

SYLLABUS

**Congress and the Presidency
(Government 218)**

WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY
Middletown CT

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SPRING 2006

DESCRIPTION: This course examines the interactions between two branches of our government and its impact on the politics of legislation to better understand relations between presidents and Congress in the formulation and implementation of public policy. These two institutions are in constant struggle for control of American public policy and the bureaucrats who carry out that policy. There are presently three “schools of thought” on the interrelationship: rivalry for power; separate but equal branches sharing power; and separate branches operating in a co-equal partnership. This course focuses on the dynamic interplay between the branches and the various instruments each branch uses in their attempt to control the bureaucracy.

REQUIRED TEXTS: Binder, Sarah A. 2003. Stalemate: Causes and Consequences of Legislative Gridlock. Brookings Press. 0815709110
Conley, Richard S. 2003. The Presidency, Congress, and Divided Government. Texas A&M Press. 1585442119
Fisher, Louis .1998. Politics of Shared Power. Texas A&M Press. 0-89096-821-7
Jones, Charles O. 2005. The Presidency in a Separated System. 2nd edition. Brookings Press. 0815747179
Thurber, James A. ed. 12006. Rivals for Power: Presidential Congressional Relations. Rowman and Littlefield Press. 0742536831

OBJECTIVES: Among the topics/questions that we will discuss: presidential influence in Congress and vice-versa, the original design of executive-legislative relations, how these institutions evolved from 18th century governing structures to 20th century demands and 21st century accommodations. As this is a political science course, we will also evaluate various forms of measuring the interbranch interactions. Specifically:

1. Introduction to Congressional-Presidential Relations
 - a. How would one characterize the history of the relationship?
 - b. What challenges must a new president face regarding their dealings with various congresses?
 - c. What are the key factors that determine whether a president succeeds or fails in his dealings with a particular congress?
 - d. What are the foundational bases for the relationship?
2. Separate Branches
 - a. Why did the framers see Congress as the central or main branch of government?
 - b. How can Congress impose its will upon the president? Likewise, how can the president counter congressional pressure?
 - c. Despite the potential for conflict, how can the two branches still operate?
3. Sources of Discord
 - a. Why does Congress see things differently than the president?
 - b. What is the impact of terms, constituency, parties, public support, divided government, and individual roles in the interbranch relationship and policymaking.

4. Policy-making
 - a. How and why have members of Congress and the president clashed over war powers?
 - b. How do controversies over confirmation politics affect the presidential-congressional relationship?
 - c. What is the significance of executive orders, executive agreements, executive privilege, veto (and veto threats), impoundment, continuing resolutions, various pronouncements (State of Union; budget, Rose Garden speeches, doctrines) and the establishment of “bipartisan commissions and task forces”?
 - d. What is the impact on E-L of Congress exercising their constitutional duty of legislation (War Powers Act; Budget Act of 1921; Budget and Impoundment Act), investigatory hearings (Church Committee, Pike Committee), and legislation (Boland Amendments: Use of Force Authorizations)?
 - e. Why do the two branches frequently clash over the federal budget?
 - f. What political lessons can be discerned from the impeachment (and in Nixon’s case threat of impeachment) process?

5. Building Coalitions:
 - a. How does each branch use the public to enhance their position vis-à-vis the other branch?
 - b. How can the president win friends and influence members of Congress?
 - c. In what ways can Congress shape the national policy agenda?
 - d. Why is partisanship set aside after crises (like the 9/11 attack)?
 - e. What is meant by “mandate” to govern?

By answering the above questions, we will:

- Lend historical context to the current state of Congress and the Executive branches of government.
- Understand the complex interdependency of the “separate but equal” branches in our “presidential system” of government.
- Learn the basic rules under which each branch operates.
- Understand the nature and limit of presidential power.
- Move beyond cynicism of government to understand the dynamics, dangers, and alternatives of the relationship.
- Improve reading, writing, speaking, comprehension, and research skills.

