OBJECTIVES

What is the fourth branch of U.S. government? We consider secondary institutions (or quasi-institutions) of the news media, interest groups, political parties, and the bureaucracy as composing the fourth branch of government. Scholars that study the interaction and intersection between these secondary institutions and the three branches of U.S. government (Congress, the President, and the Supreme Court) all claim that their secondary institution of choice is the fourth branch. We will consider the effect of these secondary institutions on the daily workings of government and assess each body of literature’s claim that their secondary institution should be considered the fourth branch of government. We will also consider whether the U.S. government can function without these secondary institutions.

Unlike most undergraduate political science courses, this course is a seminar. Thus, there will be very little lecturing on my part and lots of discussion on everyone’s part. Each member of the class is responsible for doing the readings and coming to class fully prepared to discuss them on an extensive basis. We will devote roughly two weeks to studying each secondary institution and your discussion will be critical for your grade in this part. The second part of the course will consist of understanding the practice of writing a major research paper as well as presentations of your research.

PREREQUISITES

To be in this course you should be a senior political science major. More importantly for this specific course, you should have taken PS2000 Political Analysis or at the very least be currently taking 2000 this semester. Without PS2000 you will not have the research skills and background to finish an adequate research paper in political science.

GATEWAY IS YOUR FRIEND

I will regularly update class information on the website for the class on MyGateway (http://mygateway.usml.edu).
READING MATERIAL

Class readings will be drawn variety of scholarly sources – including books and articles. To date, there are two full books assigned for the course:


All other readings will be in PDF form on Mygateway or available through JSTOR on UMSL's library webpage.

REQUIREMENTS

It is important to keep up with class readings and you should generally aim to complete the weekly readings before we start a new topic. Your grade for the course is composed of the following elements

1. Class Discussion: (20% of your final grade)
2. Discussion Papers: (worth 15%)
3. Research Presentation: (worth 15%)
4. Research Paper: (worth 50%)

PLAGIARISM

Generally, plagiarism is defined as turning in work that has been written by someone else, without attribution, and it is not acceptable in this or any other academic course. Any plagiarism found on an assignment results in an F for that assignment and perhaps other disciplinary consequences through the regular UMSL channels.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Week of 8/21: Introduction

Week of 8/28: The News Media
Readings:
  Cook (whole book)

Week of 9/4: The News Media (continued)
Readings:
  Cook (whole book)
Week of 9/11: Interest Groups
Readings:

Week of 9/18: Interest Groups (continued):
Readings:

Week of 9/25: Political Parties:
Smith (whole book)

Week of 10/2: Political Parties (continued):
Smith (whole book)

Week of 10/9: Bureaucracy
Readings:

Week of 10/16: Bureaucracy (continued):

Week of 10/23: Writing a Research Paper

Week of 10/30: Writing a Research Paper
Week of 11/6: Writing a Research Paper

Week of 11/13: Class Presentations

**Week of 11/20:** No Class – Thanksgiving Break

Week of 11/27: Class Presentations

Week of 12/4: Class Presentations

**Final Paper due Tuesday 12/11 by 5pm**

*Updated 8/23/07*