

## **INTEREST GROUPS AND LOBBYING**

POLS 3006

Fall 2019

Classroom: Brewster C-206  
Class time: Tue. & Thurs., 12:30 to 1:45 p.m.  
Office hours: Mon., 10:30 a.m. to 12 p.m., and 1:30  
p.m. to 5 p.m., or by appointment

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### **COURSE OVERVIEW**

This course examines the role and influence of interest groups in American politics. Topics include the reasons that interest groups form and the ways they maintain themselves; the reasons that people join interest groups; the importance of leaders and leadership strategies in attracting members and in building and maintaining the stature of the group; interest group activities in political campaigns and elections; inside-the-system efforts to influence government policy through lobbyists and lobbying activities; outside-the-system efforts to influence government policy through protests and civil disobedience; and bias in interest-group representation and its effects on government policy. The course also draws on case studies of interest groups to apply and reinforce the core concepts covered in class lectures and the required readings. Throughout the semester, I encourage you to think critically about several important questions: Are interest groups the healthy byproduct of a free society that allows citizens to organize, assemble, and petition the government, or are they a pernicious outgrowth of citizens pursuing their own selfishly motivated interests at the expense of the common good? What role, if any, should the government play in regulating interest group campaign and lobbying activities? Do societal inequalities affect which interests are able to organize and voice their concerns effectively in the political arena or does group competition balance conflicting interests? Are interest groups, on balance, beneficial or harmful to American democracy?

### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

The general learning objective in this course is for you to gain a broad understanding of interest groups. To complete this class successfully, you will need to demonstrate factual, applied, and conceptual knowledge of the subjects covered in the course. I will expect you to be able to identify and define terms; interpret theories; apply principles to hypothetical scenarios; compare and contrast concepts; construct solutions to political problems and controversies; and assess the strengths and weaknesses of various different perspectives concerning interest groups. Please note that I will not share my partisan affiliation to anyone in class and will present both sides of any argument as fairly as possible. My larger and ultimate learning objective in this course is to teach each of you *not what to think*, but rather *how to think* about the issues we address in class.

### **REQUIRED READINGS**

The required readings in this course are: (1) Jeffrey M. Berry and Clyde Wilcox, *The Interest Group Society*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. (Routledge, 2018); (2) Jack Abramoff, *Capitol Punishment* (WND Books, 2011); and (3) selected readings from Blackboard.

## OPTIONAL READING

There is one optional reading in this course: Allan J. Cigler, Burdett A. Loomis, Anthony J. Nownes, *Interest Group Politics*, 9<sup>th</sup> ed. (CQ Press, 2016).

## COURSE STRUCTURE

Classes begin with a lecture on the topic listed in the course outline. Everyone should come to class prepared to ask questions and to contribute to class discussions. Keeping up with the assigned weekly readings and attending class regularly throughout the semester will allow for more informed classroom discussions and for more interesting debates, as well as improve your ability to contribute to and learn from the class interactions. I also encourage everyone to read a newspaper, watch the television news, and follow current events. Doing so will broaden your interest in this course and help you better understand the importance of the material we cover. To incorporate visual learning in the classroom, and to help generate additional thought and discussion on the subjects covered in the course, I often show video material in class. This includes televised news footage of various historical events, documentaries, and political films. On occasion, I may select documentaries and films that have an “R” rating. Please see me if you have any moral, religious, political, or other objections to viewing documentaries or films with an “R” rating.

## EVALUATION

Your final grade in the course will be based primarily on three exams. There is also an optional writing assignment (see the final page of the syllabus for details). Your grade on the optional writing assignment will replace your lowest exam grade. Class attendance and participation will factor into the calculation of your final grade as well. The weights assigned to your exams and class attendance are as follows:

- (1) Exam 1 on September 26 is worth 25% of your overall grade.
- (2) Exam 2 on October 31 is worth 25% of your overall grade.
- (3) A final exam on December 12 is worth 30% of your overall grade.
- (4) Class attendance is worth the remaining 20% of your overall grade.