RECOMMENDED MATERIALS: I expect each of you to access the Federalist and Anti-Federalist papers as well as the Constitution. We will make use of the Government Documents section of the library for the research project – ensure you are familiar with how to access those documents. You should also familiarize yourself with the *Public Papers of the President* and *Congressional Quarterly Weekly*. You should be aware of and collating material from daily news dealing with our subject matter. Our library has

an excellent journal collection which we will use throughout the course. Of particular note are: *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, *Congress and the Presidency*, and either *Political Science Quarterly* or *Public Policy Quarterly*. Finally there are numerous websites available such as www.rollcall.com; www.whitehouse.gov; www.thomas.loc.gov; www.hillnews.com; www.legislate.com. I may also provide you with handouts throughout the semester.

METHOD OF EVALUATION: This course is specifically designed to be a dynamic interplay between student and instructor. As such, participation in class discussions is essential to the success of the course and to your success (i.e. your grade). To be able to participate, you must take the time to carefully read, compare readings, pull from outside sources, and generate questions of all the assigned material prior to each class session. There will be several in-class student presentations based on the readings. For the presentation please focus your attention on providing basic bibliographic information, summation of hypothesis and evidence used as well as conclusions drawn. In addition to active participation, you will be expected to write three short (2-3 page) papers wholly based on the readings – **you are not expected to do outside research for these papers**. Each of you will be required to write a 500-word book or movie review of your choice pertinent to class discussion. The course concludes with a medium length (8-10 page) research paper analyzing a current policy (George W. Bush and the 109th Congress) in terms of the analytical skills learned in the class. The term paper must include at least five textual sources, government documents, and current news sources. You may cite internet sources but they will not count toward the textual requirement.

Student participation/presentation:		30%
Attendance (outlined in student handbook):		10%
Short papers (2-3 pages):	1 st	5%
	2 nd	10%
	3 rd	15%
Book Review (500 words):		10%
Research paper (>10 pages)		<u>20%</u>
Total Points		100%

GRADING POLICY:

Excellent (A 93-100/ A- 90-92): well organized, superb use of resources and evidence with a well thought out thesis. Argument makes sense, proven with evidence supplied, and has no glaring gaps or contradictions. The prose is clear, errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation are rare or absent. Formatting and documentation are accurate and complete. Theories and concepts fully integrated. Content and significance go beyond the course and demonstrate energy, ability, and careful consideration.

Good (B+ 87-89/B 83-86/B- 80-82): is above average, a good product. The prose is clear, coherent, and proper but may have occasional errors in convention, meaning, or usage. Content is valid so the argument makes sense, but there are gaps in coverage, inconsistencies in presentation, or the sense that “something was missing” or “it fell short.” Theories and concepts clearly applied.

Satisfactory (C+ 77-79/C 73-76/C-70-72): is an average product meeting the assignment but only at a minimal level. There are solid ideas, but not well developed; evidence exists, but it may be thin, superficial, or poorly handled; the writing is understandable, but disjointed containing mistakes in spelling, structure, form or not well organized. The paper suffers from formatting or citation issues. The reader comes away with a rudimentary understanding of where the author is going but the author is not clear, convincing, or has not made use of the available literature to support their argument.

Poor (D 60-69): This paper meets the lowest possible standard. Here the reader does not see where the author is headed or sees the author is plainly headed in the wrong direction. Organization, content, structure fail to communicate the findings of the author. No clear thesis is present. Sources/evidence have not been used or used in only the most superficial manner. Citations and formatting conventions obviously not followed.

Failure (59 and below): Unacceptable as a product. This paper exhibits severe problems with writing, evidence, presentation, formatting, or documentation. The lowest grade (0) is reserved primarily for those papers not handed in or handed in late (as **late papers are not accepted**).

LATE WORK: Late work is not accepted. You will have a minimum of one week notice for assignments due. Plan ahead.

DISABILITIES STATEMENT: If you have a hidden or visible disability which may require classroom or test-taking modifications, please see me as soon as possible.

PERFORMANCE: How well you perform in class and on written assignments is a combination of three factors:

- How well I present the material.
- Your personal motivation to learn. Note that I did not mention your capability. You are capable by the mere fact you are sitting in this class.
- Your personal discipline to prepare for class.

