

## **Congress Project Guidelines**

**Reminder - After each Congress Day** – update your committee page, as needed.

### **Day 7 – April 15<sup>th</sup>**

By the end of class, decide on and begin writing a piece of legislation dealing with a contemporary issue in American history (contemporary = since 1990).

Remember that Congressional acts can either be a **BILL** (enacting a new law and/or appropriating money, requires presidential signature) or a **RESOLUTION** (stating the will of Congress but not having the force of law, not requiring presidential signature).

**Bill Workshop Day – April 20<sup>th</sup>**. This day is for finalizing your bill in class, and we will work as a Congress to organize them into a queue for debate on the floor. Your proposed legislation will then be subject to the scrutiny of your fellow legislators for open discussion in the next Congress sessions, and will come to a vote.

I will give each document a number, post it to the Congress Wiki, and print it out for our next Congress day. **Email it to me in its final form by midnight Wednesday April 20.**

### **Day 8 – Fri 4/22 – Legislative Session #1**

We will conduct hearings and vote on as many acts as possible.

### **Day 9 – Fri 4/29 – Legislative Session #2**

We will conduct hearings and vote on as many acts as possible.

**After Day 9** – update your committee page to its **final form by Mon 5/2**

**Mon 5/9 – Reflection paper due** on the Congress project.

## Project Grading

Your Congress Project Grade will have three parts. Percentages are of your FINAL COURSE GRADE. All together, the Congress project is meant to represent about a third of your course grade.

**Congressional Simulation** (15%) – Throughout the semester, we have taken frequent breaks from lecture/discussion to run a simulation of Congress. Your simulation grade comes from the preparation and participation that you put into each Congress Day and to the work of your committee (based on attendance records, self assessment and peer assessment) – this includes your submitted bill.

**Committee Wiki** (10%) – Each committee received one wiki page on the course Congressional Wiki. The page could contain news, links, discussion, plans, documents and their revision, legislation in progress—whatever committee business you deem important. This is a GROUP grade, everyone on the committee receives the same grade. Your group will be responsible among itself for dividing up the work fairly. I know the committees are of unequal size, and some people have dropped the course since we started; I will endeavor to be as fair as possible in deciding this group grade (based on instructor and student assessment using the following guidelines, 1 point each).

- ✓ Page was modified soon after its creation
- ✓ Page clearly lists its committee members
- ✓ Page contains a statement of the committee's mission, scope or purpose
- ✓ Page has been modified occasionally over the course of the term
- ✓ Page shows evolution over time or attention to historical context
- ✓ Page contains useful and appropriate links
- ✓ Page contains group discussion, committee business, or evidence of committee work
- ✓ Page is organized and thoughtfully presented
- ✓ Page is free of spelling and grammatical errors (since you are publishing to the open web, you want this to be your best possible work)
- ✓ Page is in its final form by May 2
- ✓ Page shows creativity, individuality, or exceeds course expectations in some notable way

**Congressional Paper** (5%) – Write a (3-4 page) paper describing, summarizing, and considering your committee's work, and also reflecting on how the project worked as a way to learn about recent US history. You could also use this paper to discuss what happened in Congress to the legislation you wrote. In the first half of the course, we considered historically accurate legislation and Congressional issues. In the last half, you have applied that knowledge to craft your own legislative agendas and to debate/vote on those agendas. What have these experiences taught you about the political process? What have they taught you about American history since 1945?

**Due on or before the day of the final exam, Mon 5/2 at 8:30 am.** If you are not taking the last exam, I need your paper in my hands, either in paper version or electronically delivered, by the exam's start time.