Course averages will be converted to letter grades using the scale below:

Course Average	Grade	Course Average	Grade
93 and above =	A	73 to 76 =	C
90 to 92 =	A-	70 to 72 =	C-
87 to 89 =	B+	67 to 69 =	D+
83 to 86 =	B	63 to 66 =	D
80 to 82 =	B-	60 to 62 =	D-
77 to 79 =	C+	Below 60 =	F

## **CLASS ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION**

Class attendance is mandatory. I will circulate an attendance sign-in sheet at the beginning of each lecture. It is your responsibility to make sure that you sign the attendance sheet if you are present in class. If you arrive excessively late to class or if you leave class early, you will receive only partial credit for attendance. Your class attendance grade will be based on the percentage of classes that you attend (e.g., a student who attends every class will earn a 100; a student who attends half of the classes will earn a 50, etc.). Students who are active participants during class discussions will receive a bonus point added to their overall course grade.

## **EXAM RULES AND PROCEDURES**

Failure to be present for any of the scheduled exams will result in an automatic “0.” On all exam dates, please come prepared with an exam book and a pen or pencil. If you cannot attend an exam, you must contact me at least 30 minutes before I have administered the test. I will grant a make-up exam only for circumstances that I deem extraordinary or for circumstances that meet university guidelines. If you miss an exam because of an illness, you are still required to contact me before the exam. You must also present me with proper verification (see below).

## **EXCUSED ABSENCES AND VERIFICATION**

I will excuse absences, including those on exam dates, for the following reasons: (1) participation in an authorized activity as an official representative of the university (this includes athletic events, university-sponsored performances, or academic conferences); (2) participation in other activities deemed by the Dean of Students to warrant an excused absence; (3) an extreme personal emergency; (4) the death of an immediate family member; (5) participation in a religious holiday; and (6) health reasons such as an incapacitating or contagious illness or unavoidable surgery. **DO NOT** schedule non-emergency doctor’s appointments (such as an annual check-up visit or a dental visit) or any other personal commitments during our class time. Serious students plan their personal schedules around their academic schedules, not the other way around. If your absence meets any of the criteria mentioned above, I will need you to present me with some form of verification no later than two weeks after the absence if you wish to have your absence excused. Some acceptable forms of verification include the following: a note from Student Health Services; a note from a doctor or medical office; an obituary; or official documentation from the athletic department indicating your travel schedule. In the event of severe weather, please call the University Emergency Telephone Number at 252-328-0062 or visit the ECU emergency alert website (<http://www.ecu.edu/alert>) to check on whether the university has canceled classes. If the university has not canceled classes, but you commute to campus from a considerable distance and believe driving conditions may be hazardous, I will consider excusing your absence.

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Academic integrity is a fundamental value of higher education shared by all at East Carolina University. Consistent with this principle, I expect all students to complete their academic work honestly. I will not tolerate any student’s involvement in *cheating, plagiarism, falsifying work, submitting the same assignment for more than one course, or other acts that would be in violation of the university’s academic integrity standards*. If I become aware of or suspect a potential

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY (continued)**

academic integrity violation, I will meet with the student under suspicion following the procedures outlined in the university's academic integrity policy. Should I determine that an academic integrity violation has occurred, I reserve the right to assign a grade penalty up to and including an "F" for the assignment or the course. If it also comes to my attention that the student involved in such an incident has had a prior academic integrity violation, or if there are other aggravating circumstances, I will refer the case directly to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities. Should the Academic Integrity Board determine that the accused student committed an academic integrity violation, the penalties, as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct, may include a grade penalty and up to suspension from the university. For more information, please see: <http://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/fsonline/customcf/currentfacultymanual/part6section2.pdf>.

## **CLASSROOM RULES**

The classroom is a learning environment. I expect all students to observe some basic rules of courtesy and respect, which include the following: (1) arrive to class on time and do not leave before class is dismissed; (2) do not pack up your things early; it is disruptive to others around you; (3) turn off cell phones and keep them put away during class; (4) no laptop use during video screenings; (5) no reading the newspaper or listening to music through headphones during class; (6) no sleeping during class; (7) no carrying on private conversations with others in the classroom while someone else is speaking; and (8) please be courteous to your classmates and respectful of your fellow students' views, comments, and questions. Classroom discussion is meant to allow us to hear a variety of viewpoints, and this can only happen if we respect each other and our differences. Failure to follow these rules will negatively affect your class attendance grade. Repeated or extreme offenses could result in your expulsion from the class.