OVERALL: I handle the course very similar to a job environment. Call or email me before class and you get a “sick day” call after and I “dock your grade”. Talk to me to resolve issues, solve problems, and get questions answered. Let us work together for your academic achievement. Lastly, the most important aspect of this class is to enjoy it and learn from each other.

Congress & Presidency
Prior Course observations

This semester we will attempt to evaluate the very interesting C & P dynamic of Bush 43 and the 109th Congress. There are a number of issues that should bring this dynamic to light. Those same issues cause angst among political scientists striving to move from theory to some universal law of political science.

There are three C & P dynamics debated within the academic community: rivalry for power; separate but equal branches; and coequality

Within the three dynamics, we have a presidential dominant and congressionally dominant perspective.

Reasons for the dynamic include: leadership type; institutional design; type of government (unified, divided, truncated); exogenous factors such as crises, economic conditions, scandal, popular expectations, entrepreneurship (which may be a subset of leadership type), and extra-constitutional exploitation (such as the use of implied powers).

During the Cold War, there existed a two-presidency concept where the president remained dominant in foreign policy with the congress maintaining power over domestic policy. Within foreign policy, there existed high politics (national security; military, and foreign relations) as well as low politics (aid & trade).

With the end of the Cold War and the emergence of President Clinton, foreign policy (both high and low politics)-domestic policy demarcation became blurred (i.e. more “intermestic” policy). This merging of policy brought to the forefront a plethora of interest groups (previously dominant in domestic policy) into the foreign policy realm.

As we increase the merge, politics became more “political” decreasing the willingness of both sides to engage in bipartisan/bicameral negotiations. Part of the reason for this is that domestic politics was inherently redistributive. As foreign policy merges with domestic policy, it too becomes redistributive.

The Senate takes on a greater role in foreign policy than the House (Federalist Paper 52 vs. 62 explanation).

The president has a greater capacity to “go public” (or over the heads of Congress). Policy entrepreneurship enables individual congressmen to also “go public” (Lee Hamilton, William Fulbright, or any other willing to travel and engage foreign states as a member of their respective body). The president, however, retains the capacity to influence the agenda by effecting the environment to a greater extent than congressional personnel if he either increases the salience or complexity of a particular issue (take for example Bush 43 and the Social Security agenda).

The judiciary: When the P acts alone, the Courts generally look to C to check and balance the P.

When the C is silent, the Court looks to the P

When C is clearly opposed, Courts look to the P unless there is a clear, precise, determinative opposition by C.

Most of you, as well as the scholars, seem to be moving toward an issue-oriented perspective of E-L dynamic studies. In other words, the issue rather than the environment (or other factors identified above) has a greater influence on both the dynamic and the predominant actor.

Whether the issue is controlled by the median voter or has salience/complexity or if the issue is foreign or domestic the end result is “no single, simple pattern characterizes presidential-congressional policymaking”.

Our goal this semester is to arrive at some consensus, with fresh eyes, at establishing a framework to increase understanding and provide a basis of advisement for policymaking to arrive at better policy.

Wesleyan University
Congress and Presidency
T/Th

Spring 2006
GOVT 218
2:40-4pm

Department of Government
Gary Donato (PAC__324_)
SCIE 58

Day	Reading	Topic
Th 1/126	None	Introduction/overview course
T/Th 1/30, 2/2	Constitution Article I & II FP10, 37,51,54,55,62,68,70,77 AFP 1Centinel, 14 Brutus, CatoV Melancton Smith Pacificus-Helvidius Letters Taft-Roosevelt Perspectives	Original Design Original Debate Post Constitution Analysis

2/7 – Paper # 1 Due (5%) Using the historical debate, which of the three dynamic models of executive legislative interaction is the most strongly supported? Explain.

