

Congress

Department of Political Science and Government
Aarhus University

September 24, 2014

1 Finish up from last week

2 Congress

3 Presentations

4 Discussion

5 Preview of Next Week

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From last week

- *The Bill of Rights*
- The other amendments to the Constitution

Think–Pair–Share

- Take 45 seconds to think about the following:
 - What do you think is/are the most important Amendments? Why?
- Discuss for 1 minute with the person sitting next to you
- Share with the class

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Congress as Institution(s)

- Constitution was a minimal framework
- Distinct patterns of path-dependent institutionalization in each chamber
- Institutions structure strategic interactions

The legislative process

- `https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H-eYBZFEzf8`

The legislative process

- Each chamber can initiate legislation
- Chamber delegates to committees
- Committees revise and report to floor
- Chambers must agree on legislation for it to be adopted
- Conflicts resolved via “conference committee”

Strategic models of Congressional activity

- Decision making operates around pivots:
 - Chamber medians
 - Committee medians
 - Presidential preference
 - Status quo
- Legislation is proposed and voted on strategically
- Big question: How much and in what ways do parties (versus members' ideology) matter?

Common features of both chambers

- Partisan leadership

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- Seniority
- Widespread majority rule
- Floor debate and committee debate
- Polarization
- Staff and professionalization

House of Representatives

- Larger chamber (435 members)

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- Individual members less powerful

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- Power is held by leadership (esp. Speaker)
- Rules Committee

Senate

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- Minority powers
 - Filibuster
 - Holds

Discussion

- How does Congress compare to other legislative systems?

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- What consequences do these institutions have for American politics compared to other political systems?

Discussion

- How does Congress compare to other legislative systems?
- What consequences do these institutions have for American politics compared to other political systems?
- How well do these institutions function?

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Presentations

- Sofus: Schickler and Wawro
- Sanne: Polsby
- Anne: Hibbing and Theiss-Morse

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Open Discussion

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Next week's agenda

- Presidency and Executive Branch
- Development of Presidential power over-time
- Veto bargaining and interbranch relations
- “Going public”

Sign-up for Presentations

