

**Interest Groups  
Political Science 125  
Fall 2007**

Class Time: 3:55 – 5:10 T/Th.  
Classroom: 66 Schaeffer  
Instructor: Fred Boehmke  
Office: 361 Schaeffer  
Office Hours: Tuesday 2-3pm and 3-4pm Wednesday, or by appointment  
Email: frederick-boehmke@uiowa.edu  
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**Course description:**

This course is an introduction to the role of organized interest groups in American politics. We will survey the important approaches to understanding and explaining interest group formation and behavior: how and why groups form, how they attract members and how they attempt to influence policy outcomes. Of particular interest will be the relationship between the motivations for groups to mobilize and the types of interests that are represented by groups.

The format of the class will include lectures, but will also include time for discussion and questions about major themes covered in the readings. The readings will serve as an introduction and supplement to the topics addresses in class, so students are expected to be familiar with the reading beforehand. Classes will introduce materials not covered in the reading, so attendance is recommended.

Final grades will be determined by performance on quizzes, a midterm exam, a final exam (exams will be a mix of short answer and/or essay questions), class participation, and short written assignments.

The syllabus may be revised during the course.

**Books:**

There are six books for the class, which will be available for purchase at Iowa Book and Supply. They are also on course reserve at the main library. The first is a general reference books to supplement lecture topics, while the last four will be used for discussion.

Lowery, David and Holly Brasher. 2004. *Organized Interests and American Government*. New York City: McGraw Hill.

McAdam, Doug. 1988. *Freedom Summer*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Fisher, Dana. 2006. *Activism, Inc.: How the Outsourcing of Grassroots Campaigns Is Strangling Progressive Politics in America*. Stanford University Press.

Christopher J. Bosso. 2005. *Environment, Inc.: From Grassroots to Beltway*. University Press of Kansas.

Stone, Peter H. 2006. *Heist: Superlobbyist Jack Abramoff, His Republican Allies, and the Buying of Washington*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

### **Course Requirements:**

Your grade will be based on four equally weighted components.

1. Class participation. This will consist of two components. The first is participation in class discussions focused around the four discussion books. We will dedicate one entire class to discuss each book. Depending on enrollment, I will probably divide the class into 2 discussion sections that meet on separate days. Credit for this component is granted for attendance (6 points) and constructive participation (1-4 points) during discussion sections. The second component is a 350-500-word response paper for each of the discussion books. These are not intended to be summaries of the reading; rather, I want you to explore some issue in the book relating to interest groups and ideas covered in class. Papers will be due at the beginning of the discussion session.
2. (About) Six weekly quizzes that will cover material from the past two weeks. These should not be very difficult if you show up to class and do the reading. I will drop the lowest quiz score when calculating your final grade.
3. A short answer and short essay midterm examination. I expect to give the midterm the week of October 12.
4. A short answer and short essay final examination that will cover material from the entire course, but with an emphasis on the latter half. This is scheduled for Wednesday, December 15 at 9:45 a.m.

Final grades are adjusted (when necessary) so that the average grade in the class is right between a B and a B-. Of course this depends on the overall performance of the class and may be higher or lower in a given semester as warranted.

## **General Topics to be Covered:**

### **Week 1**

1. Introduction to course procedures and requirements.
2. Overview of course material.

### **Week 2**

1. Federalist 10.
2. Historical perspectives on interest groups:
  - a. Group theory.
3. Pluralism and its critics.
4. Olson and the *Logic of Collective Action*.
  - a. The Free Rider problem.
  - b. Group formation and bias.
  - c. Public good provision: selective benefits.
5. Response to Olson

### **Week 3.**

1. Who joins groups and why?
2. Benefits of membership.
3. Entrepreneurs and patrons.
4. Experiential Search.

### **Week 4.**

1. McAdam discussion.

### **Week 5**

1. Representation and bias in the interest group universe.
  - a. Which groups mobilize?
2. How is the interest group system changing over time?

### **Week 6**

1. State interest group populations.
  - a. The Population Ecology Approach.
  - b. Density, diversity and changes over time.
  - c. The initiative process and representation.
2. What effect does interest group growth have?

### **Week 7**

1. Fisher discussion.

### **Week 8**

1. MIDTERM.
2. Introduction to lobbyists and lobbying.
3. What do lobbyists do?

## **Week 9**

1. Forms of Lobbying.
  - a. Direct lobbying.
  - b. Indirect lobbying.
  - c. Grassroots lobbying.
2. Political Expenditures.
  - a. Direct lobbying.
  - b. Hard money.
  - c. Soft money.
  - d. Independent expenditures.
  - e. Issue ads.
  - d. 527 Committees.

## **Weeks 10 and 11**

1. PACs.
2. Campaign finance reform.
3. What might contributions buy?
  - a. Votes.
  - b. Access.
  - c. Time.

## **Week 12**

1. Stone Discussion.

## **Week 13**

1. Fall Break.

## **Week 14**

1. Lobbying tactics and lobbying strategies.
  - a. What lobbying tactics do groups use?
  - b. What is a lobbying strategy?
  - c. What factors influence the choice of lobbying strategy?

