

iCitizen Project
PART 5: CHAOS OF DEMOCRACY
POL 120 – Winter 2020

Overview. In the *Dune* series (written by Frank Herbert), House Atreides resists efforts to “democratize” the imperial government it controls, with the emperor’s sister, Alia, characterizing it best: “Atredies power must *never* be marginalized by the *chaos of democracy!*” As you know, negative characterizations of democracy are not new; James Madison famously (in Federalist 10) described direct democracy as “mob rule.” Indeed, the word *democracy* was never commonly used prior to the Cold War to describe the U.S. governmental system; the Founders favored a “republican” government, not a “mob.”

From our lawmaking exercise, you’ve gotten a taste of democracy’s “chaotic” nature; democratic lawmaking is hard not because its processes are necessarily difficult, but rather it is the multitude of opinions that are unleashed during the deliberative stages that makes democracy chaotic and difficult. For this assignment, you’ll pick three (3) questions to answer about the simulation, reflecting on what you’ve learned.

Directions. Pick three (3) questions below to answer for your paper. Questions should be answered in 3-4 paragraphs each (minimal), incorporating examples from the simulation and making meaningful references to course material (concepts and readings) where appropriate.

1. Did your bill (or bills you support in principle) make it? Why or why not?
2. How did you think your chamber (House or Senate) deliberated? How did the leadership operate? Did you find this behavior conducive to detrimental to advancing your own bill?
3. From what you observed, how did the other chamber’s behavior affect your own behavior and your chamber’s decisions?
4. What role did the president play in your deliberations and actions? Explain how the president could frustrate or assist efforts to pass a bill.
5. If you could, what would you have done differently? Why?
6. Did you change your tactics during the simulation? Why?
7. Any general conclusions can we draw about lawmaking? How did this simulation reflect the Founders’ preferences for lawmaking? How did it not?
8. What would be some changes you would recommend to the U.S. Congress to improve lawmaking? Explain why you support these changes.

Technical Details. Your reflection paper should:

1. Be double-spaced;
2. Clearly label questions and answers, with each answer a minimal of 3-4 paragraphs;
3. Use a readable, 12-point font and normal margins;
4. Use citations to course materials and the simulation (as applicable);
5. Have your name placed at the beginning of the paper; and
6. Be paginated.

Grading. In scoring your reflection essay, each question will be graded separately (___ points possible per question, for a grand total of ___ points possible). Top-notch answers will provide a cogent argument that is grounded in the simulation and class material, addressing all facets of the question(s). Answers should make meaningful connections to the simulation and class material, avoiding platitudes and trivial references. The answer is sufficiently developed (3-4 paragraphs). Answers should also be well-written, devoid of spelling, grammar, and other syntax errors.

Submission & Due Date. Submit a paper copy of your reflection on **March 9, 2020 @ the beginning of class**. Submissions received after the due date OR emailed will not be accepted.

Name _____

**POL 120: Lawmaking Simulation Exercise
Winter 2020**

Directions: In order to better understand how lawmaking occurs within Congress and other American legislative institutions, you will participate in a mock simulation of congressional lawmaking. This session will include you considering (i.e. “marking up”) proposed bills from classmates and ultimately voting on whether the bill should advance or not.

The simulation is divided into several stages:

- Stage 1: Pivotal Politics Discussion (in class on 2/10/20)
- Stage 2: Bill Preparation (in class on 2/24/20)
- Stage 3: Simulation (in class on 2/26/20)
- Stage 4: Reflection & iCitizen Part 5 (independently)

Stage 1—In Class, 2/10/20

For Stage 1, as a class we’ll discuss Congress and the Pivotal Politics Theory.

Stage 2—In Class, 2/24/20

For Stage 2, you’ll craft mock bills for consideration in Stage 3. For this part of the assignment, you’ll need to do the following:

1. Brainstorm current **policy problems**, or issues of public concern that could be reasonably *solved* by federal governmental action.
2. Pick one or two of those problems and then list 2-3 possible solutions that address the problem in whole or part.
3. Finally, pick ONE (1) of those solutions and draft a bill (see format below).

Stage 3—In Class, 2/26/20

For Stage 3, proposed bills will be randomly assigned to either the House or Senate that will undertake markup sessions (i.e. bills will be debated, amended, and voted upon). These chambers will reflect the relative size of the real Senate and House of Representatives, and members for each chamber will elect their own leadership. Leaders will have control over legislation, meaning the “chair” will determine which bills to call up for consideration. Secretaries will also be chosen, acting as recorders, noting changes to the bill (e.g. amendments) and vote tallies. (Chairs and secretaries are entitled to vote, make motions, etc.) One student will also serve as president and engage in the lawmaking process where appropriate.

As you engage in the process, consider how you can get your preferred bills passed using what you know about “pivots” and the American lawmaking process outlined by the Constitution.

Stage 4—Independently, iC5 due 3/11/20 @ 11:59 pm

Finally, in Stage 4, we’ll reflect on what we learned about lawmaking. What bills made it? Why? Any general conclusions we draw about lawmaking? These questions will form the basis of iCitizen Part 5 (see directions for more information).

H.R. _____

(Full title of your bill goes here)

In the House of Representatives

Date: ___/___/2020

REPRESENTATIVE(S) _____ introduced the following bill;
which was read twice and referred to the Committee on

_____.

A BILL

(Repeat the full title of your bill here)

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of American in Congress assembled.

SEC. 1. (This is where you put the title your actually want your bill to be called, e.g., JOBS Act, PATRIOT ACT, etc.)

SEC. 2. (Explain/define terms that need to be defined in order to understand the bill.)

SEC. 3. (What is the act going to do? Who is going to be involved/impacted/affected by the act?)

SEC. 4. (How is the act going to be funded? Who is going to enforce/administer this act? Which government agency will oversee the bill and its duties?)

SEC. 5. (Penalties, if any, for non-compliance of the act. List these here.)

SEC. 6. (Enactment date. When will the law go into effect?)

List any amendments made to the bill here:

VOTE TALLIES: Secretaries should record the vote on amendment above, while noting the **FINAL** vote tally on the bill (to approve, to approve as amended, or to table) here:

_____ YEAs to _____ NAYs

S. _____

(Full title of your bill goes here)

In the Senate

Date: ___/___/2020

SENATOR(S) _____ introduced the following bill; which
was read twice and referred to the Committee on

_____.

A BILL

(Repeat the full title of your bill here)

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of American in Congress assembled.

SEC. 1. (This is where you put the title your actually want your bill to be called, e.g., JOBS Act, PATRIOT ACT, etc.)

SEC. 2. (Explain/define terms that need to be defined in order to understand the bill.)

SEC. 3. (What is the act going to do? Who is going to be involved/impacted/affected by the act?)

SEC. 4. (How is the act going to be funded? Who is going to enforce/administer this act? Which government agency will oversee the bill and its duties?)

SEC. 5. (Penalties, if any, for non-compliance of the act. List these here.)

SEC. 6. (Enactment date. When will the law go into effect?)

List any amendments made to the bill here:

VOTE TALLIES: Secretaries should record the vote on amendment above, while noting the FINAL vote tally on the bill (to approve, to approve as amended, or to table) here:

_____ YEAs to _____ NAYs