## **E-MAIL**

E-mail is a valuable tool for me to communicate announcements and information to the entire class. Please check your ECU e-mail at least once a day (weekends excluded). E-mail is also a good way for you to contact me. Please feel free to use e-mail to set up one-on-one meetings with me if my office hours conflict with your schedule. If you have specific questions about the course material, I am happy to answer them through e-mail; however, I would encourage you to set up a one-on-one meeting with me if you are having general difficulty with your understanding of the course material. I am also happy to answer any specific questions concerning academic or career advising through e-mail, but again I would encourage you to set up a one-on-one meeting with me if you need more general academic or career advice. Please do not use e-mail to request information already listed in the syllabus, such as an exam date or the weight assigned to a specific exam.

## **APPOINTMENTS**

My office is located in the Brewster Building, Room A-101. My office hours are from 10:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. and from 1:30 p.m. to 5 p.m. every Monday. If you cannot meet with me during my office hours, please see me after class or contact me by telephone or e-mail to schedule an appointment. I am also happy to have lunch with anyone who wishes to join me. If you wish to schedule a lunch appointment, please contact me at least one day in advance.

## DISABILITY SERVICES

East Carolina University seeks to comply fully with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students requesting accommodations based on a covered disability must go to the Department for Disability Support Services located in Slay 138 to verify the disability before any accommodations can occur. The telephone number is 252-737-1016.

## COURSE OUTLINE

### **Week 1 (Aug. 20 and Aug. 22). Overview of the Course & Madison's Dilemma**

August 20, 2019. Overview of the course

August 22, 2019. The importance of interest groups and Madison's Dilemma

- Reading for Week 1: *The Interest Group Society*, Chapter 1

### **Week 2 (Aug. 27 and Aug. 29). Theoretical Perspectives of Interest Groups**

August 27, 2019. Pluralism and the debate surrounding it

August 29, 2019. **No class\***

*\* I will be in Washington, DC for the APSA conference. An alternative homework assignment will be used as a substitute for the class. See Blackboard for additional information about the assignment.*

- Reading for Week 2: Blackboard: "American Pluralism, Interest Group Liberalism, and Neopluralism"

### **Week 3 (Sep. 3 and Sep. 5). Why Interest Groups Form**

September 3, 2019. The rise of interest groups and the reasons that groups form

September 5, 2019. The Prisoner's Dilemma

- Reading for Week 3: *The Interest Group Society*, Chapters 2

### **Week 4 (Sep. 10 and Sep. 12). Mobilization, Organization, and Leadership Strategies**

September 10, 2019. Leadership, and strategies for mobilization and organization

September 12, 2019. Documentary: *I am an Animal: The Story of Ingrid Newkirk and PETA*

- Reading for Week 4: *The Interest Group Society*, Chapter 3

### **Week 5 (Sep. 17 and Sep. 19). Interest Groups in the Electoral Arena**

September 17, 2019. The rise of PACs in the 1970s and 1980s and issue advocacy in the 1990s

September 19, 2019. This rise of 527s, 501(c) groups, and Super PACs

- Reading for Week 5: *The Interest Group Society*, Chapter 5

### **Week 6 (Sep. 24 and Sep. 26). Interest Groups and Political Parties, and Exam**

September 24, 2019. Interest groups and parties

September 26, 2019. **EXAM 1**

- Reading for Week 6: *The Interest Group Society*, Chapter 4

### **Week 7 (Oct. 1 and Oct. 3). Lobbyists**

October 1, 2019. Who are lobbyists?

October 3, 2019. Overview of the Jack Abramoff scandal

- Reading for Week 7: *The Interest Group Society*, Chapter 6; and please begin to read *Capitol Punishment*

### **Week 8 (Oct. 8 and Oct. 10). Shaping Public Opinion**

October 8, 2019. **FALL BREAK**

October 10, 2019. Grassroots lobbying

- Reading for Week 8: *The Interest Group Society*, Chapter 7

### **Week 9 (Oct. 15 and Oct. 17). Washington Lobbying**

October 15, 2019. Lobbyist strategies and tactics to affect legislation in Congress