T/Th 2/7,9	Conley 1 & 2; Thurber 1,2; Binder 1,2; skim 3 Jones 1 Fisher 1	Systems Described Types of Gov't
T/Th 2/14, 16 T/Th 2/21, 23	Thurber 6, 7; Jones 6, 7(excerpts) Binder skim4,5; Fisher 3	Congress Dominant

No later than 2/23 see me with the book on which you would like to conduct a review. You should also use this early time period to express a preliminary interest in the research paper.

T/Th 2/28, 3/2 T/Th 3/7, 9	Conley 2,3; Thurber 3, 8 (reread 6/7) Jones2,3 (structure) 5(governance), 6, 7(excerpts) Binder 5; Fisher 2	President Dominant
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3/9- Paper # 2 Due (10%) To date, we've discussed the two institutions of government individuals within those institutions and some issues. Using the information to date, conduct a comparative analysis of the varying systems of interaction between the branches of government. (The particular topic which frames your paper is of your choosing and should serve as a basis for your final research project.

SPRING RECESS 11-19 March – Have fun, return safely.

T/Th 3/21, 23 Thurber 4, 5, 7, 8, 10(key article) Exogeneous Factors.
Jones3,4 skim 5-7; Binder 2; Fisher 4, 5

T/Th 3/28, 30 Thurber 9; Jones 3,4 skim 5-7 Budget as an Issue
Conley 4; Fisher 7

4/4 – Paper #3 Due (15%) Student’s Choice. Conduct a cross time comparison of a particular issue. This paper is time bound between Reagan and Bush 43 (1st term). The issue is of your choosing and should complement your second paper..

T/Th 4/4, 6 Thurber 11, 12; Conley 5-7 (excerpts) Foreign Policy Issue
T/Th 4/11, 13 Binder 3 (esp 52-55); Jones 3-7 (excerpts); Fisher 6

4/18 – Book Review Due (10%)

T/Th 4/18, 20 Conley 5-7 (excerpts); Binder 3 (esp 52-55) Domestic Policy Issue

T/Th 4/25, 26 Newspapers/News Nomination/Confirmation
Research presentations

T/Th 5/2, 4 Research presentations 2

T 5/9 Conley 8; Thurber 3, 4, 11,12 “Fixing the System”
Jones 8; Binder 6; Fisher 1

5/9 Final Research Paper Due (30%) Student’s Choice. Subject is any issue of interest (*observation*). Time period is Bush 43 (2nd term) and the 109th Congress. This paper must incorporate theories, concepts, and readings of the course (*evaluation*) to conduct a *predictive analysis* of the outcome of the issue. The goal here it to combine all the progressive paper information to deal with an ongoing issue in the 109th. From this we should be able to predict how the issue should turn out, what (if any) impact the issue will have on the 2006 elections, and will the issue resurface in the 110th Congress and in what form (this will depend on the type of government we’ll see in the 110th Congress).

There are presently a number of brewing issues before the 109th Congress and President Bush. Your task is to select an issue of your interest and write progressive papers on that issue. The accumulation of information in the progressive papers will lead to a polished research paper.

Some topics that I culled from just three days of reading the news:

- Bush and McCain at odds over the torture issue.
- OMB evaluating 607 federal programs.
- The showdown between the president and congress over CAFTA.
- Congress’s creation of a Select Committee on Hurricane Katrina.
- The battle over renewal of the PATRIOT Act
- The filibuster threat and nuclear option exercised by the Senate.
- The battle over Supreme Court nominee Roberts, Meiers, and Alito.
- The presidential use of executive orders to “supplant” FISA.

Book Reviews

1. What is/are the argument(s)? i.e.: What causes what? (IV= indep variable; DV=dependent variable).

- a. This has two parts: the puzzle to be explained or question to be answered, and the argument/explanation/answer. What is the puzzle and what is the argument?
- b. The argument usually takes the form of something (IV) that caused something (the DV). In the argument, what causes what?
- c. What is/are the Independent Variable (IV or IDV)?
- d. What is/are any Intervening Variables (IntV)?
- e. What is the Dependent Variable (DV)
- f. Can you arrow diagram the causal chain? (IV—>DV)

