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PSC 395.01: Interest Groups

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Political Science 395
Interest Groups
Spring 2006

Professor Gregory Koger
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Office Hours: T, Th 9:30-10:30 and 3:00-3:30

Content

This course analyzes the role of interest groups in American democracy. As citizens, we are nominally equal. Our votes count the same and we have the same rights to freedom of speech, assembly and petition. Yet some of us utilize those rights more than others. Subsets of citizens (or corporations) band together to advance common political interests. This class studies the behavior of these organized groups. How do they form? What conditions favor the development of interest groups, and when would we *not* expect to see groups form? How do interest groups influence policy formulation? How do interest groups influence elections? Which groups ally themselves with a political party? This class will address these questions...and more.

Required Texts

- *Analyzing Interest Groups* by Scott Ainsworth, available at the bookstore
 - A collection of supplemental readings is on reserve at Mansfield library
- also, I may send e-mails linking you to relevant news items

Student Behavior

Students are required to read all assigned readings and bring them to class, attend all lectures, participate in class, take a midterm and final, and complete a research paper. Students are expected to avoid profanity, to turn off cell phones, and to arrive on time. While we will be discussing contemporary politics, students should avoid simple proselytizing or provocation.

The grade breakdown is:

Participation:	20%
Midterm:	20%
Paper:	30%
Final:	30%

Papers are due at the start of class. Late papers are docked a **full grade** for each day late. Students may schedule a make-up exam with documentation if illness or family death prevents attendance at the midterm. *No excuses* will be accepted for late papers; students are responsible for beginning their papers early, avoiding computer problems, and getting papers to me in a timely fashion.

Students are expected to do their own work. Students must cite sources used to write their papers. Plagiarism will be punished in accordance with university policy.

Students taking PS 300 or PS 400 in conjunction with this class, or graduate students, will write an additional paper analyzing an interest group in light of course texts.

TIMELINE

Week	Topics and Readings
Jan 24 – Feb 2	Introduction. Why Interest Groups? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ainsworth 1 & 2 • Loomis & Cigler, “The Changing Nature of Interest Group Politics,” <i>IG Politics</i>
Feb. 7 & 9	Interest Group Formation and Design <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ainsworth 3 • Patterson & Singer, “The NRA in the Face of the Clinton Challenge,” <i>IG Politics</i>
Feb 14 & 16	The Washington Environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ainsworth 5 • Baumgartner, “The Growth and Diversity of US Associations, 1956-2004,” Draft Paper • Loomis, “Interests, Lobbying, and the U.S. Congress: Past as Prologue,” <i>IG Politics</i>
Feb 21 & 23	Lobbying <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ainsworth 6 • Shaiko, “Making the Connection: Organized Interests, Political Representation, and the Changing Rules of the Game in Washington Politics,” <i>The IG Connection</i>
Feb 28 & Mar 2	Agenda-Setting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brown and Waltzer, “Lobbying The Press...” <i>IG Politics</i> • Leech et. al. “Organized Interests and Issue Definition in Policy Debates,” <i>IG Politics</i>
Mar 7 & 9	Congress II; Executive Branch <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ainsworth 7 • White, “Making Connections to the Appropriations Process,” <i>IG Connection</i>
Mar 14 & 16	Judicial Branch; Ballots & Initiatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ainsworth 8 • O’Connor, “Lobbying the Justices or Lobbying for Justice?” <i>IG Connection</i>
Mar 21 & 23	Choosing Venues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mahoney & Baumgartner, “When To Go It Alone,” draft paper • Holyoke, “Choosing Battlegrounds,” PRQ 2003
Mar 27 & 31	SPRING BREAK
April 4 & 6	4/4: Review. 4/6: MIDTERM
April 11 & 13	Campaign Finance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ainsworth 9 • Biersack & Viray, “Interest Groups and Federal Campaign Finance...” <i>IG Connection</i>
April 18 & 20	Interest Groups in Campaigns <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interest Groups and Campaigns: The Electoral Connection,” <i>IG Connection</i>
April 25 & 27	Interest Groups and Parties <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skinner, “Do 527’s Add Up to a Party? Thinking About the ‘Shadows’ of Politics.” <i>The Forum</i>. <p style="text-align: right;"><u>Papers are due April 25!</u></p>
May 2 & 4	Interest Groups and Reform - see e-mailed readings on lobbying reform
May 9	Final (8:00-10:00 a.m.)