

Political Science 163

Interest Group Politics

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The Game Plan

This course is an upper division political science course on the topic of Interest Group Politics. I assume general knowledge of government institutions, political science concepts, and research methods. However, this course will be accessible to students from all academic majors.

This course has three objectives. We'll learn what interest groups do and with what effect. In particular, we will consider the diversity of interest groups and forms of representation. Second, this course will explore the research methodologies we leverage for studying groups and lobbyist influence. Research methodology is a particular strength of mine so we will discuss how to measure what we sense is true, that interest groups and lobbyists influence public opinion, elections, public policy, and the news. However, pinpointing exactly where, why, how, when, or what influence occurs is harder to do than our intuition might suggest. Third, you will learn how to navigate California's publicly available legislative and campaign finance data. This is in the service of bringing politics to political science as well as giving you some employable skills.

How to Succeed in this Course

Bring an open mind. Enlightenment. It's the greatest gift you can give yourself. It's also why you came to sit in this room to the exclusion of other classrooms and activities. Don't deny yourself the opportunity to change your mind about strongly held beliefs.

Prepare. Read the assigned readings before each class. I have coordinated readings and lectures so that if you are on schedule, the lecture and reading will synergize. Useful discussions depend on students who have read and thought about the assigned material. Because I will be asking students about the week's readings and concepts, it is integral that you have some familiarity with the assigned readings before we meet. Prepare in the context of this course also means working on written assignment research, I'm always here to help, but I expect you to work to solve problems you encounter on these projects. The research database we use takes time to learn so prepare to do this work in advance of the deadline, I won't bail you out in the last minute.

Participate. Political science is about social problems, not solitary ones. Therefore, your participation and that of your classmates will help to enrich your understanding of these problems. Everyone in this course has something to contribute to this learning environment. I expect you will respectfully share your thoughts and ideas with each other. By participation, I mean engaging in conversation, not simply answering questions. My hope is that you will appreciate my Socratic style...it is time worn, old school.

Making the Grade

The final course grade breaks down like this:

Final Exam (40%)
Essays (45%)
Participation (15%)

There are no extensions for any assignment without written medical excuse or prior approval from me. No make-up examinations without prior approval or without a written medical excuse. Late assignments are penalized at 20% per day.

Text

Allan Cigler, Burdett Loomis, and Anthony Nownes. 2016. *Interest Group Politics*. 9th Edition. CQ Press

Various articles on smartsite

Course Schedule

Week 1 Group Formation and Maintenance

M June 20th Introduction, Syllabus, Good Writing, Expectations

T June 21st What are Organized Interests?

- “The Changing Nature of Interest Group Politics” Loomis and Cigler

W June 22nd Interest Group Theories: Pluralism and its Critics

- “Tobacco Industry Efforts to Influence Policy: When Interest Groups Face Opposition” Apollonio

Week 2 Who Joins Groups and Why?

M June 27th Benefits, Entrepreneurs, and Patrons

- “What Are Interests group Policy Agendas: How Might We Study Them?” Halpin
- “The Tea Party as an Interest: Movement? Group? Brand? Faction?” Loomis

T June 28th Political Participation and Skills

- “Organized Labor: Adaptive Strategies in Challenging Times.” Francia

W June 29th Population Ecology

- “Changing Policies/Changing Hearts and Minds: The Evolution of the LGBT Movement” Haider-Markel and Sylvester

Week 3 Lobbying

M July 4th NO CLASS

T July 5th Direct Lobbying and Lobbying Subsidy Theory

- “Working the Angles: The Job of a Corporate Lobbyist” Healy
- “The Power of Negative Lobbying” McKay

W July 6th Lobbying Success, Strategy and Client Communication

- “Lobbying in the Shadows: How Private Interests Hide from Public Scrutiny and Why That Matters” LaPira

Th July 7th Lobbying Subsidy Theory

- Wild Blue Yonder, Nick Kotz Chps (10-11)

Week 4 Lobbying

M July 11th The Military Industrial Complex and the B-1 Bomber

- “Interest Group Interests in Congressional Primaries.” Boatright
- “Sources of Congressional Candidates’ Funds: Does Interest Group Money Dominate?” Richter and Werner

T July 12th Lobbying with Campaign Money

- “We Have Met the Lobbyists and They Are Us: When Governments Lobby Governments.” Ainsworth et al.

W July 13th Governments & Special Districts

- Interest Groups and America’s “Invisible Governments”: Patterns of Participation and Conflict in Special District Politics.” Nownes and Cole

Week 5 Regulating Factions or Free Speech?

M July 18th Campaign Finance Reform? New Ideas, same results...

- “The Rise of Dark Money.” Drutman

T July 19th Citizens United and Speech without Consequences

- Citizens United (excerpt)

W July 20th Reading the Fine Print?

- “Advocacy in an Era of Inequity” Loomis and Nownes

Week 6 Who Are These Factions Anyway?

M July 25th Veiled Political Actors and Disclosure Tricks

T July 26th Documentary – Merchants of Doubt

W July 27th Review and film discussion

Th July 28th Final Exam