Chapter 9

1. Which of the following is *not* part of a member’s formal, public record?

\*a. Consulting with party leaders

b. Markups of bills

c. Roll call votes

d. Speeches on the chamber floor

2. Which of the following actions would a “late decider” be likely to take?

a. Listen to lobbyists from both sides before voting on a variety of amendments in committee

b. Introduce legislation that would make minor changes to the Social Security Act

\*c. Demand a waiver for constituents in her district in exchange for her vote on a bill

d. Make a speech in a committee meeting about how important it is to draft a new immigration bill

3. Which of the following members would tend to have the highest level of legislative effectiveness?

a. Minority party member with a senior committee assignment

\*b. Majority party member with a party leadership post

c. Freshman member who focuses on fundraising

d. Senior member who devotes a great deal of time to casework

4. What is the single best predictor of member’s voting decisions?

a. Presidential support (or lack of support)

\*b. Party affiliation

c. Constituent views

d. District demographics

5. Which of the following is *not* a factor that we typically think shapes members’ votes?

\*a. Bribery

b. Presidential leadership

c. Party affiliation

d. Constituent views

6. Which of the following is an example of a logroll?

a. The President offers a member campaign support in exchange for his vote on a controversial piece of legislation

b. A party leader offers a member a spot on a high-profile committee if she votes with the party

c. Moderate members of each party create a cross-party coalition

\*d. A member agrees to support his colleague’s bill today, in exchange for support for his own bill at a future date

7. Which of the following types of House districts is most likely to be represented by a Democrat?

a. A district with few minority voters

\*b. A majority-minority district

c. A wealthy outer suburb

d. A rural area with lots of farmland

8. What is asymmetric polarization?

a. Constituents are significantly more polarized than are their representatives in Congress

\*b. Republicans have moved further to the right ideologically than Democrats have moved to the left

c. Members of Congress tend to be more polarized than judicial appointments to the Supreme Court

d. Special interest groups have forced members of Congress to vote in a more polarized fashion

9. Which of the following helps explain the rise in party cohesion and unity since the 1970s?

a. Gerrymandering

b. Increased number of party-line votes

\*c. Changes in the ideological composition of the two major parties

d. Changes in the amount of control the President has over foreign policy decisions

10. Which of the following is the most *visible* way that members participate in the lawmaking process?

a. Cosponsorship

b. Hearings

c. Markup sessions

\*d. Roll call votes

11. Which of these statements best describes polarization in the modern Congress?

\*a. Congress is almost completely polarized along party lines.

b. Congress is almost completely polarized by region.

c. Congress is much less polarized than in the 1970s.

d. Congress is currently experiencing a period of rapid depolarization.

12. Which of the following is a centrist or moderate coalition in Congress?

a. Tea Party

\*b. Blue Dogs

c. Black Caucus

d. Progressive Caucus

13. When members are visiting their districts, they can designate a staff member to vote for them on the chamber floor.

a. True

\*b. False

14. An “active player” legislator would be likely to endorse new legislation very early so he/she can shepherd it through each step of the legislative process

a. True

\*b. False

15. Political activists tend to be more polarized than average voters.

\*a. True

b. False

16. Senators tend to be generalists, while members of the House tend to specialize in a few areas.

\*a. True

b. False

17. Amendments are more freely offered in the Senate than in the House.

\*a. True

b. False

18. Party-line voting is much more common today than it was in the 1970s.

\*a. True

b. False

19. Members are more likely to vote with their party leaders on final passage votes rather than procedural matters.

a. True

\*b. False

20. About half the members of each subcommittee tend to be actively involved in committee work such as hearings and markup sessions.

\*a. True

b. False

21. Presidents almost always prevail in persuading members of Congress to pass legislation important to them.

a. True

\*b. False

22. The Agriculture committee is the most biased toward members with a constituency stake in the legislation being considered.

\*a. True

b. False

23. Bills in the House are limited to two cosponsors.

a. True

\*b. False

24. Poison pills frequently succeed in killing bills in the Senate.

a. True

\*b. False

25. Members strive to be recorded on as many votes as possible, and the participation rate is over 90% in both the House and Senate.

\*a. True

b. False

26. In the current Congress, constituency pressure tends to bolster party unity.

\*a. True

b. False

27. Stalemate describes a period in which Congress is extraordinarily productive.

a. True

\*b. False

28. Why might members or parties engage in a strategy of “strategic disagreement”?

\*a. Answers Vary

@Strategic disagreement means that members (or parties) might choose to block compromises that they do prefer to the status quo. Strategic disagreement might be preferred if reaching a compromise might alienate supporters, have negative electoral consequences or prevent reaching an even better deal in the future.

29. What factors tend to influence presidential success rates in persuading Congress to pass legislation they support?

\*a. Answers Vary

@The largest factor is party control. Presidents are quite successful (on average, 75%) under unified government but much lower under divided government. Timing is also important; Presidents tend to lose congressional support over the course of their terms.