October 17, 2019. Film: *Thank You for Smoking*

- Reading for Week 9: *The Interest Group Society*, Chapter 8

### **Week 10 (Oct. 22 and Oct. 24). Bias and Representation**

October 22, 2019. Money and political advocacy

October 24, 2019. The privileged position of business

- Reading for Week 10: *The Interest Group Society*, Chapter 10

### **Week 11 (Oct. 29 and Oct. 31). Guest Speaker and Exam**

October 29, 2019. Guest speaker (Michael McShane)

October 31, 2019. **EXAM 2**

### **Week 12 (Nov. 5 and Nov. 7). Case Studies: Business versus Labor**

November 5, 2019. Business and Organized Labor

November 7, 2019. **No class\***

*\* I will be in Philadelphia, PA for the NPSA conference. An alternative homework assignment will be used as a substitute for the class. See Blackboard for additional information about the assignment.*

- Reading for Week 12: Blackboard: “Business and Organized Labor.”

### **Week 13 (Nov. 12 and Nov. 14). Case Studies: Organized Groups in the Culture War**

November 12, 2019. The Religious Right and the Tea Party

November 14, 2019. The LGBT Movement and Feminist Organizations

- Reading for Week 13: Blackboard: “Religious Interest Groups” and “Women’s and Feminist Movements and Organizations”

**Week 14 (Nov. 19 and Nov. 21). Case Studies: Social Movement Organizations**

November 19, 2019. The Civil Rights Movement

November 21, 2019. The Environmental Movement

- Reading for Week 14: Blackboard: “Civil Rights” and “Energy and the Environment”

**Week 15 (Nov. 26 and Nov. 28). Case Studies: Guns**

November 26, 2019. The National Rifle Association

November 28, 2019. **THANKSGIVING**

- Reading for Week 15: Blackboard: “National Rifle Association” and selections from Dan Balz and Ronald Brownstein, *Storming the Gates*

**Week 16 (Dec. 3). Assessing Interest Groups/Exam Review**

December 3, 2019. Assessing interest groups and course summary (**OPTIONAL PAPER DUE**)

**FINAL EXAM**

December 12, 2019. The final exam is scheduled from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

## 10 to 12-PAGE PAPER ASSIGNMENT (OPTIONAL)

Numerous scholars have defended the role of interest groups and their political activities in American politics. Others have been more critical. For this assignment, I would like you to select an interest group of your choice and discuss how this interest group attempts to use its resources to influence the political process. Your paper should address the following questions: What is the background and history of the group you selected? What are its goals? How does the interest group that you selected try to influence U.S. elections? How does it attempt to influence the legislative process? Has the interest group that you selected been mostly successful overall or has your group's political record been more mixed? Does the experience of the interest group that you selected lend more support to the arguments advanced by pluralist theory or does it lend more support to the arguments advanced by power elite theory? Or, does neither theory seem to apply? What does the experience of the group you selected teach us about how American democracy operates? This paper is due on the last day of class, December 3.

\* \* \*

### *Tips for Preparing the Paper:*

- Your arguments as well as any factual claims made in the paper need to be supported by outside academic sources. The best outside sources are academic books and journal articles (e.g., *American Political Science Review*, *American Journal of Political Science*, *Journal of Politics*, etc.). To earn a grade higher than a D, your paper should include a minimum of five different academic sources.
- Please note that any papers without citations are guilty of plagiarism. These papers will receive an **automatic "F"** and may be subject to additional disciplinary action.
- ALL PAPERS MUST FOLLOW THE APSA STYLE MANUAL FOR POLITICAL SCIENCE.
- All papers should be double-spaced with one-inch margins in Times New Roman font (please use a 12-point font size). Headings, sub-headings, and page numbers also should be included.
- A well-written paper requires a thesis or an argument. You should state your thesis in the beginning or introduction of the paper. Readers should have a good idea of what the entire paper will show by the end of the second page or earlier.
- The introduction should tell the reader what exactly you are going to say in the paper. The introduction also should arouse the interest of the reader.
- The body of the paper should provide evidence that convinces the reader of your central argument. Citations from books, articles, and other sources are necessary to make your argument as convincing as possible.
- The conclusion should summarize your major arguments and consider any implications related to your thesis. It should also tie together your central points in a coherent manner.
- For additional information about how to write a proper research paper, please see the materials posted on Blackboard.