2. How logically valid are the arguments?

- a. Are the hypotheses/arguments clear?
 - i. Again, can they be arrow diagrammed?
 - ii. Again, what causes what?
- b. Do the hypotheses/arguments build on one another?
 - i. A well-made major argument often consists of a number of sub-arguments that are well-sewn together. One cause of weak arguments is that the sub-arguments are contradictory, do not support each other, or are otherwise unraveled and unconnected. They must be logically consistent.
- c. Is the causal chain plausible?
 - i. Deductively: Is there a sound explanation about how and why the IV affects the DV?
 - ii. In the real-world?
- d. What does the argument assume?
 - i. What preconditions must exist for the theory/argument to work?
 - ii. Given the assumptions, is the argument still interesting or does it assume a tautological or garbage in, garbage out quality?
- e. Are the hypotheses and arguments parsimonious?
 - i. Often it seems that the ideal graduate dissertation is one that starts with a novel puzzle and ends with a counterintuitive argument. However, enduring quality is often found in projects that start with important puzzles and end with arguments that clarify a previously murky debate. Truth is often found in the clearest and simplest answers. Avoid elegant but unreal, implausible, and irrelevant arguments.

3. Are the arguments empirically well supported?

- a. Are there clear predictions and observable implications?
 - i. If so, how well does the evidence match the predictions?
 - ii. If not, what should the predictions be?
 1. And how well does the evidence match the new predictions?
- b. How are the variables defined and measured?
- c. How do we know the causal chain is at work?
- d. Are the cases or other data well chosen to answer the questions and make the argument?
 - i. For example, if a comparative case study is being conducted using Mill's method of difference, then the cases should be as similar as possible, while showing variance in the DV. Is this true? Could better cases be chosen? Were relevant cases excluded and how does this skew the results? Similar questions about case selection and case coding can be applied across methodologies.
 - ii. Bottom line: Does the evidence speak to the argument?
- e. Are there any alternative explanations for the phenomena being explained?
 - i. What other theories predict the behavior found in the cases?
 - ii. Which of these theories provides the best alternative explanation and why?
 1. How do the theory at hand and its most likely alternative fare when applied to other cases?
- f. Does the author argue against her/himself? Does s/he contend with the alternative explanations?
- g. What would it take to falsify or weaken the argument?
 - i. New or missing evidence?
 - ii. New or missing variables or arguments?
 1. Omitted variable bias?
 - iii. What research should be done that might strengthen (or weaken) the findings?
- h. Are the findings strong and decisive or weak and uncertain?
 - i. Is the theory given an easy test or a hard test?
 1. If easy, could it pass a harder test?
- i. How well do the findings stand up to counterfactual analysis?
 - i. What would have happened in the absence of the independent variable or if its value had been different?
- j. How could the argument be modified to strengthen it?

- i. Can the assumptions be better specified? Are there unspecified but necessary conditions for the argument to work? Are there unspecified but important intervening variables?

4. Style

- a. Is the writing clear?
 - i. Should this article or book serve as a role model for others?

5. What are the author's possible biases?

- a. What else have they published?
- b. Where are they coming from?
 - i. Education
 - ii. Job
- c. Are biases evident in the argument or in the use of evidence?

6. What is the author's purpose?

- a. Again, what is the puzzle or question?
- b. Who are the targets? Who or what is the author arguing for or against?
 - i. In policy world
 - ii. In academe

7. How useful are the argument(s) and overall project?

- a. Are they new? Creative?
- b. Are they important or trivial?
 - i. Do they help resolve, create, or otherwise contribute to scholarly debates?
 1. What is the intellectual heritage of the arguments and how will they shape future arguments and debates?
 - ii. Do they have policy relevance?
 1. Are they addressing important issues?
- c. Will anyone care about this work in 5, 10, or 50 years? Why?
- d. Would you assign this article or book when teaching? Why?

