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PSC 483.01: American Government

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Course Title: PSC 483 – Introduction to American Government
Semester: Spring 2008
Course Hours: Tuesday/Thursday from 1:10-2:00PM
Course Room: Liberal Arts 11
Instructor: Jeffrey Doyle
Office: Liberal Arts 354
Office Hours: Tuesday/Thursday 1:00pm-3:00pm or by appointment
E-mail: Jeffrey.Doyle@mso.umt.edu

Course Description:

This course is intended to provide students with an introduction to Interest Groups in the American states and Washington, D.C., the theories that help us understand them, and their activities. By first building a theoretical understanding of what IG's are, their role in American government, who participates and why, we build an understanding on which we can further examine their activities in political process. Importantly, we integrate numerous examples, including the civil rights movement, religious conservatives, unions and American Indian nations to examine different examples of interest groups and interest group activities at multiple levels of government.

Course Objectives:

By the end of the semester, students will be able to:

- A. Understand the role of interest groups in the American Political System.
- B. Identify and apply theoretical approaches to the study of the US interest groups.
- C. Understand the influence that individuals have on interest groups and their reasons for participating in interest groups activities.
- D. Critically evaluate the lobbying process in light of numerous interest group and governmental factors.
- E. Clearly articulate the application of interest group theories and actions in a research paper and in-class presentation.

Required Course Materials

Textbooks:

Classics in Interest Group Behavior-Alexander
Pressure and Power: Organized Interests in American Politics-Nownes
Interest Groups in American Campaigns: The New Face of Electioneering-Rozell et. al.
The Third House: Lobbyists and Lobbying in the States-Rosenthal
Various books on hold at library and articles on Blackboard

Other Reading Requirements:

1- Selected journal articles are required and will be posted on the course site on blackboard. These articles will provide theoretical depth and understanding to the topics covered in the course and are drawn from the classic writings on Interest Groups. You are required to read

these articles, print or take notes and come to class prepared to engage in discussion about these readings.

2-You must keep up to date with what is happening in government and politics. The purpose for this is to understand the impact of interest group behavior on the coming Presidential election.

Expectations, Assignments and Grading

Expectations:

Attendance	20%
Participation	20%
Presentation	30%
Research paper	30%

Attendance:

Attendance is of the utmost importance in a 400 level course. I will take attendance ten times throughout the semester with each being worth two percent of your final grade. There will be no excused absences as any one absence from this course will put you behind in the entire class.

Participation:

Participation will be an expected portion of this course. Active participation means that you have read the assigned readings and are prepared to discuss these readings with the rest of the class. I will be monitoring your amount of participation in each class period and will give you credit or no credit.

Presentation:

Research paper:

Grading scale:

A	100 -93.0%
A-	92.9-90.0%
B+	89.9-87.0%
B	86.9-83.0%
B-	82.9-80.0%
C+	79.9-77.0%
C	76.9-73.0%
C-	72.9-70.0%

D+	69.9-67.0%
D	66.9-63.0%
D-	62.9-60.0%
F	59% and below

Assignments:

Academic Honesty and Integrity:

All students in this course are expected to follow the University of Montana's Student Conduct Code. The code can be located at:

<http://www.umt.edu/SA/documents/fromWeb/StudentConductCode1.pdf>

Those found in violation of the code will face academic penalties from the course instructor, the department or the university.