When editing an image, set aside the original and work with a copy.

On your personal computer, install and use software to control viruses and malware.

When submitting any assignment electronically in this course, you are responsible for any technological problems (*e.g.* Internet connection difficulties, corrupted files, misspelled email addresses, delayed email delivery, etc.). To prevent problems along with the associated penalties for late assignments, you should submit assignments well before the deadline and take proactive steps to make sure that files were not corrupted and that assignments were received. Again, please do not trust your computer to function as expected at the last minute.

Policy on Respect and Civility

The exchange of ideas is an essential part of learning, and you are encouraged to frequently ask questions and share your thoughts during class meetings and in assignments. *Disagree without being disagreeable*. We will be discussing some polarizing issues in class, and conversation should remain civil and conducted in a good faith exchange. In order to maintain an atmosphere conducive to learning, students should use professional language in class discussions and written work and behave professionally. No offensive slang or profanity is permitted.

Policy on Academic Discipline

Academic honesty is expected, and academic misconduct will not be tolerated. Examples of academic misconduct are explored in the M Book and include plagiarism (using someone else's words or ideas without proper citation), using someone else's work as your own, allowing someone else to represent your work as their own, gaining or attempting to gain an unfair advantages, giving false information or altering documents, harming academic support facilities, and any act that violates the principles of honesty or fairness that does not fall into these categories.

Turn in material that you have completed yourself and respect the learning environment. Acts of academic misconduct are serious offenses that will be reported for disciplinary action and appropriate sanction after discussion with the student. Please see the University's Student Academic Conduct and Discipline Policy, the University's Academic Regulations in the M Book and/or speak with Prof. Klingler if you have questions in this area.

Course Outline

Part I: Conceptualizing the Legislative Process

August 23 Introduction and Course Overview Chamber Authorization Code: d5ca50bc6334782d90707e71953318cc

Congressional Formation

August 25 and 27 *Origins and Development of the U.S. Congress* Davidson, Oleszek, Lee, and Schickler (DOLS) - Chapter 1: "The Two Congresses." (DOLS) - Chapter 2: "The Evolution of the Modern Congress." (Online-BB) Toobin, Jeffrey. 2013. "Our Broken Constitution" *The New Yorker*.

August 30 *LegSim Orientation* Parties Locked After 4 PM September 1.

September 1, 3, and 8

Candidate Recruitment and Elections

(DOLS) - Chapter 3: "Going for It: Recruitment and Candidacy."

(DOLS) - Chapter 4: "Making It: The Electoral Game."

(Online-BB) Williamson, Ryan and Jamie Carson. 2020. "Why did Democrats lose seats in the 2020 elections? More incumbents ran in more competitive districts." *LSE-USAPP Blog*.

(Washington Post-BB) Fowler, Christopher and Linda Fowler. 2021. "Here's a different way to fix gerrymandering." *The Washington Post*.

(Online-BB) Thomsen, Danielle. 2014. "Political polarization discourages moderate state legislators from running for Congress, making the problem worse." *LSE-USAPP Blog*. Legislative Profile Due September 8

September 6 NO CLASS

September 10 *Representation*(DOLS) - Chapter 5: "Being There: Hill Styles and Home Styles."
(DOLS) - Chapter 16: "The Two Congresses and the American People."
(Washington Post-BB) Ryan, Timothy J., and David Broockman. 2016. "Voters aren't talking to the other party's politicians. Here's why that matters." *The Washington Post*.

Congressional Organization

September 13 and 15 *Congressional Parties and Leadership* (Washington Post-BB) Binder, Sarah. 2021. "McConnell and Schumer ended their standoff over the new Senate." *The Washington Post*.

(Washington Post-BB) Curry, James M. and Frances Lee. 2016. "Congress is far more bipartisan than headlines suggest." *The Washington Post*.

(DOLS) - Chapter 6: "Leaders and Parties in Congress."

(Washington Post-BB) Anderson, Sarah, Daniel Butler, and Laurel Harbridge-Yong. 2021. "Biden wants to bring Democrats and Republicans together. Here's why that's so challenging." *The Washington Post*.

(Online-BB) Reynolds, Molly. 2017. "Filibuster: Republican friend or foe?" *The Brookings Institution*.