To Summarize or even put another way:

Writing a Book Review (and not a book report)

1. **Provide complete reference including name, title, place of publication, publisher, date, number of pages, ISBN, and cost.**
2. **Describe the subject, scope, and purpose of the book.**
3. **Summarize the author's thesis or hypothesis.**
4. **Identify the evidence used to support the thesis.**
5. **Summarize the author's conclusion.**
6. **Critique the argument.**
 - a. **Is it logically sound?**
 - b. **Is there a fair balance of opposing viewpoints?**
 - c. **Is the argument/controversy clearly identified?**
7. **Critique the evidence:**
 - a. **Is it adequate?**
 - b. **Is it factual or merely opinion?**
 - c. **Is it based on respectable authorities?**
 - d. **Is there substantive information?**
8. **Critique the author's conclusion:**
 - a. **Does it follow from the evidence presented?**
 - b. **Does it generalize beyond the evidence?**
 - c. **Were the goals of the author accomplished?**
9. **Suggest how the book correlates to current issues or other books/material on the subject.**
10. **Suggest how the book relates to material presented in the course – how does it contribute to the body of knowledge in the field?**

Hints for writing a book review.

1. **Look in various indexes/journals for other reviews.**
2. **Offer only evidence; omit "I think" or "He/she thinks" phrases.**
3. **Assert your perspective without stating opinion with shallow words of praise or condemnation.**
4. **Look at the table of contents, index, preface, introduction, conclusion, and data tables/charts carefully before reading any text.**

How to Make a Theoretically Informed Argument

1. First, find a question to answer or puzzle to resolve (this is your policy issue).
 1. There are examples below, but the general form is to ask: Why did this event happen? What caused what so that this event unfolded the way it did?
2. To answer your puzzle and make your argument, you need 3 ingredients:
 1. **Theory**
 2. **Predictions**
 3. **Evidence**
3. A **theory** (or theories) is the basis of your explanation or answer to your puzzle. A theory is:
 1. A hypothesized causal statement (A>B) with an explanation of why A causes B.
 2. More generally, a theory is a hypothesized pattern of behavior for in our case the variant relations between the two branches under study.
 3. **Predictions**, or observable implications, predict what the relationship would look like if your theory was true. They tell you what evidence would confirm your theory.
 4. Several examples are given below. Predictions are not about the future or the weather.
4. **Evidence** is the data that supports your main theory, its complements, or counterarguments.
 1. Evidence ranges from statistical correlations to public opinion polls to detailed histories of meetings to direct quotes from actors.
 2. What evidence is most convincing depends on your question and theory.
 1. In the example below, public opinion polls are crucial for addressing the issue of whether or not public opinion led to the Somali intervention. Records of what President Bush (41) was thinking (meetings, quotes, psychological profiles, etc) are helpful in determining whether or not Bush (41) had humanitarian motives in ordering US forces to Somalia. The same could be said for President Bush (43) and the invasion of Iraq, or why Bush (43) decided to back the McCain amendment on torture, or even why Bush continues to press Congress to renew the PATRIOT Act.
5. General Example of Making an Argument:
 1. Puzzle: Why did the U.S. send military forces to Somalia in 1992?
 2. Primary explanation (i.e. your argument):
 1. humanitarian motivation to save lives
 2. Arrow diagram: humanitarian motivation → US military intervention (because President and commander in chief Bush was deeply affected by the plight of the starving Somalis)
 3. Complementary (but less important) or competing explanations:

1. US economic interests demanded an intervention
2. US public opinion demanded an intervention
3. To flex US military might in the post-Cold War world to:
 1. impress others and build credibility
 2. increase/defend defense budget
4. Your argument PREDICTS that the evidence will show the Bush had humanitarian motives. Predictions/evidence for the primary explanation include records indicating Bush's angst at the tragedy, statements of angst at planning meetings, angst-filled reactions while watching the news with his family, lack of other motivations when he discussed the options and made his decision, etc. Strong evidence would be transcripts of meetings in which others argued that we had no strategic or economic interests in Somalia, that intervention would be bad for the Department of Defense, that public opinion didn't care, and in which Bush said that he didn't care about these arguments, that he was President and that he was not going to let those Somalis die.
5. What are the predictions for the complementary or competing arguments?