30. What is the difference between explicit and implicit bargaining? Give an example of each.

\*a. Answers Vary

@Implicit bargaining takes place when members take actions designed to elicit a reaction from others but without engaging in clear negotiation—essentially, anticipating a reaction from others. Examples will vary, but might include introducing a bill one knows will fail in order to encourage an executive branch official to take action on the issue. Explicit bargaining covers a variety of explicit bargaining techniques. Examples might include logrolling.

31. How did the passage of the “Cromnibus” illustrate important factors of decision making in the modern Congress?

\*a. Answers Vary

@The “Cromnibus” was a compromise omnibus bill that combined numerous appropriations measures packaged with other elements viewed as important by party leaders. Students could focus on a variety of factors in their answer but might include the necessity of compromise, the need to reach across party lines when the majority party is not united, the inclusion of elements favored by lobbying interests, and the role of the President in having to decide whether to sign a “take-it-or-leave-it” package that he may not wholly endorse.

32. What is a policy entrepreneur and why are they important to the policy process?

\*a. Answers Vary

@A policy entrepreneur is a member recognized for taking proactive action in their specialized policy area rather than merely responding to outside forces, conditions, or actors. They are important as experts in their area and as those who take initiative in contributing to the development of particular policies.

33. What are the key differences between “early deciders,” “late deciders,” and “active players”?

\*a. Answers Vary

@These all describe different types of decision makers when it comes to the choice of when to make decisions in the deliberative process. Early deciders are strong supporters who wish to get out in front of the debate. In contrast, active players may delay any firm commitment in order to entertain offers from all sides and attempt to gain leverage over the final language of legislation. Finally, late deciders wait until the last moment. This gives them less leverage to influence the basic framework of legislation but may allow them to obtain specific concessions.

34. How do constituencies influence lawmakers’ voting decisions?

\*a. Answers Vary

@Students should describe two main pathways of influence. First, voters tend to elect representatives whose views mirror their own. Second, members are under electoral pressure to vote in line with constituency preferences or risk losing their seat in the next election.

35. How has ideological sorting since the 1950s impacted coalition building in Congress?

\*a. Answers Vary

@Ideological sorting is the idea that there is now less ideological diversity within each of the two major political parties today, because conservatives have largely sorted themselves into the Republican party and liberals into the Democratic party. Because of the reduced ideological overlap between the two parties, it is more difficult to reach cross-party compromises and form cross-party coalitions.

36. What are some of the costs and benefits of seeking multiple cosponsors for a bill?

\*a. Answers Vary

@More cosponsors can signal more support for a bill and can aid members in ensuring that committee hearings are scheduled. However, single sponsorship can be easier; each change to the bill will not require the buy-in of multiple cosponsors. Additionally, if the bill eventually becomes law, one member can claim more credit rather than sharing that credit with cosponsors.

37. Why do members propose amendments?

\*a. Answers Vary

@The obvious answer is the shape legislation during the committee and floor stage. But students should also list/describe at least one other reason, including obstruction, in order to derail legislation, or to go on the record on a specific issue.

38. How does control of the floor agenda and use of special rules advantage majority leaders in the House? Give a specific example

\*a. Answers Vary

@Students could address various advantages here; some options include engineering favored policy outcomes, expediting floor actions, and blocking difficult issues from reaching the floor. Examples will vary.

39. How do voters learn about a member’s voting record?

\*a. Answers Vary

@Very few voters personally monitor a member’s voting record; although this information is public, most voters are simply not sufficiently informed or motivated to do so. Instead, they rely largely on challengers and outside groups to publicize a member’s voting record. Outside groups are particularly likely to do so during campaigns and may highlight specific votes or give members a grade or score on their votes on a particular issue or set of issues important to the group.

40. Why is party cohesion high in the modern Congress? Is this development good or bad for representation?

\*a. Answers Vary

@For the first part of the question, students should identify and explain some of the following: members of a given party are elected by similar constituencies, they have shared ideological commitments, and because they share a common interest in a positive party reputation and in their party being in the majority. Students should then make a clear argument defining “good” representation and making a case for why high party cohesion is good or bad for representation.

41. Why should voters be skeptical of interpreting a member’s voting record as an unambiguous indicator of his views and priorities?

\*a. Answers Vary

@Students can address various problems with treating all roll calls as sincere policy preferences. This includes voting against a bill they prefer to the status quo in hopes that a better bill will be introduced/voted on later, refusing to accept a compromise to highlight party differences, accepting an unfavorable compromise because preferable reform is seen as impossible/improbable, and so on. Students should outline a variety of reasons and use examples to illustrate.

42. Select a recent bill in the House or Senate and trace its passage through the chamber. Use the website voteview.com to download relevant votes and assess the influence of partisanship or other factors on the votes taken related to the bill (depending on student experience with data, the instructor can provide these files to students for select bills). Using vote information as well as qualitative sources, do you find evidence of strategic behavior? What factors do you believe best explain the passage (or failure) of the bill?

\*a. Answers Vary

@This assignment will likely require substantial instruction on the analysis of roll call data, as well as providing cleaned data for students not at the graduate level. Students should present relevant evidence from roll call data, news sources, Congressional Quarterly, and other relevant sources to assess the influence of partisanship, constituency, and other factors on various votes as well as the overall outcome of the bill in the House or Senate.