## **Week 15**

1. Other targets of lobbying.
  - a. The executive branch.
  - b. The courts.
2. Iron triangles and issue niches.

## **Week 16**

3. Bosso discussion.

**Policy on Late Assignments:**

Homework write-ups, papers and exams are all due at the time specified. Any late homework or paper will have points deducted at the rate 10% of the total available points per week unless arrangements are made *prior* to the due date. Exams will also not be excused or rescheduled without prior arrangements. If you have a legitimate, personal reason for missing a scheduled assignment and can not notify me in advance, please come talk to me afterwards and provide documentation.

**Policy on Classroom Etiquette:**

1. During class discussion, please be respectful of other students' opinions and phrase your contributions in a constructive manner.
2. Please turn off all cell phones, pagers and other noise-emitting devices.
3. Please show up to class on time.

**Other Information:**

Please visit the Political Science Department's Website at <http://www.uiowa.edu/~polisci>. It is frequently updated regarding events and procedures in our department, changes in the Schedule of Courses, plus TA and faculty hours when available. You may also find current information on pre-advising, and registration. Our Vernon Van Dyke Computing Facility (Political Science ITC) is located in Room 21 Schaeffer Hall. Available hours are listed at our website and also posted outside Room 21 Schaeffer.

**The Political Science Department of The University of Iowa  
Professor Tom W. Rice, Chair, 341 Schaeffer Hall, 335-2358**

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Website: <http://www.uiowa.edu/~sds/> Instructors will make reasonable accommodations for students with physical, mental or learning disabilities. Students with disabilities which may require some modification of seating, testing, or other class requirements are to inform the instructor (after class or during the instructor's office hours) so that appropriate arrangements may be made. It is the student's responsibility to contact Student Disability Services, 133 Burge Hall (335-1462) and obtain a Student Academic Accommodation Request form (SAAR). The form will specify what course accommodations are judged reasonable for that student. An instructor who cannot provide the accommodations specified, or has concerns about the accommodations, must contact the Student Disability Services counselor who signed the request form within 48 hours of receiving the form from the student.

**DEPARTMENTAL/COLLEGIATE COMPLAINT PROCEDURES**

Website: [http://www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic\\_handbook/ix.shtml#5](http://www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic_handbook/ix.shtml#5) (See "Student Complaints") A student who has a complaint against any member of the college's teaching staff is responsible for following the procedures described in the Student Academic Handbook, which is available on the web site of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences: [http://www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic\\_handbook/ix.shtml/](http://www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic_handbook/ix.shtml/) The student should attempt to resolve the issue with the faculty member or teaching assistant involved. Lacking a satisfactory outcome, the student can turn to the department chair, whose name is listed above along with contact information. (If the complaint concerns a teaching assistant, the student should contact the supervising faculty member first.) If a satisfactory outcome still is not obtained, the student can turn to the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Complaints may concern inappropriate faculty conduct (including inappropriate course materials), incompetence in oral communication, inequities in assignments, scheduling of examinations at other than authorized and published times, failure to provide disability accommodations, or grading grievances. In complaints involving the assignment of grades, it is college policy that grades cannot be changed without the permission of the department concerned.

**PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING**

See Academic Fraud at [http://www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic\\_handbook/ix.shtml](http://www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic_handbook/ix.shtml) for the complete policy. You are expected to be honest and honorable in your fulfillment of assignments and in test-taking situations. Plagiarism and cheating are serious forms of academic misconduct. Examples of them are given in the Student Academic Handbook: [www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic\\_handbook/ix.shtml/](http://www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic_handbook/ix.shtml/) The Department of Political Science works with individual instructors to detect plagiarism and cheating and to ensure that appropriately serious punishments are applied. An instructor who suspects a student of plagiarism or cheating must inform the student (preferably in writing) as soon as possible after the incident has been observed or discovered. Instructors who detect cheating or plagiarism may decide, in consultation with the departmental executive officer, to reduce the student's grade on the assignment or the course, even to assign an F.

The instructor writes an account of the chronology of the plagiarism or cheating incident for the departmental executive officer who sends an endorsement of the written report of the case to Associate Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. A copy of the report will be sent to the student.

**SEXUAL HARASSMENT** You should familiarize yourself with the following web site link from the College of Liberal Arts:

<http://www.sexualharassment.uiowa.edu/policy.php>

### **YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES**

Your responsibilities to this class-and to your education as a whole-include attendance and participation. This syllabus details specific expectations the instructor may have about attendance and participation. You have a responsibility to help create a classroom environment where all may learn. At the most basic level, this means you will respect the other members of the class and the instructor and treat them with the courtesy you hope to receive in return.

### **ENROLLED COURSES OUTSIDE YOUR COLLEGE**

Taking a course outside the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences means that class policies on matters such as requirements, grading, and sanctions for academic dishonesty are governed by the College where the course resides. Students wishing to add or drop this course after the official deadline must receive the approval of the Dean of that College. Details of the University policy of cross enrollments may be found at: <http://www.uiowa.edu/~provost/deos/crossenroll.doc/> Deadlines: See Registrar's Office web site: <http://www.registrar.uiowa.edu/>

### **PLUS-MINUS GRADING**

All the department's instructors can append plus or minus grades to the letter grades they assign for the course. If the instructor does not specifically indicate in the syllabus that he or she will not assign plusses or minuses, students should assume that this form of grading will be used.

### **HOMEWORK EXPECTATION**

For each semester hour of credit that a Political Science course carries, students should expect to spend approximately two hours per week outside of class preparing for class sessions. That is, in a three-credit-hour course, instructors design course assignments on the assumption that students will spend six hours per week in out-of-class preparation.

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