

Political Science 305-005

Creative Inquiry – Congressional Voting Project

Fall 2009

Professor Jeff Fine

Meeting times: To Be Arranged

Location: To Be Arranged

Course Blackboard Web Page: bb.clemson.edu

Office: 230E Brackett Hall

Office Phone: 656-3548

Office Hours: Tues. & Thurs. 2-3:30 pm & by appointment (drop-ins always welcome)

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Course description:

Central to the literature on the United States Congress is the examination of the voting behavior of members of Congress. This project investigates how members of the House and Senate vote as well as the factors that explain *why* they vote that way. Unlike some other Creative Inquiry projects, participants are free to choose one of two different options for their work on the team. I describe these options below:

Option 1: Work on a Topic of Your Choosing

Members of the Creative Inquiry team may either work individually or in teams to generate a novel piece of research related to congressional voting. I will work with you to identify a topic and to guide you through every step of the process. If you select this option, this semester you will primarily be reading and evaluating various articles and book chapters related to your topic. At the end of the semester, you will submit a written evaluation of what you've read (where you will summarize and synthesize what you've read into a single written product). In subsequent semesters, I will guide you through the process of collecting data and testing your research question.

Some possible topics (these are merely suggestions):

- Voting on environmental policy
- Voting on "youth" issues
- Agreement and disagreement between the president and Congress
- Representation of a racial/ethnic group

Option 2: Work on an Existing Book Project

I am in the early stages of writing a book on representation in Congress. This book is primarily focused on the representation of various racial/ethnic groups (whites, African Americans, Latinos, and Arab Americans). This book is targeted to advanced undergraduate students, and I see your feedback and work as being critical to making the book relatable to that audience. If you select this option, this semester you will primarily be reading and evaluating various articles and books related to this topic. At the end of the semester, you will submit a written evaluation of what you've read (where you will summarize and synthesize what you've read into a single written product). Additionally, you will help identify (or even create) some visuals (pictures, graphs, figures) that we can put in the book that undergraduate students might find interesting. In subsequent.

Meeting Times:

We will identify a time that is available for every member of the Team. We will meet several times during the first few weeks of the semester, then every few weeks thereafter.

Evaluation:

Your grade in the course will be based on the following components:

	Option 1:	Option 2:
Attendance and participation in meetings:	20%	20%
Annotated Bibliography:	30%	
Final written evaluation of the literature:	50%	
Research assignments:		50%
Final write up of your work:		30%