Political Science 4032
Interest Groups in the United States
Spring 2011

Dr. Hogan
TH 6:10-9:00
220 Stubbs Hall

Office Hours: TTH 1:30-2:30, or by appt.
238 Stubbs Hall (578-3217)
rhogan1@lsu.edu

Course Description

This course is intended to introduce students to various aspects of interest group politics in the United States. We will examine several dimensions of these organizations, from conditions that affect their formation and development to activities they use to influence elections and public policy. Our goal is to understand their role in the political system and to evaluate their effects. Do interest groups promote or detract from democratic governance? What aspects of these organizations can be beneficial or harmful to the way collective decisions are made in government? How has the power of interest groups changed over time? Has the increase in the number of groups over time led to a dispersion of power in the political system or is power concentrated in a small number of groups? How has the influence of interest groups changed relative to other entities such as political parties and government institutions? Ultimately, have interest groups become too powerful, or have they become too weak to be effective in providing citizens access to the political process?

In addition to our focus on the substantive aspects of interest group politics, we will also spend time examining the methods used by scholars to answer questions on this topic. Part of our goal is to assess the evidence obtained by scholars and to consider alternative approaches. While this is not a course on political science methodology, issues involving research design and analysis will play prominently in our class discussions.

Reading Materials

The following books are available for purchase in the bookstore:


In addition, other required readings listed on the syllabus can be accessed through the LSU Moodle system.

Course Requirements

The grade for the course is determined by a student’s performance in the following areas:

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interest Group Report</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Book Review</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<td>Mid-Term Exam</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<td>Final Exam</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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Letter grades will be determined as follows: A = 90-100 percent, B = 80-89 percent, C = 70-79 percent, D = 60-69 percent, and F = below 60 percent.
Participation: Class Discussions, Quizzes, and Brief Writing Assignments
Classes are generally conducted in a lecture-discussion format so it is important to keep up with the readings and to come to class prepared. Students are strongly encouraged to take part in class discussions. In order to do this, it is necessary to complete the readings in advance and to spend time thinking about them in a critical manner. Also, please keep up with current political developments involving interest groups since these will often be used as examples in our discussions.

Quizzes will be administered periodically along with brief in-class writing assignments. In addition, I will occasionally ask you to complete a short assignment that is due at the beginning of the next class meeting. These assignments typically involve writing a brief essay on a given topic. This work will be counted as part of your participation grade. All class assignments will be posted on Moodle soon after they are provided in class. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to check Moodle for any missed assignment prior to the next class meeting. Also, assignments not handed in on time will receive a grade penalty.

Interest Group Report
Each student will hand in a brief report on a particular interest group. This assignment counts for 10% of your course grade. A separate sheet will provide details about this assignment. The report is due at the beginning of class on February 24.

Book Review
This assignment counts for 15% of the course grade. Students will write a review of The Third House: Lobbyists and Lobbying in the States by answering a series of questions that will be provided at least one week prior to the review’s due date. The review is due at the beginning of class on March 24.

Exams
There are two exams – a mid-term and a final (dates are listed on the syllabus). These tests will consist of short-answer/essay style questions. Note that makeup exams are only administered when a student can produce a valid written excuse. If you anticipate a problem, please let me know as soon as possible. Also, for anyone who has special needs or who requires accommodations through Disability Services, please advise me of your situation in advance of the exams so arrangements can be made.

General Policies

Plagiarism
Plagiarism is a serious offense and is not taken lightly. Use of another’s words or ideas without giving proper credit will not be tolerated. Care should be made to properly cite sources where appropriate. If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please consult me. I reserve the right to investigate when I suspect that you are not doing your own work. All violations of this policy are turned over to the Dean of Students for adjudication.

Classroom Etiquette
Please be considerate to those around you who are trying to listen, take notes, and participate in class discussions. Please make every effort to be on time to class. Be seated and ready to begin at 10:40 and leave early only for emergencies. Turn cell phones and pagers to silent. Most importantly, do not talk during class. Disruptive students will be asked to leave immediately.

Recording Devices and Computers
No audio or video recording devices are allowed unless special permission is granted by the instructor. You are free to use laptop computers for class purposes (e.g., taking notes, looking up relevant information on the internet, etc.). But please do not simply play on the internet, check e-mail, or use Facebook.

Late Assignments and Missed Work
All written assignments are due at the beginning of class. Penalties will be assessed based upon the circumstances, but will generally involve a substantial loss of points. In others words, be certain that I receive your written work at the beginning of class. Please note that for reasons of fairness to other students in the class, credit cannot be given at the end of the semester for missed exams and quizzes or for papers not handed in. In other words, when you experience a significant problem that prevents you from meeting a deadline or taking a test, it is your responsibility to let me know about it in a timely manner and to make arrangements to make up the missed work. Excuses must be provided within one week of your return, NOT at the end of the semester.
Course Schedule

January 20  Introduction to Course

January 27  Approaches to the Study of Interest Groups
   - Berry and Wilcox, Chapter 1.
   - Reading #1: Madison, Federalist #10.
   - Reading #4: “Appendix: A Brief Introduction to Regression.”

February 3  Interest Group Communities
   - Berry and Wilcox, Chapter 2.

February 10  Group Formation and Maintenance
   - Berry and Wilcox, Chapter 3.

February 17  Interest Group Activities in Political Campaigns
   - Berry and Wilcox, Chapters 4 and 5.
   - Rozell, Wilcox, and Madland, Chapters 1, 2, and 3.

February 24  Interest Groups and Voters
   - Rozell, Wilcox, and Madland, Chapters 4 and 5.

***INTEREST GROUP PROJECT DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS***
March 3

**Interest Groups and Campaign Finance Laws**

March 10

**Midterm Exam**

March 17

**Strategies of Lobbying**
- Berry and Wilcox, Chapter 6 and Chapter 8 (part) pp. 137-141.

March 24

**Lobbying Legislatures**

***BOOK REVIEW DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS***

March 31

**Interest Group Influence on the Bureaucracy and the Courts**
- Berry and Wilcox, Chapter 8 (part) pp. 141-154.

April 7

**Interest Groups Engaging and Activating Citizens**
- Berry and Wilcox, Chapter 7.
- **Reading #31:** Andres, Gary J. 2009. “Lobbying in a Hyper Media Age” (Chapter 6) and “The New Lobbying Toolbox” (Chapter 7) in *Lobbying Reconsidered: Under the Influence* New York: Longman.

April 14

**Effectiveness of Interest Groups**
- Berry and Wilcox, Chapter 9.

April 21

**Spring Break**
April 28  

*Policy Influences of Interest Groups*


May 5  

*Evaluating Overall Interest Group Effects*

- Berry and Wilcox, Chapter 10.

May 12  

**FINAL EXAM** in this classroom on Thursday, May 12 from 8:00-10:00 p.m.