Legislative Agenda Due September 15

September 17

LegSim Caucus Meetings for Leadership Elections

September 20 and 22

The Committee System

(Online-BB) Berry, Christopher R. and Anthony Fowler. 2016. "Congressional committee membership is less important than previously thought, but chairs are really influential." *LSE-USAPP Blog*. (Washington Post-BB) Reynolds, Molly. 2020. "Members of Congress have lost control over spending." *The Washington Post*.

(Washington Post-BB) Wiseman, Alan and Craig Volden. 2019. "Congress is back in town. Here's why lawmakers will struggle to get much done." *The Washington Post*.

(DOLS) - Chapter 7: "Committees: Workshops of Congress."

Party leaders must be named by September 20

Practice Exam Due September 20

September 24 and 27

The Lawmaking Process Part I

(DOLS) - Chapter 8: "Congressional Rules and Procedures."

(Washington Post-BB) Binder, Sarah. 2021. "Democrats might use 'reconciliation' to pass Biden's pandemic relief package. What's reconciliation?" *The Washington Post*.

(Washington Post-BB) Binder, Sarah. 2021. "Democrats moved Biden's pandemic relief bill quickly. Their work will get a lot harder from here." *The Washington Post*.

September 29 LegSim Caucus Meetings for Committee Assignments Committee assignments must be finalized by September 29

October 1 LegSim Committee Meetings

October 4 *The Lawmaking Process Part II* (DOLS) - Chapter 9: "Decision Making in Congress." (Online-BB) Volden, Craig, Alan E. Wiseman, and Dana E. Wittmer. 2013. "On average, women in Congress are more effective lawmakers than men." *LSE-USAPP Blog*. (Washington Post-BB) Malhotra, Neil. 2020. "Why isn't the U.S. ready for a pandemic? For politicians, investing in prevention doesn't pay off." *The Washington Post*.

Congressional Relations (with Other Institutions)

October 6 and 8

Congress and the Executive Branch

(Online-BB) Clinton, Joshua. 2013. "More complex Congressional oversight over government agencies means reduced influence relative to that of the White House." *LSE-USAPP Blog*.

(DOLS) - Chapter 10: "Congress and the President."

(DOLS) - Chapter 11: "Congress and the Bureaucracy."

(Online-BB) Howell, William, and Jon Rogowski. 2013. "During wartime, Congress is more willing to defer to the president on matters both foreign and domestic." *LSE-USAPP Blog*.

(Washington Post-BB) Kriner, Douglas L. and Dino P. Christensen. 2017. "Congressional critics do check presidential power - by leading public opinion." *The Washington Post*.

(Washington Post-BB) Kriner, Douglas L. 2020. "Don't expect Congress to rein in Trump's use of military force in the Middle East." *The Washington Post.*.

October 11, 13, and 15 LegSim Committee Meetings Committee Research Report Due October 18

October 18 and 20

Congress and the Judicial Branch

(Online-BB) Dancey, Logan, Kjersten R. Nelson, and Eve M. Ringsmuth. 2014. "Judicial nominees who have confirmation hearings during divided government are much more likely to face ideological questions." *LSE-USAPP Blog*.

(DOLS) - Chapter 12: "Congress and the Courts."

(Online-BB) O'Connell, Anne Joseph. 2017. "The end of the filibuster paves the way for more diverse courts." *The Brookings Institution*.

October 22

Congress and Interest Groups

(DOLS) - Chapter 13: "Congress and Organized Interests."

(Washington Post-BB) Madonna, Anthony and Ian Ostrander. 2015. "If Congress keeps cutting its staff, who is writing your laws? You won't like the answer." *The Washington Post*.

(Online-BB) Finger, Leslie. 2019. "Interest groups' influence on policy comes through the presence of faithful legislative allies - not gifts to their campaigns." *LSE-USAPP Blog.*.

October 25 Midterm Examination

Part II: Enacting the Legislative Process

October 27 and 29 LegSim Orientation

Quiz on Senate Procedure Due October 29.

November 1 and 3 *LegSim* Major Bill Due November 3.

November 5, 8, 10, 12, 15, 17 and 19 *LegSim*

November 22, 24, and 26 *Thanksgiving State Work Period* NO CLASS

November 29, December 1 and 3 *LegSim* No further Reelection Tasks may be performed after 11:59 PM on December 3.

December 6 (4 PM) LegSim - Campaign Debate Appearances Reelection Strategy Memo Due