*******Some questions, issues, and problems that arise*******

6. PROBLEM: how do we know what really caused any event in political science?
 1. Answer: it is very hard, and sometimes leaders themselves can't fully explain their actions. Yet, life and death issues are involved and we must do our best to make wise policy. We must be modest and ambitious at the same time.
7. NOTE: If something causes something, the cause must precede the effect.
 1. Logical, isn't it? Yet many students mess this up.
 1. Example: the shift in public opinion in favor of Somali intervention must precede the intervention if there is to be any chance that public opinion helped cause the intervention.
8. PROBLEM: Ignoring counterarguments and evidence that goes against your arguments.
 1. Solution: be honest with the data. If you are wrong, switch arguments and be right.
 2. Solution: be aware of counterarguments. Acknowledge them and explain why they are weak and yours is better.
9. PROBLEM: if multiple theories predict the same thing, your argument will lose persuasiveness.
 1. SOLUTION: add predictions and make them more specific
 2. Example:
 1. Puzzle: why did the dinosaurs die?
 2. Theory 1: An asteroid hit earth, and kicked up enough dust to cool the climate and kill the dinosaurs.
 1. Prediction: evidence of lots of dust in atmosphere when dinosaurs were estimated to have died.

3. Theory 2: A huge volcano erupted, and threw up enough dust to cool the climate and kill the dinosaurs.
 1. Prediction: evidence of lots of dust in atmosphere when dinosaurs were estimated to have died.
 4. PROBLEM: finding evidence of dust is not enough to determine which theory is true.
 5. SOLUTION: make more specific predictions about what *kind* of dust each event generates, make predictions about asteroids causing indentations and volcanoes causing mountains, etc.
10. For opinion or policy arguments, find an argument to make. These arguments should be theoretically informed.
1. Theories are a good basis for predictions because theories are hypothesized patterns. Patterns are the basis for prediction (think about it: if behavior was random, nothing could be predicted). Policy arguments are predictions in two ways: they predict what problems will arise and they predict what solutions will work. To do this successfully, one must be aware of patterns applicable to the case at hand. An example of such a pattern is balance of threat theory, which might be well applied to the question of future great power relations, but less well applied to the issue of whaling agreements.
 2. Instead of explaining history with a theory, the task here is to make an argument about wise policy. You must make predictions about current/future problems and their solutions. Instead of spending much time marshaling evidence for your explanation, you have to justify why you think your theory is well fitted to make predictions about the issue at hand. For example, you would have to justify why “rivals for power” theory was appropriate for assessing executive-legislative relations. You have to use theory to diagnose the problem at hand, and to argue why your solution will work and why barriers to your solution are surmountable.
 3. The meaning of the word prediction in this section accords more with the informal understanding of the word meaning a forecast of future events. When first used above, prediction had a more formal social science meaning of past events that if found would confirm the theory (i.e. prediction as an observable implication of the theory).
11. A note on complementary and competing theories.
1. Complementary theories are those that help explain the event in question, but do not explain as much as the primary theory. Think of it as a pie chart: one explanation covers 60%, the next 25%, the next 8%, etc.
 1. How many theories you wish to deal with depends on your question and your **willingness to trade parsimony for richness**. This is an art and a judgment call. My rule of thumb: do what is most persuasive. If the best theories only explain a bit of your event, then you may need to incorporate several theories to make your case. On the other hand, if the best theory explains most of your event, then you can mention complementary theories in passing.
 1. Parsimony is achieved when you can explain a lot with a little.
 2. Richness adds detail, but at what cost in clarity?
 2. Competing theories are similar to complementary theories except that they are not part of the same pie. They are separate alternatives. Many people use the term competing when they really mean complementary.

3. NOTE: often it is helpful to think of theories as contending or competing when in fact they are complementary. This is because debates about what caused what are often about which theory explains the 60% and the other the 25%. They are indeed complementary, but it makes a big difference which is the more important. When writing, use the terms competing, contending, or counterargument when arguing about which theory is king of the hill and explains the most. Use the term complementary when talking about theories that occupy support roles of secondary explanatory power.